

WELCOME

The big story that has dominated the news this week has been the terrible terrorist attack in Manchester, which left us shocked and appalled. One cannot imagine the sadness that the parents and relatives of those who died must be feeling. Perhaps we can also pause to think of those NHS staff who had to cope with the tragedy and willingly helped those that they could. How important is our health care at times of crisis.

As we turn back to electioneering and campaigning, we should always remember that our efforts are not just about strategy, but about real people trying to get on and survive in a sometimes hostile world. Although we may not agree on how that is to be achieved, we should never forget the objective is not to score points, but to provide real assistance when it is most needed.

A welcome to more new subscribers this week. Our readership steadily increases.

Material for future newsletters editor@sohs.co.uk by Thursday
 SOHS-Save Our Hospital Services
 (A non-party group whose aim is to campaign to protect our health services in North Devon)

Election Pledge

This is the pledge that election candidates are being asked by SOHS to sign.

NHS Pledge:

If elected, I commit to working towards the reinstatement of a comprehensive, universal National Health Service, which is to be publicly funded and publicly provided and available according to need, rather than ability to pay.

During the next Parliament I undertake to promote and vote in support of the following policies:

- to repeal the 2012 Health & Social Care Act
- to enact the NHS Reinstatement Bill
- to correct the current shortfall in funding and review funding requirements in the light of reinstatement
- to restore community and acute hospital beds
- to reinstate a standard week for elective treatments - until such time as resources are available for a 7 day week
- to prioritise improved pay and working conditions for health and social care workers
- to fund training programmes for clinical staff to alleviate staff shortages
- to reinstate nursing bursaries
- to halt the shrinking of NHS services as outlined in NHS England's *Five Year Forward View*, and "Sustainability and Transformation Plans" (STPs)

A Host of Hustings

SOHS hustings on the NHS at Barnstaple St Peter's Church, Tuesday, May 30

At the hustings, candidates will be asked their position on the sustainability and transformation plan (STP), which SOHS says includes loss of beds

and the claim patients would rather receive care at home.

All candidates have indicated that they will be present.

There is also a hustings at The Plough in Torrington on 5 June (note amended time of 19.30).

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Today's food for thought:

Some interesting thoughts from Ray.

So, how on earth can we afford the nursing bursary?

I have an idea! Let's start by cutting the earnings of the eight highest-paid directors at Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust by 50%.

That would free up £797,500¹!

And that could pay for full bursaries for 177 nurses².

Remember, that's just in Northern Devon. There are 136 acute non-specialist trusts in England³.

If the figures are analogous to NDHT, we could pay for full bursaries for 24,072 nurses! Simple!

Hang on ... you think a 50% cut in earnings is a bit harsh?

Even after a 50% cut in earnings, the lowest paid of those directors would still be earning £52,500 – that's 2.2 times more than the average staff nurse!

Even after a 50% cut in earnings, those directors would still be earning an average of £99,687 – that's 4.3 times more than the average staff nurse⁴!

Even after a 50% cut in earnings, the highest paid of those directors would still be earning £195,000 – that's 8.4 times more than the average staff nurse!

It's all a matter of priorities ... I'm with the nurses!

(Shall we do the CCGs next?)

¹ Data from Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust, Annual report and accounts April 2015 – March 2016, page 51. Note: These are 2015/16 figures for salary + pension-related benefit and I have used the lower end of the pay band in all calculations – actual figures will be higher.

² The maximum annual bursary is £4,491.

³ Data from NHS Confederation (<http://www.nhsconfed.org/resources/key-statistics-on-the-nhs>).

⁴ The average salary of a staff nurse as of March 2017 is £23,137 (http://www.payscale.com/research/UK/Job=Staff_Nurse/Salary).

Diary Dates

Visit the diary page on the website for more dates, fuller details and maps

Tuesday 30 May 19.00 SOHS Health Hustings with General Election candidates, Barnstaple Parish Church of Saint Peter and Saint Mary Magdalene: Paternoster Row, off High Street., Barnstaple, Devon, EX31 1BH <http://tinyurl.com/y8ut7uad>

Friday 2 June at 19.30 General Election Hustings, St. George's Church, Church Road, Georgeham

Monday 5 June General Election Hustings, The Plough Arts Centre, Torrington 19.30. No charge, but booking seats advisable. www.ploughartscentre.org.uk

Tuesday 6 June ND Health Trust Board meeting 10.00 – 17.00, Chichester Boardroom, North Devon District Hospital

Wednesday 14 June 19.00 SOHS Campaign meeting. Venue to be confirmed

Thursday 6 July 13.00- 17.00, NEW Devon Clinical Commissioning Group meeting venue to be advised

Tuesday 1 August 10.00-17.00, Northern Devon Healthcare Trust Board meeting, Chichester Boardroom, North Devon District Hospital

Don't forget to send us your dates to include in the diary. If people don't know, they won't attend

A Letter from A Supporter

I am writing to you to express my dismay at the running down of medical services for North Devon. In particular the outrageous possibility that the North Devon District Hospital could be closed in the future.

Our family came to North Devon in 1965, my first encounter with the NHS in Devon was in December of that year. When four months pregnant I had to have my appendix removed, so found myself in the Old Infirmary by the river in Barnstaple. Baby and I recovered from the operation and he was born in the maternity unit in Barnstaple in the spring. Through over fifty years of family life we have been cared for by the wonderful people who devote their lives to the NHS. Everyone was so pleased when our new hospital was built. We truly felt that the medical staff who cared for the health of our community deserved the best possible working conditions. My daughter was born in the new maternity unit at the North Devon District Hospital and so was her son, sixteen years ago. When my husband cut his foot with a chain saw. I drove him to A&E-the nurse said 'don't bleed all over our nice, clean floor'. For over fifty years every medical need our family has encountered has been met kindly and competently. Recently I spent several days in hospital (NDDH), due to the

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Another hustings is on Friday 2 June at 19.30 at St. George's Church, Georgeham (see diary listing, oposite).

A further hustings is planned for Bideford, but we do not have any details of this, yet.

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inevitable failures of old age. People retire to our part of the world bringing such things with them. While I was there I found the same treatment I have had in the past, but it was quite clear that the staff were overworked. How much worse will it be if our wonderful hospital is allowed to

die for lack of funds? The Journal Herald carried a story some weeks ago about the millions being spent to turn Venn quarries into a leisure complex, for the rich no doubt, while there is no money for the health of the nation. I really object to this.

The letter has been sent to a number of people in the STP/CCG, and others. It is good to be

reminded of the very real challenges which will be faced by local people if we lose our essential health services. If you have a story to tell, please send it to us and, if suitable, and with permission, we may publish it in a future edition of Redlines. Ed.