



Hospital Focus

Number Two

Abingdon Hospital under review

But still under threat!

"We welcome the new thinking on the proposals to close local hospital beds", says local Lib Dem Cllr, Alison Rooke, "But I'm still sceptical that cost, not patient welfare, will be the deciding factor for the Primary Care Trust".

Unfairly funded

Oxfordshire receives £1,200 per person per year - **£200 less than the national average**. If Oxfordshire received the national average there would be no need for cuts.

We sent a letter to Patricia Hewitt, the Secretary of State for Health, with our petition. We asked:

- 1 With an increasingly aged population, how can it be fair or reasonable to allow the huge disparity in health funding?*
- 2 The Government wants to combat climate change. How can it be sensible long-term planning to allow local hospitals to close and so push people into car use over greater distances? To reach Wallingford Hospital from Abingdon or Wantage by bus takes over 2 hours. The journey is difficult, time-consuming and expensive.*
- 3 How can you be content to see our Primary Care Trust plan to close local hospitals such as Abingdon, clearly in order to meet a budget deficit? If 'Urgent Care Pathways' need improvement, as the PCT says, they will not be improved by closing beds to save money.*
- 4 Will the County Council continue to be capped and have to cut other services to fund more social care as the PCT seeks to transfer the financial burden?*

The Campaign so far

Abingdon Lib Dems have held:

A Public meeting with Dr Evan Harris MP

An open public meeting with Dr Evan Harris MP and local councillors gave local residents a chance to raise their concerns. Over 100 people attended this meeting and some very good points were raised

A Private meeting with Abingdon's GPs

This was attended by GPs from all the Abingdon surgeries who use Abingdon Hospital for referrals. They all agreed that it would be a great detriment to health care provision to lose the hospital.

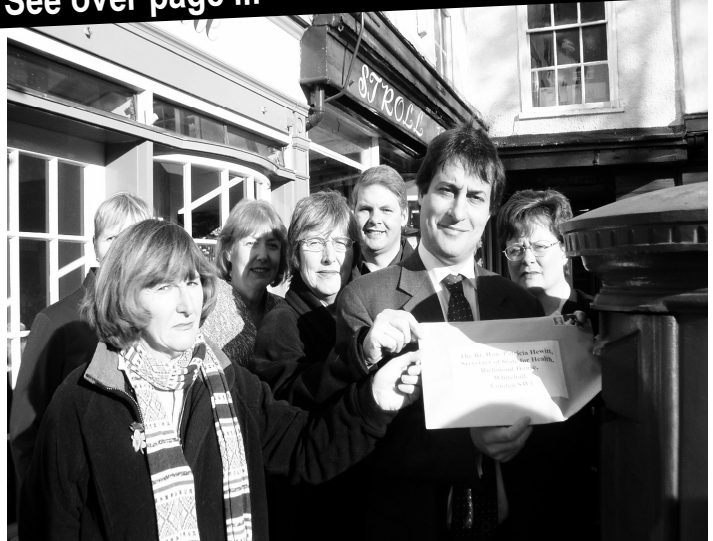
Petition signing sessions in the market place

We set up a table in the market place on Saturday mornings for shoppers in Abingdon to sign the petition to save the hospital. Passers by enthusiastically signed. The petition has been sent to the Health Secretary, Patricia Hewitt.

We have also distributed 2 Hospital Focuses

to let Abingdon residents know what is happening to our health service.

Join our Letter Writing Campaign
See over page ...



Abingdon's MP Dr. Evan Harris with local campaigners posting petition and letter to Patricia Hewitt.

Save Abingdon Hospital Beds You Can Help!

Join Our Letter Writing Campaign

Write to Mark Britnell, the Chief Executive of the new South Central Strategic Health Authority. The final decision rests with him.

Mark Britnell needs to know how vitally important Abingdon Community hospital is to the population it serves.

A barrage of letters will be more effective than another petition.

Mark Britnell,
Chief Executive,
South Central Strategic Health Authority,
Jubilee House,
5510 John Smith Drive,
Oxford Business Park South,
Oxford, OX4 2LH.

Here are some points/questions you could include in your letter:

* Travel to more distant hospitals

The majority of patients in community hospitals are elderly with elderly spouses wishing to visit. Many do not have access to cars. If Abingdon hospital closes then Wallingford could well be the nearest community hospital. As was demonstrated by the Mayors of Abingdon and Wantage, the journey to Wallingford Hospital by bus from each of their home towns took over two hours each way!

* Community care

With the loss of hospital beds there will be a greater reliance on home care. Will the Health Authority be able to ensure that there is a satisfactory level of care in the community in place, before community hospitals are closed? How will they ensure this?

* Provision of carers

More reliance on care in the community will mean a need for many more carers. Given that there is already a shortage of people willing to do this work, how will the authority ensure that the level and standard of home care will meet the increased demand?

You told us...

Visit our local website at: www.oxwablbedems.org.uk

Excellent response to Hospital Focus questionnaire

Thank you all who returned the form, and for the many, generous contributions to the campaign. Just under 300 forms were returned.

- ◆ 90% knew someone who had been cared for in Abingdon's Community Hospital.
- ◆ Of those, 50% said they visited every day, an extra 13 people visited 2 or 3 times a day.
- ◆ We asked how often people could visit if their friend or relative was sent to Wallingford. **12% said they would not be able to visit at all** as they didn't drive and wouldn't be able to manage the bus journey.
- ◆ Around 20% would manage on the bus, but would only be able to visit 3 or 4 times a week.
- ◆ The Primary Care Trust argues that people would prefer to be cared for at home. We asked; *'Would patients prefer to be cared for at home with appropriate care?'* Fewer than half said yes, but only **with appropriate care** and doubted that it could be provided.
 - ◆ Almost all said that if the beds went the Minor Injuries Unit should be retained.