

The Future of Health Care in Saltash

Following the unexpected and sudden closure of St Barnabas Hospital for in-patients and Minor Injuries in December 2016 - which we were told was “temporary” - a public consultation process was started by the NHS to consider the future role of the hospital. This progressed at a snail’s pace and was inconclusive by 2020 when overtaken by the Covid pandemic. All such work stopped at that point.

At the end of lockdown, members of the Patient Participation Groups at our two Practices sought to have the process re-commenced, but no action followed from local NHS managers. We made an appointment to see our local MP, who helpfully suggested that she would back local plans for health care provision if they were supported by GPs. The Practice Managers agreed to follow this up. We also linked up with representatives of the St Barnabas League of Friends.

Simultaneously, several PPG representatives from East and North Cornwall also met with Dr Andrew Sant, newly appointed Managing Director of the local Cornwall NHS “Integrated Care Area”. He was already knowledgeable about the lack of development in Saltash, and offered to visit to hear local opinions. However, in November 2022 it was confirmed that a different NHS consultation would be commenced covering the future of all NHS buildings in the town, i.e. not just St Barnabas, but also the two surgeries and Peninsula House, a modern office building on the Tamar View Industrial Estate.

This was due to start in January, but nothing happened (as usual). We decided to start an online quest for wider local views and support, which drew 200+ contributions, and strengthened our resolve to seek not only the restoration of lost services but also a modernisation of the way health care is provided locally, and to do this in partnership with the Health Centre and Port View Surgery. In addition, Dr Sant was approached for help, and within days he came to Saltash for the morning on 16 February. He was very supportive of our concerns, and we came away convinced he would lead a process to gather community views and find a way forward quickly.

Dr Sant would like to meet local Town and Cornwall Councillors, PPG members, and other community representatives to explain what he has in mind. He would have come to the March meeting of STC, but is unavailable on the date. He has offered to attend on March 15th however.

Recommendation: STC to nominate representatives to meet Dr Sant during the afternoon of Wednesday March 15 (timing tbc, but Council Chamber provisionally booked)

Our two PPGs will organise the meeting, and invite community representatives.

Peter Thistlethwaite
Chair, Port View Surgery PPG

George Muirhead
Chair, Saltash Health Centre PPG