

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN SUDBURY & DISTRICT

SUDBURY WATCH! Report September 2009

I much regret that my paid work in London prevents me from attending this AGM this year. I shall however attend the monthly SW meeting on 23rd September - should you want me to remain your representative on SW next year.

Since my report in June there are few positive developments. Stories about the scandalous cost of providing a car park at the new Suffolk PCT office abound in the local press. It is another example where the competence of the authority must be doubted and we have made out views.

SW continues to take an active part in the PCT Locality Group (charged with planning the new facilities for Sudbury); the West Suffolk Hospital through Peter Clifford's shadow governorship of the still to be confirmed Foundation status hospital board; the regional health authority which is responsible for agreeing the final outline business plan; our own social enterprise company; regular contact with Tim Yeo our MP who holds regular meetings with the PCT chairman; and a host of other contacts and advisers. But the picture now is one of near continual delay in every aspect of the implementation of the Independent Re-Configuration Panel's recommendations. How much this is due to the current economic climate is hard to distinguish. We are currently putting pressure directly on the SHA through various routes to finalise the outline business case which is now in its fourth manifestation. Until this is done the PCT cannot put the development of the new health facilities out to tender.

What we do now know is that the only two sites which will be actively considered for the development are the Walnuttree and Church Field Road sites. Belle Vue is no longer in contention. SW has consistently championed Church Field Road. The incidences of the Sudbury one-way system jamming with traffic are too awful to contemplate with Walnuttree having poor road access. However, this does not mean that a developer could not come forward with yet another site that we have yet to hear about.

From a larger perspective we are much concerned with the political drift of the government in generally reducing the social and medical care of the population. Whether a change in government in 2010 would alter that is unclear but personally I am very doubtful. This will mean that we must all be prepared to involve ourselves more with the democratic system if it is to work to the area's advantage. This was the theme of Andrew Phillips' address at the recent award ceremony where SW chairman Peter Clifford received his well earned recognition for doing just that.

In June I thanked you for your patience. I do understand that that must be wearing thin but we have no alternative but to "stick in there" and try to promote the interests of our people. Interestingly, the IRP, who set the parameters for the development of Sudbury's health Facilities, are due to return to Sudbury on November 25th after 2 years to review "progress". SW will certainly be making its views known!

Richard Titford
September 2009