

Are you passionate about NHS health provision locally?

Sudbury WATCH (Working and Acting Together for Community Health) are seeking new members. If you, or someone you know, might be the right person, please speak to Richard Titford or to Malcolm Snow (01787 374096).

Richard Titford has provided this background information:

SUDBURY WATCH!

It was at a meeting in St Peters in about 2005 chaired by Tim Yeo MP that a decision was made to mount an action committee to fight the proposed closure of The Walnut Tree Hospital. WHAC (Walnuttree Hospital Action Committee) was born. I joined it and assumed a representative role for CTiS&D to which I would report periodically.

The committee numbered several local councillors, health professionals and other energetic people. We organised marches through the town, marches in London to the Dept of Health, constant lobbying of the Primary Care Trust (PCT). We met monthly in the Town Hall and the Town Clerk was our secretary. We had a lot of local support and raised funds for our modest costs.

We lost the battle to save the hospital but remained a force of protest at how the NHS was riding rough shod over the wishes of the people. Discussions over St Leonards, Peoples Park, Acton Lane clinic indicated a deep-seated intent by the NHS to do their own thing.

In about 2010 we made a conscious decision to move our role from poacher to gamekeeper. We changed our name to SUDBURY WATCH! (Working and Acting Together for Community Health). The NHS recognized our changed intent and dealt with us accordingly. It became clear to us that Sudbury would be left with no NHS outlet apart from GPs. We campaigned long and hard for a new Sudbury Community Health Centre to be built on NHS already owned land at Churchfield Road to prevent patients having to travel to the West Suffolk Hospital in BSE for ordinary things like blood tests! The project grew and was the only new build by NHS Suffolk at the time.

The SCHC stands as our great achievement. We continue to pressure the NHS to provide us with what they are contracted to. We do not want special treatment. We meet about quarterly at The Bridge Project. This year we have had our new MP, NHS executives, and the CEO from WSHFT. I am now treasurer. WATCH can do with some new blood. **We need people who are passionate about NHS health provision locally.**