

ADVERTISEMENT

The NHS is in the latter stages of preparing a consultation document which is likely to recommend further dramatic cuts to hospital services in Surrey. The plan is expected to include the closure of all Epsom's acute services and a downgrading of either Guildford or St Peter's in Chertsey, leaving the County with just three major hospitals compared with five at present. NHS managers say privately that a similar exercise in London is likely to lead to the partial closure of St Helier as well, with its acute services moving to St George's in Tooting.

The move comes despite the announcement of 480 job cuts at the Epsom and St Helier Trust, and the planned loss of almost 200 of its 900 beds. A decision has yet to be taken about the future of the maternity unit at Epsom, though if the broader cuts go ahead, it looks unlikely to survive.

Meanwhile NHS officials have given a lukewarm welcome to an offer by former Epsom



ahead of Surrey NHS Closure Plans

Some of the thousands of protestors who joined the rally in defence of the hospital in September

Hospital Chairman Adrian White to take over the hospital and turn it into a charitable trust serving the local community (see overleaf).

In an angry meeting between MPs from Surrey and other parts of the South East and health minister Caroline Flint, Chris Grayling told her that Surrey is in danger of becoming a healthcare desert.

"These proposals will be disastrous for local residents," says Chris. "The NHS in Surrey

seems to be evaporating before our eyes. It beggars belief that we could all spend so much extra in taxes and end up with East Surrey as the only hospital between Tooting and the south coast. It's not as if we are getting improved community services instead. They are being cut as well. It's all completely unacceptable."

For more details about the battle to save Epsom Hospital, please visit www.epsomhospital.com.

FROM THE CLOCK TOWER



NOVEMBER 2006

'From the Clock Tower' is a twice yearly update from your local MP Chris Grayling.

The Epsom and Ewell parliamentary constituency covers the Borough of Epsom and Ewell, Ashted, Nork, Tattenhams and the Preston area of Tadworth.



You can write to

Chris Grayling MP at the *House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA*
graylingc@parliament.uk www.chrisgrayling.net

Can the Sherriff ride to the rescue?

Unexpected bid to keep a hospital in Epsom

Chris Grayling has been joined by other Surrey MPs in welcoming proposals from the former Chairman of Epsom Hospital and current High Sheriff of the County, Adrian White, to take over Epsom Hospital and to run it as a charitable trust led by local doctors and members of the local community. The charity would retain as many NHS services as possible at Epsom, and would also set up specialist units to serve the NHS, charitable and private sectors.

The proposal was also welcomed by Sir Paul Beresford, MP for Mole Valley, and by Ian Taylor, the MP for Esher and

Walton. However the official spokesman for the Epsom and St Helier Trust gave the proposal an initial thumbs down in a

comment to the local press.

“The truth is that I would not have wanted things to get to where they have,” says Chris. “I want Epsom to remain as a full district general hospital within the NHS and will continue to fight for its future. However that is looking an increasingly vain hope, given the plans for cuts at the moment. So any proposal that might give Epsom a brighter future than simply

becoming a cottage hospital must be treated seriously.”

“I have known Adrian White throughout the time I have been MP, and I know how determined he is to save Epsom Hospital. To be willing to put his own money forward in what could be a very radical plan to retain Epsom does him huge credit. I hope that the NHS will work with him to see if the proposal does represent a potential alternative.”



More hospital protests planned

Local NHS services are in danger, so campaign spreads across the county

More hospital protests are planned locally and across Surrey against the planned service changes in the local NHS, following the mass rally in September which brought the town centre to a standstill. The rally was jointly organised by officials from the trade union Unison and by Chris Grayling.

In total, stewards estimated that as many as 5,000 people may have attended the event, and at one point the line of protestors ran virtually from the hospital back into the

centre of the town.

“The fact that a Conservative MP has been working closely with left-wing Union officials to protest against the changes should

give NHS officials food for thought – and should make them realise that this is not a partisan protest, but one that unites our community and others like us elsewhere in the country,” says Chris. Details of further protests will appear on the Epsom Hospital campaign website, at www.epsomhospital.com

in brief

MP leads protests against train seats "rip-out"

Chris has met senior managers at Stagecoach Rail, who run South West Trains, to protest about plans to continue ripping out seats on commuter trains to create extra standing room in the rush hour. "More and more people are standing on their daily commute into work. Given the rises in ticket prices, it's just not good enough," he says.

Fight against Parsons Mead Development

Chris is working with local councillors to try to ensure that the owners of Parsons Mead school sell the site for educational purposes and not redevelopment. "I think the decision to close the school was hugely unfair on parents and pupils. But now the challenge is to ensure that the site doesn't just become another redevelopment area," he says.

Success in rail ticket campaign

Commuters from Ewell West, Ewell East and Stoneleigh are set to see the costs of their tickets fall after a two year campaign by Chris Grayling finally ended in success. The three stations are to be put into the Travelcard zones, making it cheaper and easier to travel from there.

The move followed a series of discussions between Chris, South West Trains, Southern and Transport for London.

"I want to pay tribute to the team at Southern," says Chris, "who are the ones that made this change possible. They are

the ones who persuaded the other organisations to go along with the plan, after what had seemed fruitless discussions lasting a couple of years. As a result, we got the breakthrough that commuters want. Now we have to see if we can get the same improvement for Epsom." Chris plans to hold further discussions about the possibility of including Epsom

in the travelcard zones once the new arrangements are in place.



MP puts pressure on Government agency over missing shop

MP calls for community focal point

Chris has held discussions with officials from English Partnerships, the Government agency handling the sale of the remaining hospital sites in Epsom, to try to speed up the process of getting a small shop built to serve the new communities there.

Plans to build a shop close to Horton Chapel have been in the pipeline for years, but with around half the area to be developed now complete, there still isn't a start date for the project.

"I think it has been a huge mistake to develop the hospital sites with no clear community focus," says Chris. "Putting the shop in place will help start to rectify that. I want the plans to go ahead as quickly as possible."



Outside the Livingstone Park development

AROUND & ABOUT

Visiting local community,
voluntary and charitable groups



Opening the new reception area, funded by the WRVS, at Epsom Hospital.

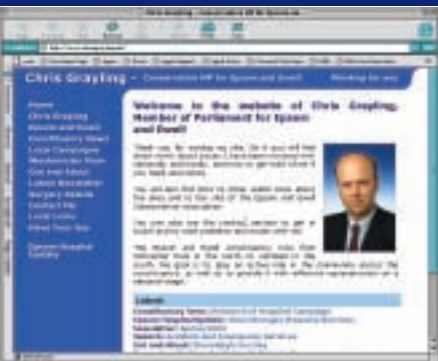
.....
With local volunteers for the Samaritans helping them raise the profile of their work.



.....
In the Stocks – after opening the summer fete at Cuddington Primary School, Chris is persuaded to get wet in the stocks.



Keep updated



Chris's website, www.chrisgrayling.net, contains information about the area, local news and details of how to contact him, as well as electronic copies of this newsletter. You can also leave your views on the special bulletin board.

contact

A visit from your MP

If you would like Chris to attend an event or to visit your organisation, please contact the constituency office at 212 Barnett Wood Lane, Ashted, KT21 2DB or telephone 01372 271036.

Visits to the House of Commons

If you are part of a local school or organisation that would like to arrange a tour of the House of Commons, please contact Chris's office at Westminster. You can ring the office on 020 7219 8194 or write to Chris at the House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA.

Surgeries

Chris holds surgeries every fortnight on a Friday afternoon. The venues rotate between the constituency office in Ashted, the Epsom Conservative Club, Stoneleigh Library and Tattenham Corner Library. For details of the next surgery date and to book an appointment, please ring the constituency office on 01372 271036.

FROM THE
Clock Tower

