

Report of the Defend Whittington Hospital Coalition meeting

Thursday, 7 January 2010 at The Whittington Community Centre,
Yerbury Road, N19

Attending: Many local residents from across Islington, Camden and Haringey, including representatives of Highgate Society, Islington Greens, Liberal Democrats, Conservatives, Labour, St George's Church, Better Archway Forum and others. Also in attendance Jeremy Corbyn MP.

Apologies: Jan Pollack, Janet Shapiro, Kathleen Greaves, David Wilson, Frank Jacobs, Gary Heather, Adam Lambert, Viv Whittingham, Apala Chowdhury.

Minutes of last meeting read and approved, with thanks to Sue for doing them.

Officers: The meeting was asked for volunteers to fill several posts. On a show of hands the following were elected:

Joint chair with Shirley Franklin: Zozi Goodman

Joint secretaries: Dave Plummer and Katy Gold

Press officers: Apala Chowdhury, Zozi Goodman, with help from David Wilson probably forthcoming

Treasurer: Sue Secher had volunteered at the previous meeting but was not able to attend this evening's meeting.

Link to coordinate groups affiliated to campaign: Sarah Mills

Points discussed:

- 1.** Unison offered to donate £10,000 to the campaign, which was accepted with great thanks. People should still be encouraged to donate if they wished; at this stage it is unclear how long the campaign will have to run and how much money will be needed.
- 2.** Jeremy Corbyn MP confirmed that there would be another public meeting with Rachel Tyndall, NHS, on Monday 25 January at Archway Methodist Hall at 7.00. She will answer the questions put to her at the previous public meeting. It was agreed that it was a good time for the campaign to publicise the DWHC.
- 3.** Petitions: the Whittington Community Centre had kindly offered to be a place where people can drop off signed petitions and collect new ones. There was some discussion about various issues such as the title of the petition, its use, when it should be handed in and to who etc. Jeremy Corbyn kindly offered to arrange for the Department of Health to

receive it if the campaign would like to. There was a brief discussion about where else to get signatures from the public, with agreement to continue to have tables at Nag's Head and also outside the Whittington (on the public area) or at Archway.

- 4.** Website: discussion about setting up a website and petition in addition to those already set up by the two main political parties. Dave Plummer volunteered to set one up. There was some discussion about linking our petition to those of the political parties, unresolved whether to do this or not.
- 5.** Leaflets: There was some discussion around printing leaflets, the cost of which would not be a problem thanks to Unison's donation. Leaflets can have the web address and dates of next meetings on them.
- 6.** March: This was confirmed as taking place on 27 February from 12.00 from Highbury Fields to Whittington Hospital.
- 7.** Islington Council's Scrutiny Committee: Tracy Ishmail, a local councillor, advised that the council has a Health and Welfare committee that is looking at health issues in Islington. Rachel Tyndall was due to speak at the committee meeting tonight, but it had been cancelled due to the snow. This is very helpful as it means that when she does speak at the next meeting the DWHC can be there, both outside with a demonstration and inside, as these meetings are public. With consent from the councillors on the committee questions can also be put to Rachel Tyndall directly. Scrutiny committees are important as the councillors on them have the power to object to proposals and refer the matter to the Secretary of State. This can be done in each borough affected, who will all have Scrutiny committee meetings. Individuals can also write to each councillor on the committee before the meeting to show how concerned they are.
- 8.** Money: some discussion took place around the cost of hiring the Whittington community centre - £30 for an evening meeting - and the cost of printing up meetings. It is also important for people who collect money on the street to account for the money to the treasurer. A bank account is needed to be set up, with officials of the committee as signatories on the account.
- 9.** Groups: The campaign needs to go out and contact as many groups as possible to get them to join the campaign both as a group and also as individuals. Sarah Mills offered to coordinate this. It needs to be determined how far geographically this needs to extend - local council wards are useful for this purpose. There needs to be a list of types of groups that need contacting, for example pensioners, patients, trade unions, residents, disability, charities, church

and other faith groups, schools, nurseries, colleges. Libraries, community centres and doctors surgeries are ideal places for petitions.

- 10.** Issues: There was some discussion about the need to address the issues as well as the petition/campaigning. It was agreed that more thought was needed on this, perhaps a sub-group of those interested could meet to discuss this further.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the DWHC will take place on 21 January at 7.00pm. It was agreed that for the time being the meeting will take place fortnightly.