

Minutes of Meeting Monday 3rd September 2012

The meeting opened at 1930 with 33 members present. The Chair welcomed members, Sue Bungey, Cllrs. Colin Bungey, Fred Neil and Peter Hall

1. Apologies were received from Mr & Mrs Chester, Cllr Gillian Geary, Sue Newman and Lynne Kerrigan.
2. The meeting agreed that the monthly meeting held on Monday 10th June were an accurate record.
3. Matters Arising:
 - a. Rowing Club was still pursuing Rate Relief.
 - b. No progress on development of old medical centre in Saxon Square. It was reported that Travelodge are struggling financially.
 - c. Supermarket planning applications. It was reported that all three were being brought back for consideration in October 2012. Councillors were not clear whether this would also include consideration of the police station / law court site.
 - d. The Conservation Trust is still pursuing the issue of the new vicarage proposals and also the wall in the Bank car park.
 - e. The Kings Priory Suite is reported as not in operation at present (although there was also a contradictory report that it had hosted a wedding recently). Councillor Hall reported that the hotel was not renewing its planning application. The CCA therefore needs to gain clarity on what is happening.
4. The Chair introduced Sue Bungey, Public Governor for Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospitals who told members that a merger with Poole Hospital was being considered. The final decision would be taken by the Office of Fair Trading and the Competition Commission and if agreed would be effective from July 2013. Sue and other governors are hopeful that it will go ahead. Any changes in services (none planned currently) would need to go to public consultation.

Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospitals became a foundation trust in 2005 and has a membership of about 14,000 including public and staff. Members are informed of changes via newsletters and are able to vote for (or even become) governors. Members can also attend trust information sessions, and leaflets about these were provided to CCA members. The governors meet five times a year. Meetings are open to the public. The governors are a link between the public and the Trust Board and their job is to challenge the Board. Members will receive ballot papers for the governors of the new merged trust, even though it is not yet agreed, because everything will have to be in place if it is. Forms for CCA members to apply for membership of the trust were provided. Existing members do not automatically get transferred to the new trust but there is a space on the application form for new members to indicate that they wished to do this.

There are open meetings to view and discuss proposals for the development of the Christchurch Hospital site on Friday 7th September 1400-1900 and Saturday 8th September 0900-1200 at the hospital and CCA members were encouraged to attend. The proposals include a new GP surgery, a pharmacy, a nursing home and key worker housing.

There was then an opportunity for members to ask Sue questions.

Question: are they planning to keep pathology at Christchurch?

Answer: there are no plans at the moment to move this and any would have to go to consultation but GPs should be providing blood taking services and there is a cost implication of the hospital continuing to provide these.

Question: it is rumoured that Poole Hospital needs financial support so will a lot of the money go to Poole?

Answer: Poole is now out of administration. It is up to the governors to make sure services are not scaled down. The point of the merger is to continue to provide services but there may need to be specialisation within the new trust to be able to do this.

Question: did Poole have to cut services to get out of administration?

Answer: primarily back office staff and management rather than clinical services.

Question: will the service we get be appropriate to the needs of our aging community?

Answer: no services will change without consultation.

Question: are the joint residents associations content with the merger?

Answer: governors had been to individual residents associations who appear to support the process. The chair asked for a vote of CCA members about whether they supported the merger and the result of this was 17 (of 33) did so, with reservations.

Question: what will happen to the front of Christchurch Hospital?

Answer: The buildings are no longer suitable (or legal) for health care provision. Any change would have to go through Christchurch Borough Council planning process. The green space is a conservation area and is protected. Changes to the buildings will be part of the plans on view on 7th and 8th September. Any comments on these need to go to the Borough Planning Committee.

The Chair thanked Sue for her contribution and agreed that the CCA should discuss this further at the next meeting on Monday 1st October. There was also a need to check when the Borough planning meeting would take place so that the opportunity to comment or object was not missed.

5. The Chair read out the "Echo" article on the suggested move of Council officers for the benefit of those who had not seen it and followed this by an excerpt from Ray Nottage's weblog. Councillors reported to the meeting that the suggestions had not been discussed at full council and the email that triggered the "Echo" story was the first they had heard about them as well. The Chair reported that no one from Chief Executive's office had been available to come to the meeting but had agreed to come to the next meeting.

The meeting agreed that, while there was a benefit from reducing the office costs of the council officers, this needed to be in a way that was acceptable to Christchurch citizens, did not dilute the services they received or had access to and was not a precursor to merger of the councils. The "one-stop shop" would not provide a satisfactory level of access as citizens needed to be able to meet and talk with the officers, not generalists nor just by phone or electronically.

Proposals for cost reduction that maintained level and accessibility of services were:

- a) Remain in Civic offices but rationalise space use and let one or two floors.
- b) Move to existing lower cost buildings within the town (some sites discussed).
- c) Move to a new lower cost building within the town.

6. Following discussion of item (5) it was agreed that a proposal for joint working be taken to the next meeting of the Joint Residents' Associations.

The meeting closed at 2110 with agreement to defer items (7) Boat House Noise and (8) Correspondence to future meetings. The next meeting is Monday 1st October 2012, 1930 in Druitt Hall.