

**TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**TONBRIDGE FORUM**

**Monday, 10th September, 2012**

**Present:** Cllr O C Baldock (Chairman), Cllr N J Heslop (Vice-Chairman), Cllr A W Allison, Cllr Ms J A Atkinson, Cllr P F Bolt and Cllr Ms V M C Branson.

Councillors Mrs Murray and Rhodes were also in attendance pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

Members of the Forum: Kent County Councillor Miss Hohler, Kent Police, Society of Friends, St John Ambulance, Tonbridge Allotments and Gardens Association, Tonbridge Art Group, Tonbridge Citizens Advice Bureau, Tonbridge Civic Society, Tonbridge District Scout Council, Tonbridge Historical Society, Tonbridge Line Commuters, Tonbridge Music Club, Tonbridge Rotary Club, Tonbridge Theatre and Arts Club, University of the Third Age and the Women's Institute.

Other organisations present: Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust, Kent and Medway NHS and West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group.

Apologies for absence were received from Borough Councillors Mrs Anderson, Mrs M Heslop, Lancaster, Ms Spence and Trice and The Skinners Company, Russet Homes, The Bridge Trust and the Kent Community Health NHS Trust.

**ACTION**  
**BY**

**PART 1 - PUBLIC**

**TF**  
**12/011**

**MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the Forum held on 6 February 2012 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**TF**  
**12/012**

**UPDATE ON ANY ACTION IDENTIFIED IN THE LAST MINUTES.**

The Chairman referred to Minute number TF 12/007 (Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council Update) which set out a range of summer events celebrating the Diamond Jubilee and the London Olympic Games funded from the Community Enhancement Fund.

**ACTION**

The contribution of local community groups, organisations and volunteers to these events was publicly recognised. Their participation at the Olympic Torch 'splinter' event with Dame Kelly Holmes at Tonbridge Castle was greatly appreciated, especially as this had been arranged at extremely short notice.

**TF  
12/013**

## **KENT COUNTY COUNCIL SERVICES UPDATE**

The Kent County Council Community Engagement Officer (Anne Charman) reported that an eight week consultation on the County Council's budget proposals for 2013/14 was launched on Thursday 6 September. In the document 'Framing our Budget' Kent County Council outlined how it planned to freeze council tax whilst still delivering excellent services.

The consultation finished on Thursday 1 November 2012 and comments were invited. A copy of the document and more information was available from:

[www.kent.gov.uk](http://www.kent.gov.uk) or by contacting James Harman on [james.harman@kent.gov.uk](mailto:james.harman@kent.gov.uk)

Following a ten week public consultation on household waste centres, a number of small changes would be implemented from 1 October 2012. These included a small charge for asbestos and types at specified sites only. It was noted that North Farm was the closest to Tonbridge.

Particular reference was made to an initiative aimed at doubling the number of apprentices in the County called Kent Jobs for Young People. Local employers were encouraged to participate in the scheme.

Kent County Council Member Grants were available and applications for projects under the Small Community Capital Grant and Local Schemes Grants were welcomed. The deadline for applications was Friday 26 October 2012 and community groups were encouraged to apply for funding.

The Chairman thanked Anne Charman for her contribution and questions were invited and set out below.

The Society of Friends outlined problems with recycling electrical goods and getting these collected locally, especially for those residents who could not travel to North Farm. The temptation would be to put these items into general refuse.

The Chief Environmental Health Officer from the Borough Council offered to pass this concern to the Head of Street Scene and Waste Management for a response.

On behalf of a local resident, a Borough Councillor outlined difficulties associated with the new process for issuing and renewal of Blue Badges. Further details would be provided to Kent County Council outside the meeting.

The Kent County Council Services Update would be circulated with the Minutes and available to view on the website.

**TF  
12/014**

#### **KENT POLICE UPDATE**

The Chairman introduced Inspector John Phillips of Kent Police, who had taken over responsibility for Tonbridge town centre from Inspector Allen in April 2012, and invited him to give a brief summary of local policing issues.

The changes in the Kent Police structure, service delivery model and the significant financial pressures were outlined. Reference was made to the proposed closures of stations in East and West Malling. However, Inspector Phillips reassured Members that the local position was robust and there would be no visible changes anticipated for Tonbridge town centre.

It was reported that during the Olympic Games Kent Police had provided support to the Metropolitan force, under a mutual aid commitment, but had managed to maintain an effective policing resource locally.

Crime and incidents surrounding retail and the night time economy were key priorities for Kent Police, particularly as the latter was a cause of aggravation for local residents. Responses to this type of crime included a visible police presence in the High Street, the Shop Safe initiative, preventative arrests and dealing robustly with problems at an early stage before they escalated.

The approach to tackling anti-social behaviour was one of partnership with the Borough Council and registered social landlords, with a strong and pro-active stance adopted.

In response to a question raised from the floor the options for tackling the increase in metal theft were outlined. It was explained that poorly drafted legislation surrounding the Scrap Metal Act was not helpful in addressing the problem. The most effective response was targeting the individuals

and vehicles that moved the items around.

The Chairman thanked Inspector Phillips for his contribution to the meeting.

**TF  
12/015**

## **NHS HEALTH NETWORK**

The West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group (Caroline Dyer) set out the significant changes in the NHS. These included the closure of Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) as the lead commissioning organisations of health services and the introduction of Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs).

It was reported that CCGs were clinically led organisations made up of local GP practices who would have a say in what healthcare services were commissioned locally. There would be 12 GP groups involved in the local West Kent CCG covering Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells, Weald of Kent, Sevenoaks and Maidstone, with a budget of approximately £450M. In addition, there would be patient involvement and currently there was a vacancy for a patient representative and candidates were invited. A governance framework to support the constitution of the West Kent CCG would be circulated for information.

There was a recognised need to ensure that services addressed local needs appropriately. This was a challenging situation and the West Kent CCG was looking at how to prevent longer term health conditions developing. It was noted that education was a useful tool in the prevention strategy.

Members asked about the future working relationship between the new Pembury and the Cottage Hospitals and were advised that the former would deal with acute treatment, as would Maidstone, whilst the latter would provide less intrusive treatment and nursing. The Cottage Hospital also provided an out of hours service. A recent problem concerning this service was outlined and it was suggested that this was followed up with the Director at the Pembury Hospital.

The Patient Experience and Engagement Manager (Natasha Wright) then gave a presentation on the West Kent NHS Health Network. It was explained that the Network was a way to ensure inclusion of patients, carers, the public, communities of interest and geography, health and wellbeing boards and local authorities. Membership was open to local people and organisations who wished to receive regular information about developments to local

NHS services and who wanted to become more involved in helping shape future services.

Members of the Forum were encouraged to sign up to involvement with the Health Network as it provided an opportunity to share views on local health care services. An overview of patient participation events was provided.

Particular reference was made to a current joint consultation into mental health services and Members were invited to comment before the deadline of 26 October 2012. It was reported that not everyone in Kent and Medway had access to an equally good hospital service and the proposals set out in the consultation aimed to improve patients' experience of mental health crisis care.

Documents could be viewed at:

<http://www.kmpt.nhs.uk/acute-mental-health-review>

Inspector Phillips commented that the experience of Kent Police in dealing with vulnerable persons illustrated a lack of provision of mental health support. In response to this concern, it was anticipated that in future patients would receive more help in the home. It was recognised that there were significant gaps in mental health provision and Kent Police were encouraged to raise their concerns under the current consultation process.

The Chairman thanked both speakers for their contributions to the meeting and presentations would be circulated with the Minutes and available to view on the website.

**TF  
12/016**

### **ACUTE HEALTH SERVICES UPDATE**

Members received a presentation from the Director of Corporate Affairs (Mr Terry Coode) and the Transport Co-ordinator (Mr Alan Hewett) which explained that the Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust provided acute services from two main clinical sites at Maidstone Hospital and the new Tunbridge Wells Hospital at Pembury, with an additional 12 beds at Tonbridge Cottage Hospital.

Cancer services were also provided at the Kent Oncology Centre, Maidstone Hospital; whilst emergency care and Women and Children Services were provided at the Tunbridge Wells Hospital.

The patient benefits of the new hospital were outlined and included an improvement in mortality rates, greater

maternity choice and enhanced facilities for patients.

It was explained that patient feedback was vital to the Trust and over 4,000 real time surveys had demonstrated that 90% of patients were happy with their hospital experience.

Particular reference was made to transport provision and the Trust's funding contribution towards developing bus services, supporting voluntary car services, car park concessions and providing financial help for patients in receipt of benefits.

Members expressed frustration at the poor advertising of bus timetables and services to the Tunbridge Wells Hospital feeling that patients should be encouraged to use them. In response, Mr Hewett explained that the marketing of bus services was the responsibility of Kent County Council and due to the uncertainty surrounding a range of issues these had not been widely promoted. However, these issues had been resolved and it was expected that bus services would now be better publicised.

In addition, Members asked what the Trust's funding contribution to voluntary organisations supported. It was hoped that this money would assist in longer term improvements towards organisations becoming more efficient and better able to provide services for patients.

The Chairman thanked Mr Coode and Mr Hewett for their contribution to the meeting and copies of the presentation would be circulated with the Minutes and available on the website.

**TF  
12/017**

## **LOCAL HEALTH PROJECTS**

The Chief Environmental Health Officer set out the local health projects currently undertaken by Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council and funded by the West Kent Primary Care Trust. It was hoped that this funding source would continue following the ongoing NHS reforms. However, this was not guaranteed and could have implications for the future provision of these projects.

The aims of the Kent Health Inequalities Strategy (Mind the Gap) were explained and the key focus of the Inequalities Action Plan were outlined.

The three key areas of the delivery programme as prescribed by the PCT were:

- Healthy living centre initiatives
- Healthy weight
- Mental health and well being and community led programmes.

The local health improvement projects and main activities sitting under this criteria included Virtual Healthy Living Centres, community health and well being days, cook and eat sessions, healthy walks, adult weight management, family weight management, mental health and community days, smoking referrals, diet and exercise and projects to tackle underage drinking in public places.

Particular reference was made to the next Workplace health and well being event scheduled for 9 October 2012 at the Morley Road Industrial Estate.

Members welcomed the range of activities being undertaken by the Borough Council.

The contribution of the Chief Environmental Health Officer to the meeting was appreciated and copies of the presentation would be circulated with the Minutes and available on the website.

The meeting ended at 2125 hours