



PRESS RELEASE

Horton services saved

The Independent Reconfiguration Panel (IRP) published their report into threatened services at the Horton hospital on Thursday 20 March. In an unprecedented move by the IRP they rejected all of the proposals put forward by the Oxford Radcliffe Trust (ORT).

With the landmark statement *The IRP does not support the Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals (ORH) NHS Trust's proposals to reconfigure services in paediatrics, obstetrics, gynaecology and the special care baby unit (SCBU) at Horton Hospital* the long wait by campaigners was over.

Local radio stations interrupted their programmes with newsflashes, both ITV and BBC early evening bulletins led with extensive Horton packages and the BBC Radio Oxford Bill Heine show was broadcast live from Banbury.

Campaign chairman, George Parish, declared that it was the best day of his life. "We have all given so much and at times the challenge seemed insurmountable" he said. "But at the end of the day perseverance and common sense won through. This really is a victory for David over Goliath and lives will be saved as a result."

ends

23 March 2008

Footnote: At a meeting organised by local MP, Tony Baldry, to discuss the future of the Horton, members of the Save the Horton campaign have already pledged their support to a combined North Oxfordshire Stakeholder group.

For more details contact Chairman: Cllr George Parish, 26 Glamis Place, Banbury OX16 OHZ tel: 0781 5995090 OR
Roseanne Edwards: 07765 255415 (Charlotte Bird is on holiday)

www.keepthehortongeneral.org



PRESS RELEASE

Flawed journey times undermine ORT's case

The investigation by the Independent Reconfiguration Panel (IRP) into the Oxford Radcliffe Trust's (ORT) proposals for downgrading the Horton Hospital will be completed by the end of this week.

One of the last groups to be interviewed comprises local MPs Tony Baldry, Tim Boswell, John Maples and Rt Hon David Cameron.

Amongst the issues that the group will undoubtedly incorporate into their presentation is the underestimated ambulance timings, upon which the ORT has based its entire supposition. The actual timings, uncovered by Save the Horton campaigners, as opposed to those offered by the ORT, are attached to this press release.

"Anyone who has followed this campaign will know the ambulance journey times are pivotal to the acceptance of the proposals" said campaign Chairman, George Parish. "We have proved that the numbers just don't add up. If something as fundamental as this has been fudged exactly how trustworthy is the body that calls itself the Oxford Radcliffe Trust?"

NB If you would like additional in depth analysis of ambulance timings please contact Kate Spencer on 01295 711510

ends

28 January 2008

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www.keepthehortongeneral.org



PRESS RELEASE

The moment of truth?

The outcome of the investigation by the Independent Reconfiguration Panel (IRP) into the downgrading of services at the Horton General Hospital, proposed by the Oxford Radcliffe Trust (ORT), will be in the public domain within weeks.

The IRP are holding their last set of meetings with interested parties and return to London at the end of January to prepare their report for Alan Johnson, Secretary of State for Health.

Numerous people have made representations to the Panel including MPs and Council members, GPs, local Headteachers, journalists, members of the ethnic communities and community services as well as the Save the Horton Campaign group.

The Panel commented that the number of letters and emails they have received supporting the Horton far outweighs any other hospital they have been asked to investigate.

“Feelings are running very high in Banbury” said campaign Chairman, George Parish. “We have been into local schools and addressed their assemblies; we have distributed 84,000 leaflets to local households; we have sent 1,000 letters to local businesses and we have liaised with the extensive Pakistani and Polish communities in the area.”

“We have left no stone unturned” he added, “something that the Oxford Radcliffe Trust, for some reason, has not considered a priority.”

Mr Parish urged anyone who has not yet written to the IRP to send their letter before the end of January (address on the campaign’s website.)

ends

14 January 2008

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PRESS RELEASE

Save the Horton campaigners meet IRP

On Thursday 6 December five members of the Save the Horton campaign met representatives of the Independent Reconfiguration Panel in Banbury.

Retired consultant, Peter Fisher, invited the panel to look at the medical background to the unacceptable threats currently facing the Horton Hospital. He referred to the findings of Lord Darzi and the Tooke Report, either of which could herald a change in national policy and secure the future of the Horton. He also questioned the Government's attitude towards the European Working Time Directive.

New mum, Kate Spencer, told the panel about her experiences as 'the patient' in an ambulance run organised by the campaign. Comparing the current and proposed obstetric services, in which women in life threatening situations will experience delays of up to an hour in treatment, Kate said "In other circumstances, this would be described as torture."

John Rakestraw, 'the paramedic's mate' during the ambulance run, graphically described the journey and the implications for people in outlying villages in the Banbury area in terms of actual transfer times (rather than those originally put forward by the ORT.)

Campaign chairman, George Parish, concluded the campaign's submission by inviting the panel to the Sunshine Centre to meet those disadvantaged families that will be hardest hit by the ORT's proposals for their local hospital. He reiterated that "nobody we have contact with supports the proposed changes."

Ends

8 December 2007

For more details contact Chairman: Cllr George Parish, 26 Glamis Place, Banbury OX16 OHZ tel: 0781 5995090

www.keepthehortongeneral.org



PRESS RELEASE

Run for your life! Part 2

The ambulance run, organised by the Save the Horton campaign, departed the Horton Hospital in Banbury at 08.25 this morning. Kate Spencer, recently delivered mum, was the 'patient' on board. The ambulance, provided by the St John Ambulance, arrived at the John Radcliffe Hospital one hour and five minutes later.

Although it was not under a 'blue light', the ambulance driver was able to estimate the time it would have taken if the run had been for real. Driver, Craig, calculated the journey would have taken 35/40 minutes – somewhat longer than the Oxford Radcliffe Trust's assertions that journey times are achievable within 25 minutes.

- Weather conditions were absolutely perfect. Clear visibility, dry roads, no climatic impediments whatsoever!
- No accidents en route
- No road works en route
- Journey ended at the far perimeter of the JR site
- Journey did not take account of any other details apart from the time taken to travel from Banbury to Oxford (ie requisitioning ambulance, loading patient, unloading/stabilising at the JR)

Kate Spencer, interviewed on the BBC Oxford Bill Heine Show, received support from an unexpected quarter. An oncology consultant, who was in the studio, concurred with Kate's report that the journey between the two hospitals always took over an hour.

Ends

22 November 2007

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PRESS RELEASE

Run for your life!

Accompanied by a cameraman from ITV, Save the Horton campaigners will travel in an ambulance provided by the St John's Ambulance Brigade from the Horton Hospital to the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford. The journey will commence at 08.20am on Thursday 22nd October.

The object of the exercise is to disprove the Oxford Radcliffe Trust's assertions that this journey should take 25 minutes.

Kate Spencer, who lives in a village north of Banbury, recently gave birth to a healthy daughter within 40 minutes of leaving home. She will be our 'patient' tomorrow.

Campaigners have continually contested that the trip to Oxford from Banbury, for a mother in the advanced stages of labour requiring an emergency caesarean, will result in deaths to babies and mothers.

George Parish, campaign chairman, commented "the IRP are currently investigating the situation at the Horton on behalf of Alan Johnson. They need to be aware that a transfer from the Horton to the JR will take longer than the Trust's estimation. It could be the difference between life and death."

ends

21 November 2007

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PRESS RELEASE

Labour councillor loses faith in party policies

Following a debate on the future of District General Hospitals, attended by 13 MPs last Wednesday, George Parish believes that local Labour councillors are being put in an untenable position.

Accompanied by other members of the Save the Horton Campaign, chairman George Parish, travelled to Westminster last week to attend the debate, organised by local MP Tony Baldry.

11 Tory MPs representing constituencies from rural south Cornwall to industrial Lancashire, along with Independent MP Dr Richard Taylor, bombarded the only Labour MP to attend the meeting, Junior Health Minister Ann Keen, with a vast catalogue of damning facts and figures.

“I am incredulous that my own party can be so blind to what is happening at grass roots level” said Councillor Parish. “Ann Keen made no effort to assuage the immense anxieties expressed by the MPs on behalf of their constituents” he continued. “For her to tell us *Sometimes we have to encourage our peer group to accept change* is about as helpful as Marie Antoinette recommending the poor eat cake!”

ends

15 October 2007

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PRESS RELEASE

A&E under threat - Yes or No? Now or later?

Further to an interview with Sir William Stubbs on Tuesday's Today programme and an item on last night's Channel 4 News, the Keep the Horton General campaign would like to put the record straight about the threatened services at the Banbury hospital.

We run a cross party campaign but in this instance would like to endorse what David Cameron has been lambasted for – the hospitals whose A&E departments have been earmarked for downgrading.

Whilst supporting James Naughty's extraordinary suggestion that staff in A&E departments (not under threat) should have our sympathy, Sir William did not mention the paediatric, maternity and gynaecology staff who live constantly under the shadow of their jobs being axed.

Months ago, committee member and retired consultant, Peter Fisher reported that he had attended a meeting with Professor Sir George Alberti who had been invited as adviser by the Oxford Radcliffe Trust. The professor, whilst stating that on that occasion he had come specifically to advise on paediatric and maternity services, said that he was expecting to be invited back to look at all other services. The Trust has had several opportunities to refute this but has chosen not to do so.

Thus whichever may be the services under immediate threat, there can be no confidence that any other is secure.

ends

23 August 2007

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PRESS RELEASE

Proposed cuts are crystal clear at the Horton

Despite David Cameron's alleged misrepresentation of figures regarding General Hospitals the fact remains that the Horton General, the hospital that provides services for Mr Cameron's constituents, is facing drastic cuts to its children's and maternity services.

The Keep the Horton General campaign has campaigned for over 18 months to retain services at the Horton and is delighted that the hospital was featured on the Today programme this morning.

A cross party committee, spearheaded by Tory MP Tony Baldry and local Labour councillor George Parish, have worked tirelessly to raise the profile of the Horton Hospital.

Numerous appearances on television bulletins and in the press assured the Horton campaign a top ten position on the 'hot spot map' as detailed by Patricia Hewitt.

The campaign is committed to challenging the Oxford Radcliffe Trust all the way and having achieved a David and Goliath victory at the Scrutiny Committee meeting, held at local council offices in July, has pledged to local supporters that they will fight for local services to the end. On numerous occasions local residents have turned out in their thousands to make their feelings known.

Committee chairman George Parish and retired Horton consultant Peter Fisher are seasoned campaigners and are available for comment on behalf of the Horton. Prior to yesterday's soundbyte that "*the death risk rises with each mile travelled*" they have been echoing the views of local GPs that "the proposals (for transferring mothers in advanced labour and seriously ill children) to Oxford are unsafe and inhumane."

ends

22 August 2007

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PRESS RELEASE

Despite the judgement on 12 July by the Scrutiny Committee to refer the Oxford Radcliffe Trust's proposals for the Horton General Hospital to the Secretary of State, the Trust is adamant that their proposals are the only way forward and voted unanimously for the changes when they met on 26 July.

Meanwhile supporters of the Horton held a 24 hour vigil at St Mary's Church in Banbury from 9 am Wednesday 25 July until members of the KTHG committee arrived at the Trust's meeting in Oxford at 10 am. 50 people stayed overnight in the church and over 800 people signed a petition in support of the hospital and its current services. Andrew Lansley, Shadow Health Minister, addressed the vigil and launched a nationwide campaign against the downgrading of General Hospitals.

"For Andrew Lansley to launch his campaign in Banbury is a massive vote of confidence in all those concerned with retaining services at the Horton General Hospital" commented campaign chairman George Parish. "We have huge commitment as a group and with the tireless support of local MP Tony Baldry we have also achieved national recognition. Our job is not done until we know that the future of the Horton General Hospital is assured."

ends

31 July 2007

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PRESS RELEASE

24 hours to Save the Horton

Following last week's judgement by the Scrutiny Committee to refer the Oxford Radcliffe Trust's proposals for the Horton General Hospital to the Secretary of State, local MP and staunch Horton supporter, Tony Baldry has planned a 24 hour event to coincide with the Trust's all important decision making meeting on 26 July.

From 9am on Wednesday 25 July until members of the Keep the Horton General committee board their coach to attend the Trust's meeting in Oxford on 26 July, there will be a vigil in St Mary's Church, Banbury.

Tony Baldry will address the Horton campaign supporters who have congregated at St Mary's 8pm on Wednesday evening. Bolstered by a pledge by local Central News to cover the vigil and the progress of the delegation to the Trust Headquarters for the all important meeting in Oxford, Tony said "We will maintain the pressure that we have exerted over the last 18 months. I urge you to give a big cheer for the Keep the Horton General committee as they go to Oxford to deliver the message from Banbury

"Hands off the Horton"

ends

18 July 2007

For more details contact Chairman: Cllr George Parish, 26 Glamis Place, Banbury OX16 OHZ tel: 0781 5995090



PRESS RELEASE

A landmark day for the campaigners

Months of hard work and concentrated effort have been rewarded today for the Keep the Horton General campaign.

The Scrutiny Committee who sat all day at the Banbury based Cherwell District Council offices, listening to evidence and reports from all the Stakeholder Groups, voted unanimously to refer the Oxford Radcliffe Trust's proposals for the Horton Hospital to the Secretary of State.

Two midwives from the Horton made a moving representation to the Committee, quoting facts and figures for last month at the Horton Maternity Unit – the busiest month on record.

Concerns over the proposed Ambulatory service, which is a key component of the Trust's proposals, and the question of the European Working Directive and Modernising Medical Careers strategies taking precedence over patient care, undoubtedly concerned the Committee.

Campaign chairman, George Parish, applauded the Scrutiny Committee for their measured approach to the hearing and praised the commitment shown by all of those who spoke on behalf of the Horton General Hospital. "This is a significant step for our campaign" said George as he left the meeting, elated by the decision which will ensure that the Westminster hierarchy is in no doubt that our message is:

"Hands off the Horton"

ends

12 July 2007

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www.keepthehortongeneral.org



PRESS RELEASE

Our Future Our Hospital

The Keep the Horton General campaign, together with local MP Tony Baldry, are organising various peaceful protests ahead of the ORT's crucial decision about the Horton hospital's future on 26 July.

Local school children, accompanied by their parents, are being encouraged to make their voices heard (from 08.30 to 10 am) as members of the Oxfordshire County Council Scrutiny Committee meet on Thursday 12 July, in the Cherwell District Council Chamber, at 10 am.

Children's services at the Horton hospital are under threat by the ORT's draconian proposals. Headmaster of local Sibford School, Michael Goodwin, representing the views of his pupils – some of them boarders - said *"They are conscious that the proximity of the Horton has made a real difference to them on occasions when they have been unwell in the night, or had to attend A&E after a sporting injury. They do not relish a much longer journey to Oxford, and as the Head who might sometimes have the responsibility of staying at their bed side in the small hours of the morning, I wholeheartedly support the campaign to Keep 'Hands of the Horton'.*

Plans for a significant demonstration on 26 July, the day the Trust make its decision, are advanced and will be released nearer the time.

ends

2 July 2007

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PRESS RELEASE

David Cameron is one of many high profile supporters of the Horton General hospital.

Quoted in this week's Banbury Guardian, where the entire front page is taken up with a report into the flawed consultation process that undermines the desperate battle by local people to maintain services, Mr Cameron says "It is absolutely vital that patients and staff have faith in the consultation process. Any notion that a downgrading of the Horton will go ahead regardless undermines this faith and the whole point of consultation."

Following a briefing at the Horton on Monday, where staff were left in no doubt that the Oxford Radcliffe Trust's proposals to downgrade the Hospital were a "done deal", local MP Tony Baldry commented "If the Trust closes its eyes and ears on new options before the (consultation) process is finished, then it is almost inevitable that the proposals will go via the Reconfiguration Panel to a national appeal."

The Save the Horton campaign is urging local people to write to their GPs ahead of their meeting, to discuss the proposals, on 13 June. The GPs unanimously rejected the Trust's original proposals last year, describing them as "unsafe and inhumane."

The message resounding loud and clear in and around Banbury is

Hands off the Horton!

ends 7 June 2007

For more details contact Chairman: Cllr George Parish, 26 Glamis Place, Banbury OX16 OHZ tel: 0781 5995090

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PRESS RELEASE

The Keep the Horton General campaign will be represented at the National Day of Action for the NHS rally in Oxford this Saturday, March 3.

Campaigners and supporters will be boarding their 'battle bus' and leaving Banbury at 10.30 am. Committee Chairman, George Parish, urges everyone who cares about the future of the Horton to join the rally at Bonn Square at 11.30 am.

"People of all ages will be taking to the streets to ensure that their message 'Hands off the Horton' will be heard by NHS managers both locally and nationally." George is confident that the Trust, based at the John Radcliffe Hospital in Headington, will be able to hear the demonstrators loud and clear from their route along the Cowley Road. "We are joining the demonstration in Oxford to show our solidarity with other groups up and down the country. We will be taking banners, chanting and generally drawing as much attention to our plight as possible. This is a great opportunity for us to spread our message alongside other groups who, with one voice, are urging Patricia Hewitt to listen to the British public."

More information can be found at www.keepournhspublic.org.uk

ends

26 February 2007

For more details, and a detailed itinerary, contact Chairman:
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www.keepthehortongeneral.org



PRESS RELEASE

The Keep the Horton General committee continued to keep its campaign in the forefront of public awareness when it hosted an open forum, question and answer debate on 25 January 2007.

Despite a bitterly cold night, attendees included Chief Executive of Cherwell District Council Mary Harpley, Chairman of CDC Cllr John Harper, Banbury Mayor John Donaldson, several local councillors, Dr Peter Fisher and Touch FM's Lindsey Hume.

Questions, to Trust representatives Andrew Stevens (Director of Planning and Information) and Helen Peggs (Director of Media and Communications), were considered and demanding.

Helen Peggs referred to the meeting on the Friday edition of Radio Oxford's Bill Heine show when she was quizzed about children being ferried between the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford and the Horton General Hospital in Banbury.

The campaign chairman is delighted by the continued publicity.

George Parish said "The meeting in Banbury was very successful and we look forward to holding another one later in the year. The message from Banbury continues to be heard. In fact, it has spread as far as Europe - the winning balloon from December's balloon release was found 1000 km away in Denmark!"

ends

31 January 2007

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PRESS RELEASE

The Keep the Horton General committee had a major presence at yesterday's cross party debate on the draconian cuts threatening the NHS.

Travelling with the Horton supporters was a crew from Central Television who were recording a diary of the day's events. Greeted outside the House of Commons by local MP Tony Baldry, the banner brandishing group were given a rousing cheer by other campaigners. Packing into Westminster Hall, the supporters heard speeches from consultants, MPs, hospital workers and members of the public representing hospitals the length and breadth of the land.

Committee chairman, George Parish, addressing the crowd, re-iterated the view held by all: "Hewitt - don't do it."

Leaving the rally for an audience with David Cameron on College Green, the cameras were turned on the group from Banbury who had travelled up the M40 with the message

HANDS OFF THE HORTON

Footnote: The committee will be holding an open forum to give an update and answer questions about the campaign on Thursday 25 January at St Mary's Church, Banbury from 6-8pm. All welcome!

ends

17 January 2007

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www.keepthehortongeneral.org



PRESS RELEASE

UP, UP, AND AWAY

Friday, 15th December saw excited children from local schools and nurseries gathered by the “bandstand” in Banbury’s town centre. Keep the Horton General campaigners had invited the children to take part in a balloon race in support of a National Day of Action against hospital closures. Hundreds of red “Save the Horton” balloons were released at 11.15am.

The event was hosted by Keep the Horton General and Town Mayor Cllr John Donaldson. Jack Friswell, Banbury’s first honorary citizen, who as a Councillor, Alderman and Mayor of the town has raised thousands of pounds for the Horton Hospital, was guest of honour. Also in support was local actor David Yip of television and film fame.

Whilst waiting for the event, watching crowds were entertained by St Mary’s School children Morris Dancing and Stuart Green from Radio Horton playing carols.

After the balloon release the children were given squash and biscuits in the Town Hall. The Mayor and children now wait impatiently to discover how far the balloons have flown.

Our thanks to the Balloon Lady of Chipping Norton Road, Swerford for supplying the balloons.

www.keepthehortongeneral.org

ends

19 December 2006

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PRESS RELEASE

Friday 8 December saw a fantastic fundraiser for the Horton General Hospital at Marston St Lawrence. George Parish, Chairman of the Save the Horton Campaign, received a rapturous welcome as he greeted the assembled crowd. One couple, who live in Spain but have been following the campaign via the Banbury Guardian, enjoyed the event with a huge crowd of locals. Ironically, one dancer twisted his leg and ended up in an ambulance bound for the local hospital. The amount raised, to be handed over to the Horton General, was £1100.

As part of the PUSH day of action on Friday 15 December 150 children, from schools and nurseries all over the Banbury area, will assemble at 11.30 am at the bandstand in the middle of Banbury. Local celebrity actor, David Yip, will preside over the colourful launch of hundreds of balloons along with guest of honour, Jack Friswell, who has raised thousands for HGH over the years. The event is hosted by Banbury Mayor, John Donaldson. Long time supporters of the Save the Horton General campaign, Radio Horton, will have a major presence on the day.

George Parish commented "Even though Christmas is on everyone's mind, the Horton General is still attracting a lot of local support and interest. Although 2007 is just around the corner we are continuing a relentless campaign over the Festive Season and New Year. We are not going away."

ends

13 December 2006

For more details (and photos of the Marston St Lawrence event) contact Chairman: Cllr George Parish, 26 Glamis Place, Banbury OX16 OHZ tel: 0781 5995090
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www.keepthehortongeneral.org



PRESS RELEASE

Keep The Horton General committee recently met with Andrea Young, the new CEO of Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust. During the amicable and wide-ranging meeting, also attended by Dr John Walton and Heather Barnet, the committee expressed its fears over the Oxford NHS Trust's proposals and its projected budget for services. Due to the number of unanswered questions committee Chairman, George Parish, requested a further meeting.

The committee is keeping the campaign to the forefront of public awareness, planning an ongoing range of events. A well attended evening of music was held at Banbury's General Foods Club on November 18. Supporters, who raised £700, were greeted by 'The Fine Lady on a White Horse' and entertained by three local bands.

As part of the PUSH day of action on Friday 15 December, a large crowd of children will gather around the bandstand in Banbury's town centre and release balloons. Supported by Banbury Town Mayor Cllr John Donaldson and a number of celebrities, guest of honour will be Horton benefactor Jack Friswell.

George Parish comments "It is not only the committee who are keeping the Horton General in the public eye. Robert Phipps of Marston St Lawrence is organising a dance on Saturday 8 December. The event is proving so popular that a marquee is being provided to accommodate the overflow from the village hall."

Both social evenings will benefit the Horton League of Friends.

ends

1December 2006

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PRESS RELEASE

Horton General Hospital Campaigners are encouraged at news that the Oxford Radcliffe Trust is rethinking its proposals for the Horton General.

Yesterday, on BBC Radio Oxford the ORT's representative, Helen Peggs, told Bill Heine that the Trust were looking again at their proposals for turning the paediatric provision into a 9-5 facility and for the maternity unit to be midwife led.

This follows on news, reported in last week's Banbury Guardian, that the Trust 'do not currently have an agreed programme of service changes.' They 'will be doing further work with GPs, Horton staff and others to look at the problems and re-examine solutions.'

Hospital campaign chairman, George Parish, replied to Helen's comments, saying "I welcome the statement from the Trust. That they intend to look again is encouraging and I do hope that they come back with a plan to keep all services. I believe common sense has come to play and the Trust must work with GPs, councils and all stakeholders. I thank all those that, tirelessly, have opposed the changes proposed for The Horton General Hospital. The Keep the Horton General committee will still be campaigning and keeping the public up-to-date via the website

www.keepthehortongeneral.org"

ends

9 November 2006

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