

Defend Whittington Hospital Coalition



Minutes

Date: 18th February 2013

Time: 19:30

Place: Methodist Church Hall N19 3TD

Chair: Shirley Franklyn

Minutes: Mike Hart

Present: (see attached)

Apologies: Jeremy Corbyn

1) Reports

Shirley Franklyn reported on the very successful public meeting held on 12th February at the Methodist Church Hall Archway. Nearly 600 people had attended. This was due to an emphasis on publicity including, talking to patients and staff in the hospital, holding stalls and leaf-letting. Also important was the fabulous support of the local press.

It was also noted that medical secretaries at the Whittington had all been given notice, this despite the Francis report specifying lack of contact with patients and families as one of the trust's many failings. An important role of medical secretaries is to keep contact with patients and their families.

2) Lobby of the Whittington Board

A board meeting is to be held in the Whittington Education Centre which is on the service road at the back of the hospital. The meeting will be on 27th February from 14:00 - 17:00. It was decided that the lobby should be publicised with a mass email. The idea would be if possible to halt the meeting by making lots of noise.

Staff present spoke of a climate of fear and intimidation at the hospital and cast doubt on the sincerity of Jeremy Coe's claim that there would be no discrimination.

There was criticism of Lyn Featherstone who has appeared in the media claiming to have 'solved' the problems of the Whittington but whose credibility is severely damaged by having voted for the Health and Social care Bill.

According to the Whittington website the hospital will be reduced from 400 to 177 beds (this hospital had 1,000 beds at its peak). As Professor Yudkin had pointed out, the hospital is 94% full. This is a danger-

ous level and results in red alerts. Where are people to go if they close beds?

The motivation for the closures and sell off (as with Mid-Staffordshire) is to become a foundation trust. We should be demanding no job losses, no bed losses and no sell off.

It was proposed that all the local Trades Unions should be contacted and that those present should mobilise members of their organisations. Also local groups that are not explicitly political (like the Highgate Society) should be contacted.

Making a splash at the lobby will help make sure that we have maximum publicity. Bring amplifiers and other noise making equipment. Email Shirley with offers. As the meeting is public we need to develop questions over the next week or so, for the meeting. Again email Shirley.

It was felt that we should be asking for a meeting with the board together with staff.

3) Demonstration

The proposed demonstration for Saturday 16th March would meet at Highbury Corner and march up Holloway Rd to Magdala Ave. At the moment permission has not been granted. It is complicated as a number of agencies have to approve.

It was generally agreed that despite lack of permission the march should be publicised starting now.

Steve agreed to assemble the placards on the day. A call for stewards was made. 40,000 leaflets are to be printed and a call was made for leafleters.

Leafletting would take place at all the local tube stations (Archway, Highgate, Finsbury Park, Upper Holloway and Holloway Rd) between 07:00 and 08:00 and between 17:00 and 18:00 during the weeks running up to the march.

Also there will be a stall at the Nags Head, selling badges etc and getting people to sign a petition. There is also an online petition.

Shirley pointed out that the campaign was broke so donations (please ask your union branch) would be much appreciated.

A number of speakers were suggested, including Owen Jones, Francis O'Grady, Bill Rodgers Claire Gerada, Gary Walker, Someone from the Barnet anti cuts campaign, someone from Lewisham (pref Jackie Davies), someone from Ealing, someone from KONP, Ramjeed Brar and people from the local Trades Unions.

A call was made for someone trustworthy to be treasurer.

Ben is to be twitter person.

Sharon is to run the website.

Trade Union contacts will be via Gary & Mick.

Ali & David will do student contact.

Other places that need contacting are City & Islington College, London Metropolitan University, City University.

Finally Shirley asked that if any problems are encountered she be notified.

3) Close

Next meeting will be at the same place and time on 4th March 2013.