

Cllr. Sylvia Russell 21st June 2022

Teignmouth Hospital just won't go away even after almost a decade of trying first by the Health Authority and now the CCG, where I see there is a new Chairman who no doubt will be listening carefully to the deliberations of this Committee today. During the pandemic emergency it was recognised that circumstances dictated where the vaccination centres should be and I would like to place on record my admiration and thanks for the many options available to access vaccination points which I have no doubt will continue as long as necessary. It was disappointing that the first floor of Teignmouth Hospital was not re-purposed with rehab beds. If it was OK to turn empty warehouses into Nightingale Wards, why not 24 beds upstairs at Teignmouth Hospital when the view alone would lift the spirits rather than the outlook from a bleak commercial building. Nevertheless infection control and health professionals were on hand locally and the day to day work of the hospital on the ground floor continued seamlessly, albeit with the additional safety measures as necessary.

Now the emergency is almost over and thoughts must turn once again to what to do with the first floor of Teignmouth Hospital. The pandemic gave lots of opportunities to think outside the box and perhaps the CCG could look at the options available. If Torbay Hospital can work successfully with Ramsey Healthcare at Mount Stuart then perhaps (whisper it) why not look around to see what could be provided at Teignmouth Hospital involving a partnership with the private sector. Whilst we currently have 8 residential homes in Teignmouth, the requirement to meet every increasing specialism with trained staff can be daunting. We did have three nursing homes but no longer have any with the required nursing home registrations and have to look to Dawlish or Newton Abbot for spare bed capacity. Community teams on the ground tell me that they can manage but there are many elderly people with physical and mental health needs living alone with no near family support. The Voluntary sector is a vital cog in maintaining cover in the community and increasingly organisations like Marie Curie cover all night support at home.

After something like a 40 year wait, a decision has at last been made to develop a "Health Hub" on a wartime bomb site in Brunswick Street and I understand that a financial contract with the NHS has been finalised just this week. However this is not overwhelmingly endorsed by all the GP practices locally or the Georgian cottages opposite who worry about being dwarfed by a five storey building. The long suffering motorists and residents in Teignmouth may just prefer additional parking in the town centre area and the refurbishment of Teignmouth Hospital which at the last count was to cost £1.5 million a mere drop in the ocean compared to the overall NHS budget.