

Save Our Services in Surrey

Notes from meeting held on 15th January in Woking

Notes taken by Helen Couchman

Present: Helen Couchman, Paul Couchman, Alan Clyne, Mick Dawson, Sheila Wright, Chris Wright, Ginny Eaton, Thelma Snelgrove, Fred Greaves, Louise Irvine, Nick Trier. Margaret (a local carer) joined the meeting around 8pm.

Apologies from Howard Kaye and Robert Evans

Trade Unions represented – UNISON, UCU, NUT, NASUWT, PCS

Ginny Eaton in the Chair

- 1) Notes of previous meeting were agreed.
- 2) Treasurer's Report – Thelma reported that we have around £1500 in the bank. Paul handed in £250 collected at the two Care Homes public meetings. Thelma reported spending on new banners, stickers and flyers for the Care Homes Campaign. ACTION - It was agreed to write out to affiliates asking for 2015 affiliation fees (Paul to do). There was some discussion around getting a new bank account as the one we have is just a passbook and we cannot do BACS transfers etc. ACTION – Thelma will look into this.
- 3) Fire Stations update – Paul reported that Surrey Fire and Rescue appeared to be having difficulty recruiting enough suitable on call fire fighters, even when expanding the catchment area (thus increasing response times). It is possible that they will try to revert to their original position of just one full time appliance at the one station in Ashford – if this is the case we will need to be ready to mobilise for an action aimed at Spelthorne Council who originally opposed this position. Surrey FBU are currently working on the overall Public Safety Plan for Surrey and their findings could be vital to the campaign. Paul reported that a video production company had been inspired by this campaign and have offered to do a free promotional video for SOSiS. ACTION – Paul to follow this up.
- 4) Surrey Care Homes – Alan gave a detailed update on the campaign so far. Most information is on the SOSiS website. He reported that the campaign had been magnificent, particularly as it was being coordinated by a small handful of volunteers through good links with the staff, residents and families. The campaign has so far pushed the consultation deadline back by six weeks to 31st January. It looks like the only big public campaigns are based around Cobgates and Park Hall. We are heading over 3,000 signatures on the petition (1,400 online and 1,600 paper). Press coverage has been great and this week's Farnham Herald has a front page on the campaign. It was agreed to mobilise fully for the lobby of the Cabinet on 24th February. We will pay for transport if we have the funds and if local campaigners make the arrangements. ACTION – All to build for the lobby on 24th February. Park Hall

campaigners are planning a fete in Reigate Park on 14th February. ACTION – All to try to attend and support. Further discussion took place over the proposal to close the home. Paul urged everyone to submit a response to the formal consultation.

- 5) Other campaigns – Meeting was advised by Nick of a public meeting ‘Let the Community Decide on the Future of Oxted School’ on 17th January at 12pm in Oxted Community Hall. Meeting was advised by Louise of ‘NHS Not For Sale’ campaign initiated by Unite the Union. ACTION – Louise to pass information to Paul for promotion on SOSiS website.
- 6) May 2105 elections – the SOSiS Charter – Paul introduced a proposed 10-point charter for the May elections. This was based on SOSiS founding principles and policy decisions over the 6 years since we were founded and had been brought up to date. A good discussion ensued. Amendments were made to the point on taxation and the Charter was then agreed unanimously. ACTION – The SOSiS Elections Charter to be placed on a new page on the website. All progressive prospective parliamentary and council candidates will be asked and encouraged to sign up to the charter. We will list those who actively say they support the charter and any who actively decline. The issue of ‘lobbying’ costs and the new gagging laws was raised. It was agreed to close the ‘links’ page on the website for the duration of the elections.
- 7) Any Other Business – Nick asked trade union affiliates to make sure they affiliate to the West Surrey Trades Council (who had cancelled their planned meeting to attend the SOSiS meeting).
- 8) Next Meeting will be on Monday 23rd February at the Maybury Centre in Woking, to finalise plans for the lobby the next day.