

**CMPCA COMMUNITY MEETING – 8pm 23 November 2010**  
**St Mary Magdalen Community Centre, Upper North Street**

**Police Report**

There was no police report as no officer was available

**The Future of the Montpelier Surgery**

CPMCA Chair John Riddington welcomed a packed meeting and introduced speakers Dr Marshall-Andrews (partner at the Surgery), Chris Naylor (Primary Care Trust) and Jason Kitcat (Ward Councillor)

Dr Marshall-Andrews described the existing surgery as quaint, quirky, friendly etc. but not suitable for a number of reasons – difficult access externally, confined space internally, on two floors without modern facilities or proper access for disabled patients. Solutions, including a lift and ramps had been considered but were not workable as the building is essentially too small for the 6000 patients cared for. Thus a new location is the only viable option. Efforts have been made to find a suitable location without success to date (Mitre House had been considered but when surveyed was found to be unsuitable).

Chris Naylor confirmed that the Surgery needs to relocate and explained that she looks after premises in Brighton & Hove for the PCT and that many are like the Montpelier Surgery in being not suitable for modern needs. The PCT's estate strategy is usually to encourage relocation to new build property as the conversion of existing buildings is usually difficult and often not very satisfactory. Properties for possible conversion are however always being sought (she mentioned one at the bottom of Elm Grove as an example). While some assistance funds are available GP's are ultimately responsible for providing their own, suitable accommodation. She wanted 'something splendid' for the new Surgery.

Councillor Jason Kitcat advised that Taylor Wimpey are submitting two new applications to develop the Royal Alexandra Hospital site, one for complete redevelopment with 40% affordable housing and a surgery and pharmacy, and a second which retained the existing main building and included 15% affordable housing but excluded both a surgery or pharmacy. In his view only the second application had any chance of success based on the outcome of past applications and the requirements of the Council's planning brief.

JK then suggested that the PCT had committed themselves contractually to the company preparing a PFI bid to fund the construction of the Surgery/Pharmacy as part of the Taylor Wimpey proposals. CN denied this, saying that no such relationship existed.

A lively question and answer session then followed during which it became clear that many of those present were upset at the commercialism which might allow this former children's hospital site to be redeveloped without space being reserved for a new medical facility to serve the local community. It was felt vital that the Planning Committee should be made aware of the strong local feeling in favour of a new surgery on the site.

After further discussion three important facts emerged:-

1. Despite the desirability of relocation, the existing surgery was not in imminent danger of closure.
2. The size of a new surgery on the RAH site need be no more than 450m<sup>2</sup> floor area, which is less than that hitherto included on TW's applications.

3. A new pharmacy was not regarded as necessary by any of those present.

The meeting concluded with the advice from JK that those wishing to see a new surgery on the RAH site should write individually to the Council, objecting to the second application on the grounds that it does not include a surgery and suggesting that if necessary the 15% affordable housing should be reduced to make this possible. JK undertook to prepare a 'typical' letter of objection which will be available at the Surgery and on the CMPCA website.

The minutes from the previous meeting were then approved.

The Chair reported that :

1. The application to convert Mitre House into a hotel had been approved, but with conditions attached that largely addressed the concerns of local residents. A new application had been submitted that proposed making relatively minor changes to the approved design.
2. The CMPCA would be holding a Christmas party on 16<sup>th</sup> December.
3. Caroline Lucas MP would be speaking at a Community Meeting scheduled for 21<sup>st</sup> January.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm