

The Defend The Whittington Hospital Coalition Campaign meeting Monday 22nd March, Whittington Community Centre N19: Minutes

Meeting chaired by Shirley Franklin.

S. Franklin welcomed all and explained purpose of the meeting:

To take the campaign forward and to build on the successful demo and activities so far.

The context was one of growing resistance to cuts in the provision of essential public services not just in north London but nationally and across Europe. The aim remains to save the A&E and maternity services for the community.

SF introduced J Davies a consultant at the Whittington hospital and a member of the BMA.

JD congratulated the coalition and its organizers for the work done so far.

It had given encouragement to the hospital workers.

She explained that Govt policy was undermining the viability of the hospital as also privatisation was undermining the delivery of the service to patients.

The Darzi report was not helpful. She said she was not against change but against privatisation and a reduction in care. She stressed that shouting out loud will be successful as NHS London don't like it.

The case for the closure was bogus: the figures used by NHS London do not add up and the polyclinics were not in place.

Non medical staff at the hospital resigned or afraid to speak out due to Stalinist atmosphere.

A few contributions from floor inc Angela Sinclair who could remember the days before the NHS: she encouraged all to keep up the campaign.

SF thanked Jacky for her contribution and introduced Candy Unwin (Camden Keep Our NHS Public Campaign)

Candy stressed that the coalition could win and that public sector needs to fight together to protect services against privatisation. She described the experience of their campaign and felt that a protest outside the hospital pre election would be a good idea.

We need to send a message to the politicians.

SF introduced discussion on the next steps: Day of Action before the next election to put pressure on the Ministers and the five MPs who came on the demo and promised their support: poss a rally between 12 till 2pm with some speakers at the hospital but also activities in local areas across the boroughs affected by the closure.

General discussion followed : Key points:

*donation of £500 Islington NUT A Smith supported idea of day of action inc lunchtime protests various activities and show of solidarity for the hospital workers.

*various political party election candidates made supportive contributions.

*P Brandon from the local bus garage suggested consulting his members to get some real consultation for the managers proposing the cuts.

*Trades Council spokesman supported Day of Action £200 donation from Trades Council

SF put the proposed Day of Action 29th April: Majority in favour 2 against 10 abs (85+ in attendance)

More speakers contributed:

A Strouthers from City and Islington college: could get a local demo going with delegation to rally.

SF praised the new video from Sarah (brilliant well done!) encouraged all to watch it.(its on the website)

Placards could be made available for local demos.

SF introduced local MP J Corbyn.

JC thanked all for organising the demo: well done to the campaign

He described what he and Lynn Featherstone had done in the House noting the support given by some ministers. He explained the reasons why the closure of the A&E was not in the interests of any of the annual 80 000 users of the service. We need an A&E for these numbers.

The NHS planning process not accountable. We need real accountability.

Poly clinics cant provide the service we need.

All speakers in the Commons debate were on our side. Minister indicated twice that he was on our side.

Suggested compendium of reasons why we need the A&E: send them to him

He urged the coalition to keep up the pressure

SF thanked JC.

Richard Moth described work being done to involve hospital workers through visits and petitions

Gill George (Unite) praised the campaign so far well done to all. Day of Action good idea: cuts coming in the public sector unless we stop them We should send a message Hands off!

Lots more speakers followed. (apologies for missed names)

Finsbury Health centre speaker

Austin HearneyTUC

Jan Pollock

A ward sister from the hospital

Lib democrat candidate supported campaign

Conservative candidate supported campaign

Janet Burgess

Craig from UCL.: to get students involved.

Monica re stakeholders meeting.

Suggestions:

Get to election hustings.

Write to all GPs in the area

Send stuff to JCs compendium.

Final vote on the proposed day of action and the various activities
Carried overwhelmingly 8 against(85 present)

Minutes Kevin Doherty