

PRESS RELEASE July 20 2018 (for the EMS)

Will the NHS sell Emsworth short?

If our well-loved hospital site is sold to the highest bidder, the community will lose an opportunity for ever

Emsworth Victoria Cottage Hospital was built more than a century ago with money raised by the gentlefolk of Emsworth to help look after the health of local people. Now a new community group wants to ensure that the hospital site by the roundabout in the town is redeveloped into an asset that could play a key role in everyone's future health and wellbeing.

Since April this year a group of volunteers has been looking at what could be developed on the hospital site currently owned by the NHS (Property Services).

Says Dwynwen Stepien, chair of the voluntary group: *"We aim to form the Emsworth Community Land Trust (EmsworthCLT) so that we can ensure that the old hospital site works for local people. The steering group is exploring all possible options including affordable housing and a community space dedicated to helping people access healthier lifestyles. We will look at other sites too but this one is the priority."*

Harry Thuillier, Treasurer of Emsworth CLT adds: *"This project is a huge challenge and the opinions of the people of Emsworth really matter. Our first wish is to involve people and local organisations so that any plans we have are fully aired and shared. Once we are established properly as a charitable organisation we will encourage everyone to join the group as a member."*

The group recognises that the biggest challenge is to raise enough money to acquire and develop this site and possibly others. The Emsworth CLT steering group is currently exploring options to work with other organisations including Housing Associations.

The vision of the Emsworth CLT is to include, on the redeveloped hospital site, a community place full of possibilities for people to get involved. The main objective is to work closely with all community groups to explore what could be developed in the community space that enhances our health and wellbeing.

ALL HELP WELCOME

Local volunteers and fundraisers are strongly encouraged to make contact with Emsworth Community Land Trust if they would like to be more closely involved in this project. The first public meeting is currently being organised for later in the year. Watch out for publicity on this.

The ECLT steering group promises regular updates on its activities via the EMS. Please email emsworthclt1@gmail.com if you would like further information.