

Press Release DRAFT

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Celebrating Emsworth Cottage Hospital as the preferred new home of the Emsworth Surgery

The people of Emsworth can, at last, celebrate plans for their cherished Cottage Hospital to become the new home of the local Doctors' Surgery. For too many years the building has stood empty, but following extensive public pressure, consultations and negotiations the Emsworth medical practice is now set to move to the old hospital which will be fully refurbished for that purpose. It will take some time to confirm the NHS capital funding and to complete the work but at least the plans are now underway.

Hundreds of local people have put time and effort into achieving this result. The local community has pulled together and made its voice heard on the matter. The #Emsworth United campaign comprised all the major representative organisations in the town, Emsworth Forum, the Community Association, the Residents Association, the Community Land Trust as well as the Health Action Group. Together they convened the public meeting on August 22nd attended by over 450 Emsworth residents, and it was the size and strength of public feeling at this meeting that helped persuade the NHS Clinical Care Group (CCG) and the Doctors to reconsider the hospital site as a base for the surgery.

Stephanie Elsy, Chair of Emsworth Forum, said: *'This is a wonderful outcome and one that all the local organisations under the banner of #Emsworth United fought for when the NHS put the hospital site up for sale last July. Strong community determination was shown at the well-attended meeting to fight for the hospital site to be retained. It is an entirely fitting result that the Emsworth medical practice will aim, with the support NHS funding, to make the refurbished hospital its new home. We are very grateful to Lord Richards for Chairing the Emsworth United Steering Group and supporting our campaign and to the Doctors and SE Hampshire CCG for listening to us.'*

David Thomas, of Emsworth Health Action, added: *'Throughout our campaign, it was obvious that more than a 'replacement' GP surgery was and is needed to meet the growing and changing pattern of healthcare demand facing Emsworth. What was - and is - needed is a model with a strong GP service at the core of a range of integrated supporting healthcare and healthy living services. If that is all in new accessible facilities that will fundamentally improve the quality of our care through enabling teamwork and joined-up services. This new model of care is being rolled out under the NHS's Strategy. Emsworth will be in the vanguard of this change and it's all due to real community engagement and mobilisation working in a 'can do' way with our local NHS.'*

Chair of Emsworth Community Land Trust, Dwynwen Stepien, stated: *'There is no doubt that the new use of the Cottage Hospital building as the surgery will be a popular decision. We are all delighted that this choice has been made and will continue to support everyone's efforts to ensure that this time we will be rewarded by a new surgery in Emsworth. The Land Trust will continue to work hard to find other sites. We shall pursue activities in order to bring community benefit and affordable homes to Emsworth. The Hospital building is now in the right hands after a difficult period in limbo.'*

Ends...

Further details: Please contact Maggie Gebbett, Secretary, 01243 699517, 07833 741508.