

# **South Woodham Ferrers Health & Social Care Group**

## **Annual Report May 2018 – April 2019**

### 1. Background

South Woodham Ferrers (SWF) Healthcare 2000 Group was formed as a Millennium project in 1999. South Woodham Ferrers Town Council (SWFTC) ran quarterly Care Lunches for many years. The increasing close combination of health and social care by the relevant authorities and organisations was recognised. As a result, as described in the next section, this hereditary joint organisation was established to enable SWF to mirror that development.

SWF Healthcare 2000 Group had an excellent reputation and ability to engage with all NHS and social care authorities and organisations at the highest, as well as operational, levels. The new SWF Health & Social Care Group ('the Group') inherited that and built upon it. This continues to give the Group access to, and have the confidence of, the highest level officials including Councillors holding Cabinet portfolios, Chairs, Non-Executive Directors, Chief Executives and Executive Directors of all relevant health and social care authorities and organisations.

As a result, the Group is able to bring top level speakers and information to SWF. One important reason for this is that we are told attendances at our meetings in SWF attract consistently larger audiences than similar meetings held in Chelmsford and elsewhere. The Group is flexible, adapts to requests from the authorities to fit in with their planning and developmental schedules, holds effective meetings which are purposeful are not held for the sake of meeting. As said later, we have recognised that meetings are no longer as popular nor as well attended as in the past and so want to move to other ways to inform and represent the patients, service users and public of SWF in the full range of health, social care and wellbeing issues.

### 2. Formation & Governance

Proposals for the establishment of the South Woodham Ferrers Health and Social Care Group were considered as Agenda Item 106 by SWF Town Council (SWFTC) and the agreement to this was Minuted as Item 106 in the Minutes of SWFTC's Meeting held on 19 April 2016.

The Inaugural Public General Meeting of SWF Health & Social Care Group ("the Group") was held on 28 June 2016. That meeting adopted the Group's Governance, which has been slightly updated at the 2017 and 2018 AGMs

- Appendix 1 is the present Governance document of the Group

- Appendix 2 is the Role Descriptions for the Group's Officers
- Appendix 3 is the Role Description for the Group's Administrator
- Appendix 4 is the Group's financial report

### 3. Report

On Monday 25 June 2018 the Group held its 2018 Annual General Meeting which was followed by a Public Meeting about "Residential Care, Frailty & Care of the Elderly. This included presentations about:

- The health and social care of frail and elderly people in the community and in residential homes by commissioners of existing services and about their strategic plans for this
- Our local residential care homes
- Our nearest nursing home
- Explaining the difference between residential and nursing homes
- Services to support carers (partners and families) of frail and elderly people
- A new Worship & Dementia project launching then.

#### SWF's developing new medical centre

The Group, working in conjunction with the Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) for the three SWF GP Practices, agreed to concentrate as much as possible for the rest of 2018 on matters relating to the development of the new health centre for the Town.

For the last few years, reflecting the present NHS structure, the PPGs and this Group have worked in close harmony and cooperation. All these groups are totally reliant on volunteers. The voluntary officers of this Group indicated a few years ago that they were unable to continue without appropriate administrative support. Subsequently it was agreed to share the administration, communications and public relations as much as possible through this Group's Administrator which is supported with an honorarium; we are most grateful for SWF Town Council's generous grant for this purpose.

The history of the development of the new medical centre goes back a few years. From the outset when this centre was first suggested we have been closely involved. We have recognised the mixed views of residents about this. As is our usual approach, once a decision is made our role is to get the best from it for the patients, service users and people of the Town.

Initially we recognised that there was a need one way or another for improvements to be made with the infrastructures of our three GP Practices. If a new medical centre was to be developed we recognised the enormously strong views about its location. We argued strenuously for it to be in the Town centre and against it being built at the junction of Hullbridge Road with Burnham Road. We lobbied vigorously to that effect throughout the

consultation and planning phases and suggested alternatives. The developers did not accept any suggestions for alternative locations and submitted their plans. Along with others, we argued our case during the planning stages. In due course Chelmsford City Council approved the plans. So by the summer of 2018 whether we like it or not the decision was made.

It should be noted that the various consultations and planning applications were given wide publicity by the developers, planners and others and views were invited. SWF Town Council contributed at every stage and so did many organisations, patients and Townsfolk.

Once the new medical centre was approved the GP Practices and NHS had to develop and agree a plan for its framework, infrastructure, services and organisation. The PPGs and this Group requested that the patients and public of the Town had a say in that at the earliest opportunity and that was our constant approach. Unfortunately we were unsuccessful (as were all others) in this plea. The GP Practices are private businesses commissioned by the NHS. They are also members of the Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group (MECCG) which commissions various local health services. Between them they had to devise a Business Plan for the new centre and then pass it 'up the line' for approval by NHS England. This all took a long time; a lot longer than it should have, some observed.

During the second half of 2018 this Group did 'fill the void' by publishing articles explaining the process and reporting on progress – or the lack of it. It was deeply frustrating. Our (this Group and the PPGs working together) regular requests for information from the Practices and MECCG did not enlighten us. We have never been told what was the big hold up. We did not know any more than others and what we did know we reported publicly.

We were unable to hold our own public meeting as the Practices and MECCG would not take part and the Practices wanted to hold their own meeting when ready. In the end the public meeting held on 9 January 2019 was arranged. In the lead up to it we lobbied for it to be in the largest possible venue and if a ticketed event for there to be some sort of broadcast for any overflow. We also helped attract and collate questions from patients and public and contributed our own. We did not regard the resultant Answers to the Questions to be adequate and some submitted questions were not addressed. As our suggestions about the public meeting went unheeded we decided not to support that meeting; we (this Group and the PPGs) were requested to be visibly present, have promotional stands, and support the project but we all declined to do so.

Many views about that public meeting have been expressed. This Group has run many successful meetings over the years, some about controversial issues. We are disappointed that experience seemed to be largely ignored. Since the public meeting held in January 2019 we (this Group and the PPGs) have had regular meetings with MECCG where we have lobbied for further public events

and asked for further information to be published. Recently an updated version of the Questions & Answers has been published on the websites of the Practices and some newsletters have been issued. We continue to request suitable public events, engagement and information and express our regret at the ongoing delays in providing patients and SWF as a whole with full information. The opening of the new centre is said to have been brought forward (to around the turn of August/September 2019) but the information people want seems to be continuously delayed and relevant events not arranged. It is a shame we have been hampered by the lack of administrative resource and so not communicated more about all this.

We hope that the new centre will provide improved services and enable the development of more health and social care without the location proving to be too problematical.

### Health, Social Care & Wellbeing

Our local GP services are of huge significance but there are also very many other health and social care services much used and needed by SWF people. In no particular order in the last year this Group has engaged in and with:

1. Chelmsford CVS (Council for Voluntary Service)
2. Mid Essex CCG
3. Mid Essex Hospital Services NHS Trust and allied hospitals at Basildon & Southend and their Joint Working Board
4. Mid & South Essex Sustainable Transformation Partnership
5. Essex Healthwatch
6. Essex County Council Public Health
7. Essex County Council Social Services
8. Essex Cares

Group representatives have attended, engaged with, been involved with and/or contributed to:

- Reviews of local Acute Hospital Services
- The Essex Health & Wellbeing Strategy
- Essex Health & Wellbeing Profiles
- The Essex Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
- Essex Sexual Health Services
- Essex Domestic Abuse Board
- EPUT (Essex Partnership University Trust) about some of the mental health services it provides for all of Essex
- SWF pharmaceutical matters
- SWF dental matters
- SWF ophthalmology services including opticians
- East of England Ambulance which serves SWF
- East of England Ambulance Service policies and procedures for voluntary community first responders; SWF were pioneers of this in Essex, East of England and throughout the UK

- MECCG's local community and primary health care strategy and that of NHS England
- Local NHS funding
- Carers services including with Carers First and Action for Family Carers
- Chetwood Healthy Family Delivery Site, part of Chelmsford Central Family Hub
- Some Accessibility & Disabled People's services
- Bereavement and Death Matters
- Virgin Healthcare services development including webinars
- SWF Foodbank
- SWF Chatty Bus
- Social Prescribing
- CQC (Care Quality Commission) re various health and social care regulatory issues and their voluntary & community involvement
- ARU (Anglia Ruskin University) mental health awareness week annual day including delivering presentation about the impact of relationships on mental health and vice versa
- MECCG complaints delays
- UK, Eastern Region and Essex Acquired Brain Injury Fora.

In response to requests from the local media, ie newspapers, radio and regional tv stations, officers have made personal contributions to reports, discussions and items about various health & social care issues including:

- Poor hospital waiting times
- Prevention is better than cure in healthcare
- GP services issues in other parts of Essex and for Essex generally
- Hospital complaints
- Hospital cleanliness
- The fall in GP numbers and implications
- NHS 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary debates, reviews and reports
- NHS national plans.

By invitation, the Chair is the Patient & Public representative on East of England Major Trauma Scheme & Network. In that capacity he has, inter alia, promoted the provision of support for families and friends of major trauma patients; is promoting the review of, maintenance of and increase in rehabilitation resources; is working with regional rehabilitation coordinators, rehabilitation service providers, social care providers, public health authorities, planning authorities, NHS & Department of Health and university researchers. In particular:

- He organised workshops for key decision-makers and opinion formers in Essex. As a result the first high level complex needs rehabilitation 25 bed unit in Essex is now being procured to launch in 2020. This £6mpa+ service will mean major trauma and other adult patients requiring complex and lengthy rehabilitation won't have to go to beds elsewhere around the country; he is a member of the procurement team;

- As invited, he is providing patient & public input to key national major trauma research projects mainly to do with pre-hospital care and treatment;
- As invited, he was one of a three person expert delegation, led by Chris Bryant MP, to meet the Economic Secretary to the Treasury about the need for a full audit and gap analysis of national rehabilitation resources and Government inter departmental approach to address identified requirements; a recent report showed there are only 40% of the rehabilitation beds available for civilian major trauma patients and there are other critical care patients who need the levels of rehabilitation;
- A major tranche of patients needing this are those with acquired brain injuries and he has worked closely with key experts in this subject;
- In the last year sadly SWF has seen a few people and their families affected by major trauma and the most serious acquired brain injuries;
- This is an example of how this Group does its best to work on behalf of Townsfolk who use all types of health and social care services from the most local to the rarest national ones.

The Group's Chair represents SWF on the Livewell Chelmsford Group. Livewell Chelmsford has multi-agency and organisation membership and is linked to Mid Essex CCG, Essex Public Health and to the Essex Health & Wellbeing Board. Its main roles are to:

- Be a decision-making body in respect of setting and delivering small projects including the funding of such
- Be a locality group to inform the CCG and ECC of local health and wellbeing issues, and translate Mid-Essex and countywide initiatives into local action, and
- Be a forum for disseminating and discussing information relevant to partners.

As required and requested, the Group liaises with local health service providers, our MP and SWF's local authority Councillors about individual and generic issues of concern/interest to them.

The Group attended and exhibited at the SWF Annual Town Public Meeting on 9 April 2019.

### Our Organisation

In 2018 we recognised that times change in various ways and one is that the way this Group has operated for twenty years needs updating. Today people are much less available and likely to attend meetings unless of particular interest and relevance. But people are hungry for information and welcome and use opportunities to express opinions and interact on social media and virtually. So we know we must operate more in that way. We will continue to run meetings but only when necessary and not regularly (other than our obligatory AGM).

So we must increase the use of our website, our social media outlets and develop more e-communications and virtual activities. As you'll see from the previous two sections a great deal is being done, but we need to communicate about it all more than just by way of this report, the regular reports we provide to SWF Town Council and the occasional communications our volunteers have managed during the absence of administrative support.

During this year the Group has strengthened its ties with the PPG Chairs. It has been particularly important to demonstrate a united front in dealing with the progress of the New Health Centre. To this end since the January public meeting there have been joint meetings with the MECCG main players who are delivering the Centre by assisting the Practices. There will continue to be such meetings on a monthly basis until the Centre opens.

There is one specific area of work where there is a major benefit in closer collaboration between the Group and the PPGs and this is in the use of social media and electronic communications. The Group offered to make available its website and Facebook and Twitter feeds to PPGs. An offer that was accepted. PPGs can put things on the individual Practice websites but there is evidence that patients use these websites mainly for booking appointments and requesting repeat prescriptions, which of course are the main reasons for their existence. Communications with residents is of primary importance and the Group is evolving to ensure that it embraces the most effective way of doing this.

Unfortunately our Administrator moved away in late summer 2018 and our Chair has often been out of action this last year due to serious family illnesses. We have tried our best to recruit a new Administrator but so far without success. Sadly recruiting volunteers is increasingly difficult as people's lives become ever busier. However, we know from various sources that the people of SWF have strong feelings about health and social care. The volunteers who have set up and kept this Group running for the last two decades have built good foundations, delivering various benefits for SWF. Succession planning and passing on the baton is necessary as we're not getting any younger!

#### 4. Future Activities

Maintain existing contacts, relations & sources of involvement and engagement. Identify developments in health and social care of relevance to the patients, service users and people of SWF and act accordingly. Our mission remains to represent SWF in patient and public engagement and involvement, and to get the best from existing systems and services.

Immediate future developments

- One way or another secure the necessary Administration support without which this Group cannot operate as it is needed to do

- Hold Task Force meetings as required, for instance about issues raised with MECCG, the Success Regime, the Mid & Soth Essex Sustainable Transformation Partnership and the Local Neighbourhood Plan
- Develop and deliver e-communications, provision of relevant information to SWF and virtual activities
- Publicise and use Facebook & Twitter social media accounts
- Increase public profile
- Redesign website

## 5. Officers

Chair:	Peter Blackman
Task Force Chair:	David Birch
Minutes Secretary:	Jackie Birch
Administrator:	Vacant

April 2019

Many thanks to Donna Cooper who was our Administrator until early autumn 2018 when she moved away. We wish you well for your future and are extremely grateful for your cooperation whilst we have and continue to try to recruit a successor.

Tremendous thanks to David and Jackie Birch for 'holding the fort' a lot during the last year as Peter has been largely absent for some prolonged periods due to serious family illnesses.

## 6. Recommendations & Request

We commend the work of the Group and this Report to SWFTC.

We request that SWFTC considers and accepts this Report.

As far as possible, the Group has delivered value for money. The remaining funding will enable the Group to deliver an integrated approach to all levels and types of health and social care as they affect and apply to the patients and population of SWF. We are exploring all possible means of recruiting a new Administrator so that the Group can continue to deliver its much needed work.

The Group requests continuation of SWFTC's support and in due course further funding towards its future administration. We will continue to consult and keep you advised of developments, progress and future arrangements.