

# COUNCILLORS IGNORE PUBLIC OBJECTIONS

- **Disastrous Riverside Road Project to go Ahead**
- **Serious Questions Remain Unanswered**

On Wednesday 30 January Lowestoft Coalition Against the Cuts had the chance to put the concerns about the Riverside Road accommodation Project to Waveney District Council. LCAC thanks all those who made this possible by signing our petition either online or in the precinct.



Unfortunately councillors were unable or unwilling to provide any answers. Here is how it went:

**LCAC:** You have halved WDC staff numbers in the last five years and more redundancies are to come. Why does the business plan contain no assessment of future staff numbers? How do you know what to build? **No answer.**

**LCAC:** Are the Riverside Road offices being built for the private and outsourced partners who will contribute nothing? **No answer.**

**LCAC:** The plan, co-written by Norfolk Property Services, involves selling off about ten properties. NPS stands to collect a commission when it sells them. Is this right? **No answer. (LCAC has found out that NPS does stand to profit in this way.)**

**LCAC:** If you are centralising services why have you got two centres, the Marina and Riverside Road Offices? Doesn't this defeat the object? **No answer.**

**LCAC:** Whose bright idea was it build on Riverside Road and to shift five hundred jobs away from the

High Street and town centre shopping areas? "Riverside Road is in the centre. It is the centre." (Colin Law, Tory, Council Leader. Laughter in the Chamber followed.)

**LCAC:** Have you made an impact assessment of the effect on shops and other businesses of moving five hundred jobs out of town? **No answer. (LCAC has found out that no impact assessment has been made.)**

**LCAC:** Why was the redevelopment of the Town Hall site not considered as an option? **No answer.**

**LCAC:** Why was the site occupied by the old WDC Housing Offices not considered. It is central, is owned by the Council and could contain all Council departments. **No answer.**

**Green Councillor Graham Elliot** pointed out that building offices outside the Town Centre broke Waveney's own planning guidelines. Curiously, he got no answer either. On the fate of the Town Hall there was much waffle, **Tory Councillor Martin Parsons** entered fantasy land with the building becoming the centre of a "erm, cafe, artistic quarter". The people are to be "engaged" about its future. And then the project was voted through. Only five voted against, four Labour and one Green.

*The campaign to stop the Riverside Road Project goes on. You can write to the Lowestoft Journal with your views or lodge a complaint with WDC Monitoring Officer, Arthur Charvonia.*

## WHAT YOU CAN DO...

- Support LCAC by joining our leafleting every Saturday, 11-1pm, in the town centre precinct, outside the Britten Centre.
- Join our email list - keep up to date with activity in your area.
- Photocopy this leaflet and pass onto friends and workmates.
- Support the local libraries campaign - contact Pauline on 01502 586412.
- Want to know more? We can supply a speaker for your group or trade union branch.

**Contact us**

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# LOWESTOFT COALITION AGAINST THE CUTS

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# IS LOWESTOFT AT CRISIS POINT?

Waveney District Council and Suffolk County Council, HealthEast, the mental health trust, the James Paget Hospital – they are all cutting and closing. The historic Town Hall is to close. Lowestoft Hospital is to close. Carlton Court Hospital's services are being decimated. The James Paget Hospital is "not clinically viable".

Blundeston Prison is to close and, on the horizon, the hugely important CEFAS operation is planning to move out of town.



LCAC's recent public meeting, October 7

Call that a crisis? Those who attended the public meeting called by Lowestoft Coalition against the Cuts on October 7 think so. Most who didn't attend think the same.

### HOPELESS AND CLUELESS

Faced with falling wages and benefits and a failing economy what is our local council doing? Waveney District Council is buying land to build more houses and is building new offices for itself, taking hundreds of jobs out of town. Do you have any confidence that it is even capable of understanding what is going on when the council is driving the decline?

Everyone but the councillors sitting in the chamber and the officers, soon to be rehoused in "a box surrounded by a car park", can see it. Many who were at the meeting had also been to the Town Hall when the ludicrous Riverside Road Office Project was

discussed. They were appalled by the standard of debate. Most councillors, who draw thousands of pounds in expenses, said nothing. Councillors and officers alike were described as "hopeless" and "clueless".

HealthEast's consultation on the future of Lowestoft Hospital was a sham. Faced with the alternatives of an apparent offer to spend millions on new premises and services or to keep Lowestoft Hospital and "do nothing" (their words) what is surprising is that so many voted to keep the hospital.



Speakers at the LCAC public meeting

### IT'S NOT ALL ABOUT A THIRD CROSSING

LCAC will be at the meeting about the future of Lowestoft called by businessman Peter Colby. We want to make sure that all the issues faced by all the people of Lowestoft count. A third crossing will not end zero hours contracts, will not end low pay or benefit cuts, will not stop the closure of Lowestoft Hospital or the privatisation of the NHS.

### PUBLIC MEETING

**The Third Crossing & Future of Lowestoft**

*Called by Peter Colby*

**Wednesday 13 November, 7pm**

**The Hotel Victoria, Kirkley Cliff Road**

# LOWESTOFT WANTS TO KEEP HOSPITAL

## LCAC hospital ballot results: YES 4 NO 190

In a snap opinion poll held between 11.00 am and 1.00 pm in London Road North, Lowestoft on Saturday 28 September and 5 October, 2013, organised by Lowestoft Coalition Against the Cuts, 194 members of the public posted their one word answers in the polling box to a simple question: Do you agree with HealthEast's decision to close Lowestoft Hospital?



The answer was overwhelming. Only four out of 194 agreed with the closure decision.

The poll exposes the consultation for what it was. An apparent offer to spend millions or continual decline? The consultation was an expensive fraud. What is surprising is that so many voted to oppose HealthEast's "preferred option".

### LOWESTOFT HOSPITAL CONSULTATION

HealthEast was apparently offering to spend millions on a new health centre in Kirkley and one in north Lowestoft but would close the hospital and buy beds in private care homes. Its alternative was to "do nothing", that is to allow the hospital's decline to continue. HealthEast got the answer it wanted. LCAC has launched an official complaint against the "loaded" questionnaire.

### THE JAMES PAGET HOSPITAL

As HealthEast's consultation ended the JPH announced £20m cuts. The hospital is "not clinically viable" says new Chief Executive, Christine Allen, who intends to close departments, cut 600 staff and shorten hospital stays. Emergency readmissions have doubled in the past ten years and workers predict "chaos" in A&E this winter. Yet HealthEast will close Lowestoft Hospital which takes pressure off the Paget. Why?

### BECCLES, HALESWORTH AND SOUTHWOLD HOSPITALS

Andy Evans, Chief Executive of HealthEast, told

Lowestoft residents that if his plan to close Lowestoft Hospital goes through then all Waveney's community hospitals, at Beccles, Halesworth and Southwold will be closed. Do the people of Beccles, Halesworth and Southwold know this?

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

Local GPs own HealthEast the body which controls most of the NHS budget for Great Yarmouth and Waveney. Do GPs support cuts to NHS services? Do they support hospital closures? Do they support privatisation? Ask your GP.

### CARLTON COURT HOSPITAL

Based in Carlton Colville, the hospital provides inpatient and outpatient services for those suffering from mental health and dementia conditions. Need is growing but the Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Trust is closing Poppies, the day centre, and proposes to replace hospital beds with home visits. Over 400 jobs are to go. Clinicians have labelled the plans "chaotic" and "dangerous". Last year 161 "serous incidents" including 53 "unexpected deaths" were reported to the Trust. It is a disgrace.

## ALAN MILBURN DISCOVERS POVERTY...

Alan Milburn, ex Labour Health Minister and now the Tory's Mobility Tsar, has discovered that we are getting poorer. That is us, not him. Working people cannot exist on what they earn. 2.3 million children live in poverty. 5.6m adults of working age live in poverty. Most of the poor are in work.

His main proposal, and the one being touted by commentators, is to means test pensioners' allowances. Or, to put it another way, blame the old. Set up young people to blame old people. Yet the plain and obvious fact is that wealth is being continually redistributed to the already wealthy. We are getting poorer because they are getting richer.



## AND WE DISCOVER ALAN MILBURN...

Milburn was the minister who opened up the NHS to private companies and pushed the PFI hospital rip-offs. Resigning from parliament when the expenses scandal was being probed he has prospered by advising the giant healthcare companies on how to exploit the cannibalising of the NHS. His jobs include advisor to Lloyds Pharmacy and advisor to Pepsico. He is on the board of private equity company Bridgepoint Capital owner of CareUK. Suffolk County Council's Tories disgracefully sold the county's care homes, and their vulnerable residents, to this appalling firm. CareUK is responsible for much of the 111 service disaster, not to mention the Broadland home care failures.



Now PriceWaterhouse Coopers, the world's largest accountancy and consultancy firm, "has recruited" social mobility Tsar, Milburn to lead its healthcare arm. His aim: "to drive change across the health sector and PwC's growing presence in the health market." You bet.

We are getting poorer because they are getting richer. Here's how it happened.

## MAKING WORK PAY ENOUGH

Since the 1970s when workers were defeated at the hands of Thatcher and her successors there has been a continuous shift of wealth towards the rich.

Two parents must now work to support a family. Mortgage and credit card debt ballooned. Even working families couldn't support themselves; the state paid benefits to working families to subsidise inadequate wages.

The wealthy found new investments in banking and privatisation. These are little more than unpro-

ductive rackets but they were more lucrative than the weak British industrial sector. And it didn't involve any real work.

The banking crisis was simply this. Earning less of the nation's wealth workers relied on debt and benefits while the nation's wealthy encouraged more debt so that workers could maintain consumption. It was not sustainable and the crash was inevitable.

Austerity aims at more cuts and more privatisation. The NHS is the biggest prize yet for the parasites in the City with Royal Mail next on the list. Disgracefully, Suffolk County Council has sold off its care homes and elderly residents to the notorious City firm CareUK. Wealth is being shifted even further to the rich.

For workers austerity has meant real hardship and further attacks on jobs, on rights, wages, pensions and benefits. Food banks and pay-day lenders are symptoms of the new economy. It is as unsustainable as the economy which led to the crash of 2007/8. Austerity solves nothing and a new crisis will follow. For workers it is a con.

"Making work pay" is an insulting and deceitful slogan. The fact is that work doesn't pay enough. The cuts and the hardship are making matters worse.

Trade union leaders have to show leadership and the Labour Party or another party needs to understand that this isn't just a game. We have to shift wealth back to those who create it. LCAC is campaigning to make that happen.

**We didn't vote for these cuts and this is our alternative\*...**

End tax dodging believed to cost £150 billion a year

Tax the rich

Stop the disastrous foreign wars, expenditure on weapons of mass destruction and invest in green jobs

Stop the bankers paying themselves obscene bonuses

Levy a Robin Hood tax on bank turnover

\*Resolution passed at LCAC launch rally - 2 March, 2011