

HOSPITAL CLOSURES: IT HAPPENED IN LOWESTOFT

We have seen this before. Andy Evans, the CEO of Health East, has already had a "consultation" over the fate of Lowestoft Hospital. Like with the other Community Hospitals, he started building an alternative out-of-town Health Centre before the consultation started in 2013. He offered every service imaginable at Lowestoft's new centre, with no mention of cost. The alternative was a costly repair at the hospital and no new services. The use of beds in private care homes to replace NHS hospital beds was brushed aside as "not privatisation".

The plan was then sold on the usual guff: "It is better to treat people at home" ; "The hospital is out of date" etc. It was not surprising that the plan went through, although those who attended the meetings were overwhelmingly hostile. What was surprising was the number who voted against the plan. More indicative of local feelings was the snap poll held by Lowestoft Coalition Against the Cuts (LCAC) in the town centre over two days. The answer was overwhelming. Only four out of 194 who answered the simple yes/no question "Do you agree with Health East's decision to close Lowestoft Hospital?"

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

agreed with the closure. LCAC also printed the CEO's forecast for the other Community Hospitals: "If it is right for Lowestoft it will be right for them too," he said in response to our question. No one else printed his reply.



Andy Evans

Two years later Lowestoft Hospital is still there but plans for its use are still unclear. Some services are still there and some renovation on part of the building is to go ahead. It is unclear whether this is the promised health centre for the north of the town. Some staff found employment at the James Paget Hospital, others just left. Finding suitable beds in private care homes has unsurprisingly been a problem. The site and the main hospital building will no doubt be sold.

Out-of-hospital teams working from the new Kirkley Mill Health Centre have been hailed as a success. Yet the James Paget Hospital is bursting at the seams and the A&E lead consultant has said that more beds are needed. Lowestoft Hospital used to provide these as do the other Community Hospitals. They should be kept.

The country is awash with money. There is more than enough to properly fund the NHS.

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.
- Forward this leaflet and pass it onto friends and workmates.
- Want to know more? We can supply a speaker for your group or trade union branch.

Contact us

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HOSPITAL CLOSURES: A BETRAYAL OF THE NHS

Health East, the Clinical Commissioning Group for Great Yarmouth and Waveney, plans to save £4.3m by closing hospitals in Halesworth and Southwold while Northgate and All Hallows will lose their 20 beds.

Instead, out-of-hospital teams will treat patients in their own homes or they will be sent to care homes. A new private care home is planned on NHS land in Reydon near Southwold and another in Halesworth. In Beccles 21 beds will be left to service the whole of Great Yarmouth, Waveney and much of the surrounding areas. Beccles Hospital has apparently been spared because it doesn't belong to the NHS.

Local community hospitals, mental health services, the James Paget Hospital and the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital are all suffering major cuts. The NHS budget has not

been protected. Faced with an increase in the number of patients, particularly an increase in elderly patients, the NHS was told to make £20bn of "efficiency savings" over five years. Staff have paid for this through frozen salaries.

If the NHS budget were to keep pace with inflation and more "efficiency savings" created, the gap in the next five years will be a minimum of £30bn. That only means more cuts and more privatisation.



The Patrick Stead Hospital, Halesworth



HealthEast consultation meeting, Southwold, 10 June

Local GPs offered an alternative to the closure of Lowestoft Hospital but were ignored. Lead consultant in A&E at the James Paget Hospital, Duncan Peacock, says it is an illusion that the NHS can work with fewer beds and that the NHS needs more beds not fewer.

In Halesworth a meeting of over 300 including experienced health professionals heard of major weaknesses in Health East's plans. Andy Evans' claim that Lowestoft now saw fewer patients sent to the James Paget Hospital fell apart. More are sent to other community hospitals

because the James Paget is full.

These plans are simply property deals and the privatisation of NHS beds. They are a desperate and dangerous response to cuts dressed up as improvements. They should be rejected outright.

www.lowestoftagainstthecuts.org.uk

THE LABOUR LEADERSHIP... AND THE MYTH OF THE MIDDLE GROUND

Immediately after the General Election respected BBC political correspondent John Pienaar interviewed, or rather listened to, the old fraud Peter



Mandelson. Trade and Industry Secretary under Tony Blair, Mandelson is notorious for his comment that the Blair government "was intensely relaxed about people getting filthy rich".

THE OLD FRAUD MANDELSON

Mandelson got filthy rich as did Blair, Alan Milburn and a host of other Labour leaders. They moved on to join companies which are profiting from the privatisation of public services, the process started by Blair, Mandelson and their friends. For 23 years they presided

over the transfer of wealth to the richest in society, a process started when Thatcher defeated and neutered the trade unions.

Rather than strengthening the position of working people the Blair government used tax credits and encouraged debt to cover a further shift in wealth and to provide a veneer of prosperity. The banks took full advantage, the skyscrapers in the City and New York monuments to their wealth and power.

It was unsustainable and the crash the direct and inevitable result. We are paying for it now. As bad, the Blair government led credulous MPs into a war that was disastrous for the people of the Middle East and now, for us as well.

Yet the old fraud Mandelson was treated by Pienaar as a guru. The defeat of Ed Miliband was the result of abandoning New Labour policies, of being too left wing, of being hostile to business, according to Mandelson. Pienaar didn't challenge him.

In other interviews Pienaar pushed the same line. Blair won three elections for Labour, he prompted. When one stumbling Labour stalwart was stuck for words, Pienaar filled in, "the middle ground, where elections are won and lost".



WHAT ABOUT SCOTLAND?

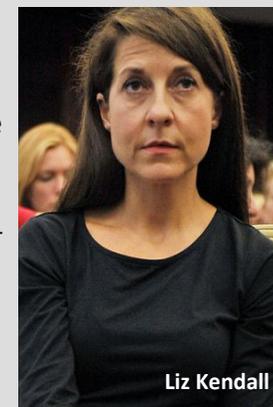
This is nonsense. Labour lost in Scotland far more spectacularly than in England. The Scottish National Party (SNP) wiped out the Tories, the Lib Dems and Labour exactly because it didn't attempt to woo "the (elusive) middle ground". Labour lost in both



countries because it huddled fearfully in no man's land wearing hand-me-down Tory policies.

Three of the four candidates for

the Labour leadership go along with Mandelson. Andy Burnham, originally portrayed as the "left" candidate, chose a speech to international firm Ernst & Young to announce that "wealth creators" should be treated as "heroes". Ernst & Young is the company which audited bankrupt Lehman Brothers, the bank which started a crash which went round the world. They failed to report Lehman's bankruptcy and were fined a mere \$10m for negligence.



JEREMY CORBYN CAN WIN

Three candidates and the political commentators are left bemused and confused by the popularity of Jeremy Corbyn. His audience listens when he speaks. They agree when he says that it wasn't the great mass of the people who caused the crash. They don't want hospitals closed and care homes privatised. They don't want to see fellow citizens impoverished while the bankers enrich themselves.



Andy Burnham, Yvette Cooper and Liz Kendall fail to see the obvious; the Blair years were a disaster for working people and searching for a mythical "middle ground" is inherently stupid. Geologists know that the ground shifts. These three career politicians don't. That is why Jeremy Corbyn can win the Labour leadership election and go on to win a general election.

LOWESTOFT COALITION AGAINST THE CUTS

Next meeting

Monday 20 July, 7.30pm

United Reformed Church
London Road North, Lowestoft
(opp Poundstretcher)

All welcome