

**Minutes of the Red House Forum Meeting  
Wednesday 25 November 2015 - At Park Hall Council Offices**

**Present**

Chris Marsden	Chairman of the Harpenden Society - in the Chair
Teresa Heritage	Co-Convener of the Red House Forum - Herts CC Councillor
Eric Midwinter	Co-Convener of the Red House Forum – Harpenden Society
Diane Brett	Project Director, Hertfordshire Community Trust
Chris Knibb	Head of Communications, Hertfordshire Community Trust
Derek Bird	Chairman, Friends of Harpenden Memorial Hospital
Marjorie Biggs	Secretary, Friends of Harpenden Memorial Hospital
Helen Clothier	St Albans Patient Group
Rosemary Farmer	Harpenden Town and District Councillor
Patrick Fisher	Harpenden Mencap
John Harris	Davenport House PPG /L&D Hospital Governor
Nicola Linacre	Harpenden Town Councillor

**Apologies**

David Law	Chief Executive, Hertfordshire Community Trust
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**Introduction**

The agenda for the meeting had been previously circulated:

1. Update on the Project's progress – Diane Brent
2. Involvement of the community in furthering the project – Chris Knibb
3. Discussion about the input of local community facilities/charities/agencies – Diane Brent

**Update**

HCT is moving towards finalising the Outline Business Case for presentation to the HCT Board on 28 January 2016. It is based on two options – Refurbishment of the Stewarts building which was built in 1994 and is in very good condition, and a new build on the site.

An architect has been engaged to look at how the existing Stewarts building can be refurbished and/or altered to deliver the estimated services summarised in the recent paper. DB commented that this option appeared at this stage to be more deliverable with limited planning issues.

Depending on the decision of the Board in January, HCT would proceed to prepare a full business case.

**Engaging the Voluntary Sector**

Item 3 on the agenda was taken at this stage as DB circulated the existing plan of the Stewarts for discussion about how the voluntary sector might become involved and what facilities would be ideally required. There was a suggestion that the entrance would be changed, a lift would be installed to provide easier access to the first floor, a separate children's centre would be created and that parts of the ground and first floors would be made available for community use. There would also need to be an increase in car parking.

DB confirmed that the L&D had advised HCT of its intention to take space for diagnostics, including phlebotomy and Harpenden Physiotherapy also wished to take space. The CCG had given support to the creation of a “Mini Hub” on the Red House site under Your Care Your Future agenda.

Much discussion followed presentation of these outline ideas with the Harpenden Society ready to galvanise local community support early next year when the HCT board had approved the Outline Business Case. The following initial suggestions were made:

- Incorporate a community meeting facility with provision of refreshments
- Use the Town Council list of voluntary organisations/charities to reach out for input
- Harpenden Society also has access to a list of voluntary organisations following its recent initiatives

Discussions then progressed to questions about the future of the Red House existing buildings and the valuable site. What had happened to the earlier outline business case proposals to incorporate a “step down” bed facility in partnership with a care home provider? Indeed, TH asked whether we were now in a different place regarding the redevelopment of the Red House and was it the intention of HCT to sell off the site?

DB could not respond to these questions and reminded us that HCT was a provider of services that must be commissioned by the CCG. In the case of a care home facility it would be the CCG and Council which would commission beds.

TH agreed to ask questions at Council level and DB agreed to take up the matter with the CCG. A suggestion that she should be joined by John Harris and Derek Bird was thought inappropriate and so was not discussed any further.

### **Involvement of the Community**

Chris Knibb spoke briefly about involving the community much of which had already been discussed. Much of the feedback which he was inviting had already been captured in previous Harpenden Society public meetings and in the expensive Your Care Your Future detailed analysis. So there was a suggestion that we should not seek to re-invent the wheel!

### **Harpenden Mencap**

Patrick Fisher advised the meeting that its wish to provide facilities on the site were not financially feasible given the price which would have to be paid for a portion of the site.

### **Conclusions**

1. It was confirmed that the Red House Project Group was fully supportive of the current proposals for converting the Stewarts or a rebuild on site as outlined by DB
2. However, questions would be raised about the loss of elements of the original outline business plan drawn up by Mark Carman, considered by the Gateway Review and endorsed at the time by HCT. Teresa Heritage would take this up at County level and DB would take it up with the CCG.

**Date of Next Meeting - Monday 1 February at 9.30am, Park Hall Council Offices.**