



09/06/15

### ECH Chairman's response to last week's GY Mercury's front page

After reading the GYM this morning, I was dismayed that once again the public are going to be confused by two conflicting appeals to build hospice facilities for adults in our area. In December 2013, chairman of the JPUH, David Wright, stated that it would be "wrong to be seen to be competing with another local charity with similar aims and therefore a fundraising campaign for a hospice at the Gorleston hospital would not be launched".

I am also horrified that in launching this appeal now for a hospice on the grounds of the JPUH that Mrs Lovick could use ECH's own strapline 'raise the roof' in her appeal, showing that not only is the Louise Hamilton Centre aiming to duplicate services that are already planned for Margaret Chadd House independent hospice, but also using the same wording – somewhat of a 'dirty trick' one feels.

May I take people back to 2005 when the JPH launched Palliative Care East without a business plan or a consultation with the public? The plan was to merely build a drop-in centre with a running cost of £25,000 pa and in December 2005, Dr Blossfeldt attended the Palliative Care Working Party meeting to offer his apologies for the oversight that the working party had not been informed of the plans. He stated "it will not be a hospice and therefore will have no inpatient beds but a drop-in centre where patients and families can visit when they have the need for support".

It seems unfair to a community that has fully come behind ECH's appeal to build a completely independent hospice separate from any NHS interference, that there may now be a situation where two appeals will mean a splitting of public money and the possibility that no such hospice service will be forthcoming at all. Would the public like one hospice built for use, or no hospice at all?

ECH have never said anything negative about the Louise Hamilton Centre, knowing that it is providing ad hoc support for people while we are still working towards raising our funds to build. However, many of our supporters are very upset that they gave money for a hospice to the LHC and that is not what the money was used for. The LHC is now part of the JPUH rather than a separate charity, so with NHS cuts being what they are, may be at risk in the future. In the rule of being a Foundation Trust, the JPUH are able to raise funds on the open financial market and therefore should they be asking for charitable money?

Brandon Lewis MP, who is a patron of both ECH and LHC, has been clear and categorical that although he supports both charities, he cannot support a hospice on hospital land. "A hospice would ideally be independent of a hospital." He also would like both charities to work together.

East Coast Hospice Ltd, Ground Floor, Sussex Road Business Centre,  
Sussex Road, Gorleston-on-Sea, Great Yarmouth NR31 6PF  
Telephone: 01493 718707; E-mail: [office@eastcoasthospice.org.uk](mailto:office@eastcoasthospice.org.uk)

Patrons:

Peter Aldous MP, Stephen Bumfrey, Dr Therese Coffey MP, Lady Dannatt, Lord Deben, Clare, Countess of Euston;  
Lady Freud, Susan, Lady Gooch; Brandon Lewis MP, Helen McDermott; Belinda, Lady Somerleyton; Dr Patrick Thompson  
East Coast Hospice Ltd, Charity number 1129631, Company number 6792702; VAT number 173 6805 89; [www.eastcoasthospice.org.uk](http://www.eastcoasthospice.org.uk)

ECH has full planning permission on their rural site and a network of 9 shops to help support the running of the hospice once built. Why would another organisation set themselves up in competition, rather than choosing to support one already in process? Why? Is it because the JPH's services are being outsourced generally and it fears that it will not have any services to provide in the future or that it is losing revenue from the local CCG and needs the palliative care budget? A hospice is a holistic environment and ECH is very close to starting to 'raise the roof' of Margaret Chadd House. It will be more than just beds on a ward, it is an ethos of Tender Loving Care 24/7, 365 days a year.

I feel so sad that we're in this situation once again of appearing to be in competition with another local organisation when it is so unnecessary to be fighting to provide similar services and when promises have been broken. To be able to make an informed decision, it is necessary to know all the facts and I hope the public will appreciate our clarification and continue to donate to raise the roof of Margaret Chadd House.

Jennifer Beesley (Mrs)  
Chairman of East Coast Hospice

East Coast Hospice Ltd, Ground Floor, Sussex Road Business Centre,  
Sussex Road, Gorleston-on-Sea, Great Yarmouth NR31 6PF  
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