

Statement from Alan Mak MP on the Emsworth Victoria Cottage Hospital

Like many of you here tonight, I was not pre-warned that the Victoria Cottage Hospital was going to be put on the market for sale.

After finding out via social media, I responded immediately and have spent much of the last four weeks working hard on this issue and finding answers. I have now been in touch with all the major stakeholders including 2 NHS bodies and many Emsworth community groups.

While I cannot be here this evening, I wanted to update you on the work that I have done so far, and assure you I'll continue to take action.

Firstly, I am convening a meeting in Early September, in Emsworth, with all the important stakeholders, including Community Representatives.

At the meeting will be the South Eastern Hampshire NHS Clinical Commissioning Group, who decide if the site can be used for medical and health purposes in the future; NHS Property Services, who own the building; Havant Borough Council, who run the Asset of Community Value process locally and decide future planning issues; our locally elected councillors; and the doctors from the current Emsworth Medical Practice.

Alongside them will be a number of Community Representatives from the various groups that operate in Emsworth. These Representatives have been decided by the community groups themselves - and they will feedback on the outcomes from my meeting and be a point of contact for future engagement.

I hope that my meeting will be a good opportunity to both bring together all the decision-makers, underlining to them the views of the community that will be discussed here tonight, and agree on a road-map for the way forward.

Ahead of that meeting, I held talks in Westminster with NHS Property Services to highlight the importance of this site to the community, and I called on them to take the site off the market.

I also wrote to the CCG asking them to take the site off the market for sale.

My view is that whilst the future of the Emsworth Medical Practice's new surgery had not yet been confirmed, the Victoria Cottage Hospital site should not have been declared as surplus for medical requirements by the CCG.

I've also stressed to the CCG that the doctors have told me they are now willing to look again at using the Victoria Cottage Hospital site, if they can agree a financial settlement with the NHS.

I am pleased that following my urgent discussions and lobbying of the CCG, I have today received confirmation from the CCG that they have reversed their original decision, and the site is now no longer deemed to be surplus to requirements for medical use. The CCG written to NHS Property Services to let them know too.

This legal step ensures that for the time being, the Victoria Cottage Hospital can only be considered for use as a medical site.

Further to that, today, I have also written to NHS Property Services again asking them to immediately remove all marketing material relating to the sale of the site – including the “for sale” boards.

While this is an important and early success, it is only the first step in the process – and I will look to secure more progress at my meeting in September with the key decision-makers

When I have more updates, I will let residents know through my website, social media and my email list, which you can join by visiting my website alanmak.org.uk/EVCH

As my early interventions with the NHS bodies have shown, I do not support the sale of the site without the community first having the opportunity to buy it, which could then allow the Emsworth Medical Practice to use it in the future.

I will continue working hard on this issue with the Community Representatives, and I look forward to hearing feedback from tonight’s meeting through them.

Thank you all for coming this evening. Your attendance shows the strength of interest in this important issue – and helps me a great deal as I continue my work to secure high quality health services for Emsworth for the future.