

SRS REPORT NOVEMBER 2016

Further changes are in the offing for the local health service. Following the closure of Southwold Hospital, the Great Yarmouth and Waveney Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) is now proposing to close down the Minor Injuries Unit at Beccles Hospital.

The unit is currently open seven days a week and treats 6,000 patients a year – many from the Southwold and Reydon area. The CCG is proposing to switch the service to a local GP surgery on weekdays. At weekends people will have to rely on the NHS 111 phone service to find treatment.

The Society is concerned about a number of aspects of the proposal not least whether local people will still have access to the Beccles service and whether the changes will lead to reduced hours and place more pressure on the A and E dept at the James Paget Hospital or on our own Sole Bay Health Centre. If more people are directed to James Paget, those without transport will need the ambulance service which is already under pressure and can involve long delays.

A final decision on the proposal was due to be made at a meeting of the CCG Governors on October 27 but was postponed because of the large number of responses to the consultation. Staff at the Unit are however already reported to be leaving and the opening hours have had to be reduced as a result.

In a recent report on the closure of Southwold Police station, we mentioned – tongue in cheek – that we hoped the CCTV camera on Mights Bridge was working. It proved to be a case of many a true word being spoken in jest. Shortly afterwards there was a big robbery at the Amber jewellers in Market Place in Southwold with £16,000 worth of goods being stolen. The two thieves were reported to have escaped in a small black car. Since there is only road in and out of Southwold it seemed to be a classic opportunity for the CCTV camera to prove its worth.

Reports quickly surfaced, however, claiming the camera wasn't working – and indeed may never have worked properly since it was installed some three years ago. The Society contacted the Suffolk Police Commissioner and received a series of vague answers. It also contacted Southwold Town Council asking whether the camera was working. Both have now said the camera is “fully operational” but that they are working to improve the quality of the pictures and to introduce number plate recognition. Let's hope they sort it out before the police station closes!

At last, some good news on the handover of Jubilee Village Green in Reydon. For months the Reydon Parish council had been writing to the developers Hopkins Homes asking for the green to be legally transferred to them and had received no response. Following publication of their dilemma in the Society's monthly report, however, Hopkins finally responded saying the draft transfer had now been sent to the council's lawyers. Once the handover is complete, the Parish Council hopes to start work on creating a community garden on the site.

Finally, we are currently seeking nominations for our 2017 Excellence Awards which will be given to those who have made an outstanding contribution to the community. Full details and nomination forms are available on our website www.southwoldandreydonsociety.org.uk or from Southwold Library, Southwold Post Office or Barbrooks stores in Reydon.

John Perkins, Chairman