

# **NORMANTON TOWN COUNCIL**

## **MINUTES OF AN EXTRA ORDINARY MEETING OF NORMANTON TOWN COUNCIL**

**Held on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2021 at Normanton Town Hall at 6.30pm**

**Present:**

- Councillor E Blezard
- Councillor A Bones
- Councillor G Cheesbrough
- Councillor J Farrar
- Councillor S Hudson
- Councillor H Jones
- Councillor F Marchant – Deputy Mayor
- Councillor P Marchant
- Councillor B Mayne
- Councillor P Mayne
- Councillor J Medford
- Councillor A Moran
- Councillor R Seal
- Councillor K Wilson
- Councillor A Wood
- Councillor W Wood
- D Johnston – Town Clerk & RFO

Dr Wynn – Health Care First  
Jyoti Mehan – Health Care First

**Absent:**

- Councillor C Appleyard
- Councillor D Appleyard – Mayor
- Councillor R Best
- Councillor J Botterill
- Councillor D South

### **118. Apologies for Absence**

In the absence of the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor, Councillor F Marchant chaired the meeting.

Apologies for their inability to attend were submitted on behalf of Councillor R Best.

RESOLVED that apologies be received, and reasons approved on behalf of Councillor C Appleyard and Councillor D Appleyard.

## **119. Declarations of Interest**

RESOLVED that the following Declarations of Interest be received:

Councillor E Blezard

Item 120 – Health Care First

Reason – Member of WMDC Public Health & Scrutiny Panel

Councillor J Farrar

Item 120 – Health Care First

Reason – Member of WMDC Public Health & Scrutiny Panel

Councillor S Hudson

Item 120 – Health Care First

Reason – Employed with Yorkshire Ambulance Service

## **120. Health Care First GP Surgery**

The Deputy Mayor welcomed the Chief Executive Officer Jyoti Mehan and GP Partner Dr Wynn, from Health Care First to provide an update on the merger of Queen Street Surgery with Health Care First.

Representatives of Health Care First thanked the Town Council for the opportunity to attend the meeting and went on to provide a brief update on the administrative merger of Queen Street Surgery and Health Care First and how this would provide improved services for patients.

It was reported that the Health Care First service included surgeries in Ferrybridge, Methley, Castleford and Normanton. The merger had taken place in June 2018 but in January 2022, there would be an administrative merger which would provide one single computer system.

The benefits to patients would include:

- Better access to online appointments

- Access to prescription ordering

- Internal messaging

- Easier access and less errors

Other than these small improvements, there shouldn't be any noticeable difference to patients.

From a management perspective, there are currently 3 sets of data and 3 CQC submissions and moving forward there would only be one.

Members asked a series of questions regarding the management of the practice since the merger and made the following observations:

- Patients have expressed difficulties in obtaining appointments during and since the Covid Pandemic
- There have been complaints about long waiting times on the phone system
- There have been isolated issues of abrupt responses from Reception Staff
- There are concerns about patients being asked to travel out of area for appointments which may put Normanton surgeries at risk of closure.
- There is a lack of face-to-face appointments which puts patients at risk
- There are concerns about the patient surveys which weren't sent out to a wide range of patients

#### Responses from Health Care First:

- Robust training would be provided for all call handlers
- There are numerous call handlers on duty so calls will move faster
- Consideration is given to call wait times, rather than the position in the queue.
- The caller number has been turned off in the past, but patients complained that they would rather know where they are in the queue.
- There is a call back facility for those who can't wait on the phone.
- Demand on phone lines is higher than they would like.
- Covid vaccines had increased demand on the phone lines.
- They would be recruiting and training 10 additional call handlers.
- Quality is the priority and HCF will be improving and reviewing all aspects of service.
- It was acknowledged that Covid had changed their way of working with a more telephone-based approach recently.
- Christmas usage is traditionally lower with fewer bookings, however maximum capacity would be ready for the post-Christmas surge.
- Across the three contracts, there were 7 GP practices and 28 GPs, along with 10-15 nursing staff.
- If appointments are needed in Normanton then capacity will be provided. They analyse where the patient is from when addressing demand.
- Attending out of area appointments is an option which might work for some people if appointments are available sooner.
- Productivity improvements will be reinvested to continue to enhance service delivery.
- HCF now see around 50% of patients face to face and a further 50% on the phone.

- Some people prefer telephone appointments due to work, childcare or other personal reasons.
- Reception had to be closed due to the number of people presenting with Covid symptoms and the requirement for deep cleaning.
- Reception is now open for people to walk in without having to ring a bell.
- Surveys were carried out on paper and by text. These reached 1 in 32 patients and there was a high response rate.
- It was acknowledged that there was some bias in the survey but the information was helpful and GPOs also speak to patients daily and feedback their concerns.
- HCF were aware of Paramedic Practitioners, but this would need to be agreed through a collection of practices and subject to the availability of paramedics.
- Doctors still carry out home visits and have 2 nurses plus 6 or 7 doctors on a rota.
- Patients on palliative care get a different telephone number with dedicated call handlers.
- The suggestion of a local 'job unit' would be helpful and reduce workload but this would be a CCG issue.
- Communication between GP and pharmacy IT systems is evolving and improving.
- The main improvements from the administrative merger would be online appointment bookings. There is little else that will change as the main merger already happened in 2018.
- Information on deceased patients comes through quickly however cause of death can take some time.
- Mental Health workers are paid on a trial basis, and it is difficult to recruit. Recruitment is difficult across the board.
- A number of services have been withdrawn and patients advised to seek help privately. These antiquated practices are not thought to be helpful to the patient.
- Diabetic reviews continue to be offered at the practice.
- It was agreed that any posts on social media could be shared by the Town Council.

The Deputy Mayor thanked the representatives of Health Care First for their attendance and interesting presentation.

In the absence of any further business, the Deputy Mayor thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting.