



New Romney Town Council – Press Release



Romney Marsh – Health Service Campaign Update

New Romney Town Council has, since August 2015, been leading the campaign for improved Health Service Provision in New Romney and across Romney Marsh. The Council voted to send a letter to the then Secretary of State for Health – Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP to highlight the issue of rural discrimination in health service provision and note its concerns about local services – notably the lack of local GP's and the failure of SECamb which provides Ambulance services to meet its designated targets. Feedback from local residents helped support the Council's claims that all was not well in the area.

Since that time, the Council has co-ordinated meetings in New Romney with a range of managers from health care providers including NHS England, the SKCCCG, and SECamb with the aim of bringing the various bodies together to focus on the situation that the Marsh, and many other rural areas face.

Mayor of New Romney, Councillor Patricia Rolfe, who has led the campaign, said: “ We have, over the past year, met with a range of professionals who we know are committed to delivering a high quality service in the area. We have had the proactive support of our local MP - Damian Collins and the newly constituted Marsh Forum that represents 7 town and parish councils from across Romney Marsh. It is crucial that any new plans take into account the growing pressure of additional housing whilst mitigating the effects of a poor transport infrastructure that prevents those most in need from travelling to services located in urban areas such as Ashford or Folkestone. One of our key aims is to campaign for a purpose built new health centre that will provide a Health Hub for the Romney Marsh. This is being given serious consideration and is reflected in the Local Places and Policies consultation recently undertaken by Shepway District Council. The dialogue is ongoing and it is important that we maintain contact with providers and ensure our voice is heard.”

Hazel Carpenter- CCG Accountable Officer, said: “The SKCCCG appreciate the opportunity to collaborate to improve services locally and welcome the interest and active involvement of local representatives ”

Health service providers are facing increasing national scrutiny and the Council is well placed to feed into ongoing discussions that may affect the future of services on the Romney Marsh and it is hoped will feed into the wider discussions that are taking place across the country.

New Romney Town Councillor, Clifford Butler - who has been involved in the ongoing discussions, highlighted his concern with regard to SECAMB's response times for the locality, said: "There has been a noticeable decline in SECAMB's ability to meet the required National Targets." He added, "This against response times for the urban areas of the Shepway District, which in most cases were in excess of the requirements."

Council representatives will continue to work with providers as a revised health services delivery plan for the Romney Marsh is developed and implemented.

For further information, please contact:
Mrs Catherine Newcombe
Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer
New Romney Town Council
Town Hall
High Street
New Romney
Kent
TN28 8BT
Email: townclerk@newromneytc.co.uk
Tel: 01797 362348