

Dear Sir/Madam,

CLOSURE OF BENJAMIN COURT, CROMER.

I write on behalf of Trimingham Parish Council for the parishioners of this village. When Benjamin Court Hospital closed abruptly in 2023, the residents of North Norfolk lost a valuable and much-needed facility. It is an insult to everyone in North Norfolk that there had been no public consultation regarding its closure either.

We are all well-aware of bed blocking in hospitals due, in main, to many patients having no post-operative care available to them at home. Benjamin Court provided that facility, permitting other patients to filter through the hospital system allowing operations to proceed and to prevent lengthy waiting lists. It is utter madness that our only hospital in the area for post-op patients to recover was closed. The effect this has had on hospital waiting lists is yet to be seen. Benjamin Court provided holistic care, benevolence, empathy and compassion for its patients – all vitally important for a patient's full recovery.

North Norfolk has one of the most highly populated elderly and at-risk residents in the whole of the United Kingdom, and this vital factor appears to have been completely ignored when the decision was made to close Benjamin Court. Do you know how many people had to be returned to the NNUH after their initial discharge, due to their being no aftercare available to them? And how many patients were bed-blocking through no fault of their own, which would have had an effect on thousands of other patients on hospital waiting lists? Were those costs accounted for in your 'savings'? Probably not.

It is noted that both the ICB and Healthwatch did not describe the hospital as a 'ReAblement' unit. WHY? The ICB's replacement unit in Norwich (not even in North Norfolk!!) is costing nearly £20m. with costs spiralling - no doubt exceeding the budget *and* it is late in opening. How are elderly and vulnerable people expected to travel from North Norfolk where many would have a round trip of more than fifty miles per journey to visit a loved one?

Benjamin Court provided an efficient and cost-effective service for North Norfolk, and more importantly one which was, is and always will be, desperately NEEDED for everyone in this constituency of almost 400 square miles. It was built specifically for the purpose for which it has been used. Despite that, it is standing empty, forlorn, and derelict. What a ridiculous situation.

The residents of North Norfolk will not be taking this matter lightly, so on behalf of Trimingham's parishioners and everyone in the region, we ask you to return Benjamin Court to its essential purpose without further delay. If you are able to close the hospital without public consultation, you are able to reopen it in the same manner and we look forward to you doing so in the very near future.

I look forward to your reply.

Yours faithfully,

June Collingwood - **Parish Clerk**
Trimingham Parish Council