

14 January 2004

# **PICTURE OPPORTUNITY!**

## **PUBLIC DEMO BY MELTON ACTION GROUP ASKS PCT, 'GIVE US MORE TIME' TO KEEP HOSPITAL FROM HOUSING DEVELOPERS**



Melton First's 'Give us more time' petition will be presented to PCT Chairman, John Gant, at 1.45pm on Thursday 15 January at Melton Borough Council offices, Nottingham Road, Melton Mowbray, in advance of a meeting of the Melton, Rutland & Harborough Primary Care Trust at the Council offices. Young & old Melton First supporters will be protesting against the PCT's decision, at MBC from 1.15-2pm tomorrow, Thursday.

**THURSDAY 15.1.04**

**1.15-2pm: DEMONSTRATION at Melton Borough Council main entrance  
1.45pm: HANDOVER of Melton First's 'GIVE US MORE TIME' PETITION**

The Melton First Action Group seeks to purchase the Melton War Memorial Hospital and surrounding parkland in order to keep the site in community hands. But the local Primary Care Trust has refused the Group time to assemble a credible bid. MFAG has now asked the Prime Minister to intervene.

"All we're asking for is a level playing field of opportunity", said John Southerington, MFAG Chairman. "When the Melton, Rutland & Harborough PCT gave just 6 weeks for bids they undoubtedly knew that organisations like ours couldn't possibly produce the information needed in the time available."

"We've repeatedly asked the PCT to extend the submission period and they've refused. If they're able to contend that the community isn't interested then the site can simply be sold to the highest bidder. That means it'll become a housing development and the Hospital's parkland, trees and wildlife habitat will all vanish, to the detriment of the town and everyone living here", said John.

"We've asked the PCT to extend the sale period until the end of May 2004, by which time we believe we'll have a multi-£m scheme in place. But they're not listening to us. It doesn't appear to matter to the PCT that the community has a moral right to the land that was originally bequeathed to the people of the town back in 1921."

"Last week we wrote to the Strategic Health Authority and to the Secretary of State for Health for their backing. This week we've written to the Prime Minister. Melton Borough Council is now behind the initiative and 2-3,000 residents have confirmed their support by signing Melton First's 'Give us more time' petition. Today we want the PCT and local residents to see how serious we are about preventing this site from becoming just another housing development."

**ENDS**

**For further MELTON FIRST information and to arrange interviews call:  
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