

Letter from Mike Penning MP to Hemel Gazette

The Editor
Hemel Hempstead Gazette
Marlowes
Hemel Hempstead
Herts.

Dear Sir,

Hemel Hempstead Acute Hospital

By the time you read this letter, the Government's vandalism of our local hospital will be almost complete. Over the last few weeks the York, Boleyn, Aragon, Churchill and Simpson Wards have closed. The Catheter lab, Cardiac Care Unit, Acute Stroke Unit, A & E Services, Intensive Care Unit and all operating theatres have been closed and transferred to Watford. Since last week, all blue-light ambulances have gone to Watford rather than Hemel.

The first operating theatre opened in Hemel Hospital in 1929 and now, for the first time in eighty years, we have no operating theatres or surgical services, and there is no longer a maternity department in which new babies can be born in our hospital. As your MP, and as a husband and father living in the town, I cannot tell you how angry, sad, worried and frustrated this makes me.

I would like to place on record, on behalf of myself and I am sure of all the people of Hemel Hempstead, our thanks and gratitude to all the surgeons, doctors, matrons, sisters, nurses, porters and other dedicated staff who have so professionally served our community at Hemel Hempstead over so many years. In particular, I would like to thank the staff who have worked at our hospital in recent years under the constant threat of closures and uncertainty about their future. I sympathise with those who have lost their jobs, or now have to face costly and tiresome journeys to Watford or St Albans to continue their caring and essential service to us all.

To those of you who for years have ceaselessly campaigned, challenged and fought against these unwanted and barbaric cuts I would also like to say thank you. I still believe that the people of Hemel Hempstead need and deserve a full service hospital in the town and should not have to trek to Watford, St. Albans and Luton.

We must keep up our fight.

Yours sincerely,

Mike Penning MP