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## ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS TOWN FORUM

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31<sup>st</sup> March 2008

Mr Neil Weeks  
Council Monitoring Officer  
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council  
Town Hall  
Royal Tunbridge Wells  
Kent TN1 1RS

Dear Mr Weeks

### **Attendance of Councillors at Town Forum meetings**

You should be aware that on the 6<sup>th</sup> March a variety of Councillors removed themselves from the Town Forum meeting because we had invited Circle Health to come and speak and also because we discussed a further planning application within Royal Tunbridge Wells.

Prior to the meeting I was advised by Councillor Mayhew that she was going to vacate the meeting before she even knew what the content of the presentation from Circle Health was going to be. At the meeting others followed suit. I found this action rather a contradiction in terms, as Councillors, who represent the interests of the residents of Royal Tunbridge Wells, were therefore unable to listen to information which would have been useful to know.

I ask you why it is that a Councillor cannot attend a meeting to see a presentation, which may not include detail of the actual design build and any contentious issues? If those same Councillors had remained they could have asked more questions such as why the town needs another hospital, what was to be included in the hospital etc. As it stands much ignorance lies within and I therefore expect Councillors to be fully aware of medical requirements, how much scanners cost, what private health does in tandem with the NHS and how a resident may elect to use the services of a private hospital under the new patient choice. We have an ageing population, which put quite simply not even the new Pembury Hospital will be able to cater for.

In your reply I would like to know exactly when a Councillor should not attend a meeting and when they should. I would ask you to consider that all the time we have two planning committees we have few Councillors to represent the interests of Royal Tunbridge Wells residents, who are not on the planning committees and may not even represent the area of concern. I would also like to know how many times Councillors have stood down from a committee to represent their constituents.

Currently we face a democratic deficit within Royal Tunbridge Wells when looking after the concerns of residents in planning concerns and your actions of not finding out what would be in a presentation prior to giving advice did not assist democracy one single bit.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Thomas  
Chairman