

PM will ask for hospital 'assurances'

PRIME Minister David Cameron will be "seeking assurances" there are no reduction to the services at Witney Community Hospital after it was announced a 30-bed ward was to close in September.

Mr Cameron, who is also MP for Witney, said he would be getting in touch with Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust to get the full details of the temporary closure.

It was announced last Tuesday the Wenrisc ward of 30 beds at the community hospital will close from September 1 this year to March 31 2016 so 24 beds can be opened at other hospitals.

Oxford Health said the move would save the trust £600,000 and also allow staff to be evenly distributed across the rest of the county's community hospitals.

Mr Cameron is currently in South East Asia on business but a spokesperson from his constituency office said: "Mr Cameron will be making contact with Oxford Health to get the full detail of these plans.

"As the local MP, he will of course be seeking assurances that there will be no reduction to the level of services in Witney."

The closure of the hospital will allow for it to be refurbished, with the day room and gymnasium being revamped. The bathrooms will also be updated.

New facilities include gym and a day room

Refurbished ward is back in business

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A HOSPITAL ward in Witney that caused concern after closing for seven months is taking patients again.

Wenrise ward at Witney Community Hospital reopened on April 4, despite fears it would stay shut for good.

The 30-bed ward closed at the beginning of September 2015 with plans for refurbishment. Its nurses were sent to other wards in the county while the improvements took place.

The ward, which has a new kitchen, day room and gym, has now opened, taking 13 patients on its first day, and planned to open 18 beds by the end of last week.

Sandra Allen, matron and manager of the hospital, said: "Patients now have a lovely light space to take their meals away from the bedside in a therapeutic area and a new space for exercises and therapy.

"The League of Friends provided some new furniture for the ward's dining room and day room space as well as lots of other equipment for the hospital generally."

Staff sent to other hospitals in the county during the refurbishment returned on March 29 and spent a week completing training.

The hospital is also looking to recruit and has been interviewing for registered nurses.

Mrs Allen continued: "We are blessed with many great volunteers and receive wonderful support from our local community.

"We are waiting to take delivery

of a new hospital vehicle that will replace our currently worn-out van and have been lucky to have Witney Rotary Club's help in the fundraising effort, enabling monies to be raised in less than a year – for which we are very grateful.

"It has been a good year for the hospital and we hope to go from strength to strength."

Mayor of Witney Jim King was overwhelmed to hear the good news, as he was nervous the community would not be able to use the ward again once it shut down in September.

He said: "This is just fantastic. I was so sceptical about whether they would even open again. I'm ever so pleased. They said they would do something and they did.

"I am pleased they have honoured their promise."

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