



EXCITING: Charlie Woods is at the helm of Braintree Community Hospital as its first managing director

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Hospital is ready for first patients

£20m facility will improve health of community

By Steve Clow

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BRAINTREE'S long-awaited £20 million hi-tech hospital will admit its first patients on Monday, April 19.

And on Saturday Braintree Community Hospital will open its doors to the scrutiny of local people.

Managing director Charlie Woods, 49, told the Chronicle during a sneak peek at the hospital last week: "We are well on our way and delighted to invite the local community to come see their new hospital."

Drawing

Schoolchildren are taking part in a drawing competition and there is a contest to name a heart in the hospital, with the winners announced at the open day on April 10.

Mother-of-two Mrs Woods, from Colchester, said the hospital's aim was to become a valued facility and improve the health of the people of Braintree and the surrounding community.

Bus service is launched

THE long awaited hail-as-you-go bus service linking Braintree with the surrounding villages was officially launched on Wednesday April 21.

The initiative, devised by Essex County Council, working in partnership with Braintree District Council Community Transport, parish councils and village agents, is aiming to provide vital links for more isolated villages.

It costs only £2 as a flat rate, along with concessionary



OPENING: Spence Edge (left), operating department practitioner, and Charlie Woods, managing director of the community hospital, test out the new facilities on theatre nurse Miss Ellis (right)

Sheila Bremner, chief executive of NHS Mid Essex, said: "There will be a chance to meet some of the 30 staff, see what services are available and look round its facilities.

"All departments and facil-

ities are first class, allowing clinicians to work efficiently employing the latest techniques."

The hospital, off Rayne Road, is one of the first to provide day case surgery, outpatients and

diagnostic tests alongside the traditional services such as rehabilitation, community beds and community nursing.

Medical and surgical equipment has been installed and the consultation rooms, clinics, inpatient rooms and waiting areas furnished.

NHS Mid Essex commissioned the Grover House Group (GHG) a provider of healthcare buildings, to deliver the new hospital under a private finance initiative.

Repeated

GHG managing director Peter Copley said: "We believe that the model used by NHS Mid Essex to commission this building is one that will be repeated throughout the wider National Health Service.

The contract to manage all the services is between Braintree Clinical Services Limited, owned by Arksun and Mid Essex Primary Care Trust (NHS Mid Essex).

Initially the contract will run until 2015 with options to extend to 2017.

Inquest into death

A WOMAN who died after being rushed to Broomfield Hospital near Chelmsford has been named by police as Louise Blake, of Riffe Hill, Braintree.

An ambulance was called to an address in Riffe Hill at 9.30pm on March 21.

Ms Blake, 41, was taken to hospital but died in the early hours of the following day. Police said the death was not being treated as suspicious. A full inquest will take place later this year.

IN BRIEF

Store backtracks on parking times

BRAINTREE: A supermarket has backtracked on reduced customer parking times.

Last month Sainsbury's in Tofts Walk reduced their 11 parking limit from 90 minutes to one hour and their maximum three-hour parking time, costing £2, to two hours. But the store heeded complaints from customers and reverted to the original limits last week.

Hall's award

FEERING: The country house hotel Prested Hall has received a prestigious Silver Award from Visit England to mark its quality of its accommodation, hospitality, food and level of service and care.

The restoration of Prested Hall from the near derelict manor house it was when discovered 10 years ago was acknowledged to be "an admirable undertaking by the proprietors".

The next phase in Prested Hall's development will involve its new bedrooms and a stand-alone restaurant overlooking the moat.

Prested currently has 11 guest bedrooms.

A12 end in sight

WITHAM: The long-running 6.8 million roadworks scheme currently being carried out on the A12 between Hatfield Peverel and Witham South is now scheduled to finish at the end of the month.

The necessary work along the busy stretch has already over-run after the winter weather in December and January prevented any attempts to lay asphalt. However, work has progressed well recently.

Ringing course

COGESHALL: Holywood School is to play host to the Essex Association of Change Ringing's annual Ringing Course from today until Saturday.

The three-day event is open to all ages and students will take on both practical and theory-based lessons, taught by experienced ringers from around Essex.

It will start with the basics of church bell-ringing and there will be further opportunities for participants to advance through a range of technically challenging sessions.

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