

10/01/2005 Sue Painter **STORY SO FAR** Pre 1914: Standish House and its grounds is a private residence.n 1914-18: The Red Cross uses the site as a 130-bed military hospital.n Post 1918: Hospital is handed over to Gloucestershire County Council and Gloucester City Council for use as a sanatorium for treatment of tuberculosis.n 1921-1948: Gloucestershire Joint Board for Tuberculosis makes many improvements and extensions to the hospital. Some 270 patients now accommodated.n 1948: Standish Hospital comes under the control of the Ministry of Health. Range of services developed to include chest and heart conditions and orthopaedics. Children's ward and special school for young patients added.n 1991: Consultations start on the future of Standish. Save Our Standish Action Group formed.n January 1993: Sportability, a charity that helps paraplegics, earmarks Standish for a revolutionary clinic to help accident victims walk again.n February 1993: County health authority supports plans to transfer services from Standish to Gloucestershire Royal Hospital. A 41,000-signature petition calling for Standish to remain open delivered to Whitehall.n July 1993: Department of Health announces Standish to close and services transferred to GRH. n August 1993: Anger after it emerges plans to turn Standish site into industrial park were submitted to Stroud District Council in 1991.n August 2001: Gloucestershire Royal NHS Trust announces Standish facilities to be transferred to GRH by 2004.n 2002: Stroud's MP David Drew makes the case for keeping Standish Hospital **as an intermediate care centre**.n **January 2003: The SOS action group launches a study into making** the site a pioneering, multi-stakeholder health and social care mutual operated by and for the community. This becomes the Standish Community Initiative.n September 2003: The hospital site is put up for sale.n November 2003: The Standish Hospital Stakeholder Group, seeks the public's views on the future of the site.n December 2003: SCI wins through to the final round of bidding.n February 2004: Department of Health whittles down the bids for Standish to just two. These include the proposals from SCI – now Standish Mutual Care.n March 2004: Chas Fellows, a member of the Standish Hospital stakeholder group, calls on the government to back the bid for a community facility on the site after the public give overwhelming support for the idea.n August 2004: The Department of Health acknowledges Standish Mutual Care as the preferred bidder for the Standish Hospital site.n December 2004: Standish Mutual Care produces a detailed business plan outlining its proposals for a health and social care community at the site. The group says it is ready to start work as soon as the hospital closes.n December 29 2004: Services at Standish Hospital transferred to the Gloucestershire Royal.

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The battle for continued care
THE future of the Standish Hospital site has been the subject of fierce and passionate debate for more than 20 years. All eyes are now on health minister John Hutton who is due to make a decision on its future in the next few weeks. Today SUE PAINTER takes a close look at the background of the Standish debate, while over the next three days key players will present their cases for the future of the site...**STANDISH Hospital has long been regarded with deep affection by the people of Gloucestershire.** Medical services have been provided on the site near Stonehouse for some 90 years. And over the decades the hospital's role has changed to meet the needs of the times. This all came to an end on December 29 when facilities and patients were moved to the Gloucestershire Royal Hospital in Gloucester. The day marked a sad milestone for campaigners who have been lobbying for more than 20 years to keep Standish open. The strength of public feeling for the site was initially shown in 1993 when a 41,000-signature petition was delivered to Whitehall. Supporters later mobilised to form Save Our Standish (SOS) to campaign for the unique site, set in 31 acres of tranquil parkland, to be retained to provide health care in the area. They have long argued that the Standish site is an important asset that would be impossible to recreate. Out of SOS has grown plans for a health and social care community to promote well-being and speedy recovery. The proposals for Standish Mutual Care emerged from a £100,000 pilot study funded by the NHS. Services outlined in SMC's 60-page business plan include extra care housing for older people, **x-ray and surgery units, day clinics, respite care, hydrotherapy, physiotherapy and osteopathy, complementary therapies, skills training and NHS-funded dentistry.** There would be staff accommodation, crèche facilities and a shop and restaurant on the site and the grounds would offer special gardens and nature trails that would be open to all. SMC's ideas have won the support of a number of organisations in the county, including Gloucestershire Social Services. Portfolio holder Coun Mark Hendry says the county would be prepared to buy services from SMC should its bid be accepted by the Department of Health. "The proposals for services such as continued care for older people and sheltered housing are really exciting," he said. "There is an increasing demand for these sorts of services for older people and this will continue." "We are struggling to buy some of these services in the Stroud area. This bid could really help social services to fulfil some of its objectives of getting people out of hospitals and into intermediate care." Stroud's MP David Drew, the vice chairman of SOS for some 15 years, says the SMC bid is no "pie in the sky" plan put together by well meaning amateurs. "Standish Mutual Care has well-established companies and experts in the health field ready to move in and provide the services the community needs," he said. "What they are **planning is in line with Government plans for the future of the health service.** "Standish has a strong basis of becoming a beacon for what can be achieved." One body that SMC has failed to win over, however, is the trust that runs the Gloucestershire Royal Hospital. Its chief executive Paul Lilley argues that while he respects the proud history and affection that people have for Standish, it makes much more economic sense to concentrate health services in Gloucester. He believes the isolated Standish site is **ill-equipped to meet the standards of health care expected in the 21st Century.** And he says that its position away from main centres of population makes it difficult to get to. "The move to the heart of GRH, integrated with the Tower Block and with key diagnostic facilities, means that the NHS can move on and provide the best acute hospital facilities and clinical staffing available for all patients in Gloucestershire," he said. Attention is now focused on health minister John Hutton who must now choose between the proposals put forward by the SMC, revealed in August as the preferred bid, and a private company believed to be looking to offer a low level mental health facility at Standish. One thing that everybody agrees on, however, is the need for a decision to be made promptly on the now-empty hospital site.