

MOTEC LIFE- UK WEB NEWS

'Zena Bullmore MBE is a lady who lives in Hemel Hempstead who has championed good causes including saving and redeveloping Hemel Hempstead General Hospital. She has shown full commitment to maintaining local health services in North West Hertfordshire. Her extraordinary determination to protect acute health services shows the character of a lady that individuals and organisations involved in improving health services anywhere in the world could learn from. Dr Louisa Draper is a member of Motec Life – UK (Medical Charity) and a Personal Assistant to the organisation's President, Paul Ofori-Atta (myself). Dr. Draper interviewed Mrs Bullmore and unfolds the amazing story of the battles and the war in a free world that should encourage and prepare people committed to good causes. Read this amazing story about a lady that tickles me more than my favourite television series- 'ZENA-THE WARRIOR PRINCESS'.' Remarks Mr Paul Ofori-Atta.

A FORTRESS OF EXPERIENCE AND CHARACTER FOR HUMANITY

By Dr Louisa Draper. May 2008.



Zena Bullmore, MBE of Hemel Hempstead makes a point.

"You have got to win their trust. You have to give them the facts. You have to get people to see the justice of what you are doing. And you must respect your fellow man." Says Zena.

Interview with Zena Bullmore MBE

I recently had the great pleasure of meeting with Zena Bullmore, a well-known and well-loved member of the Hemel Hempstead community.

Zena has kindly donated some money to Motec Life UK and I met up with her to thank her for her support and to learn about her work campaigning for better local healthcare services in Hemel Hempstead, hoping that we can learn from experiences to further our work in Ghana.

“The Health of the Nation is the Wealth of the Nation”

I ask Zena why she has given the money to Motec. Having recently had a hip replacement herself, Zena says, “you don’t know how wonderful it is to be free of pain,” and goes on to explain that she believes everybody has a right to local healthcare services. Mr Ofori-Atta agrees and adds that the need for good hospitals runs deeper than healthcare provision...“there is a saying: the Health of the Nation is the Wealth of the Nation.”

In 1948 a new larger Maternity Unit was built in Hemel Hempstead to replace the existing one. It contained two wards with a Special Baby Unit and a Nursery. Zena’s children were born there.

“Where is our hospital?”

Indeed, many Londoners were moving to Hemel after the Second World War. Hemel was designated a New Town and they were promised a great new hospital. However, the development had still not begun, and in 1975, Zena started a campaign group, the Dacorum Health Hospital Action Group, without whom there would be no hospital today. I kept asking ministers “where is our hospital?”

“Promises must be kept”

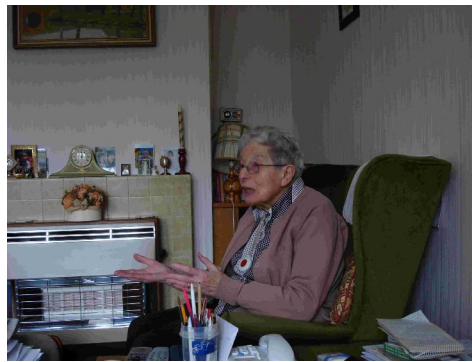
Zena was shocked to learn that not only would the new buildings not go ahead, but also that the hospital was actually at risk of closure. “Hemel was promised a new hospital when the new town was planned. People, industries and factories came here on the promise that there would be a full hospital and A&E service. That promise must be kept if our town and our district is to prosper.”

During the 70s and 80s, through numerous petitions, marches, demonstrations and visits to parliament, Zena and her action group saved the hospital and brought about a new wave of development. By the late 1980s, there was a whole new wing, with three operating theatres, an intensive care unit and a physiotherapy department. This was quickly followed by the Windsor wing for elderly care. By the early 1990s, another new wing had been built, this time a maternity and gynaecology unit with a Special Care Baby Unit and a Children's Ward with an Outdoor play area, plus a Cardiology Unit with Catheter Laboratory, Pathology and General Medical Wards.. Since then the Jubilee wing has been added, with the invaluable Accident and Emergency department, Nuclear Medicine and Rapid Assessment Unit.

“Keep local services local”

So what has driven Zena to work so hard for over 30 years? She is clearly a woman of principles, who does not let political or religious issues cloud her work. Despite being a member of the labour party, she feels this is irrelevant and just wants to do what she

feels is best for the community. “All sections of our community are represented on our committee: the whole community needs a hospital.” Her main motivation is to “keep local services local.” Mr Ofori-Atta agrees. His work for Motec is also driven by the principle that everyone deserves a right to local and accessible healthcare. He says “in Ghana, the Health service *is* the infrastructure” and adds “the World Health Organisation promised “Health for All by the year 2000, but it seems that we are moving health services away from local communities.”



“If a thing is right, it’s right.”

But why has she persisted for so long? *“If a thing is right, it’s right. If a thing was wrong yesterday, it’s still wrong today.”* It is this strong sense of conviction that has motivated her for so many years. “There have been other campaigns, but they have given up too easily. The powers that be will try to wear you down. We knew we had to outlast them.”

Support for her work has come from a dedicated committee and the people of Dacorun.

“Determination and Positivity”

Even with such a strong sense of conviction, it is incredible to think how much one can achieve. So how can we learn from Zena for our work in Ghana? She replies “I don’t know, I have it easy, ” modestly saying that her struggles are nothing compared with the development of healthcare systems in developing countries. On the contrary, it seems she has overcome many obstacles and struggles. We can certainly learn from her determination and positivity.

She agrees with one of the central tenets of Motec, ‘education is essential, and people must be kept informed’ and, she says- “you must be organised.”

She also says that the other key to her success is her “wonderful team.” How can we motivate others to work with us? How can we build teams, develop hospitals? How can we build communities that will prosper and flourish? She says:

**“You have got to win their trust.
You have to give them the facts.
You have to get people to see the justice of what you are doing.
And you must respect your fellow man.”**

What is striking and beautiful about Zena is her calm and unbreakable determination and perseverance. She seems unruffled by anything. “We must continue fighting”. Her sense of what is right drives her on. I only hope that I can learn such dedication and devotion to *never* give up in fighting for what I believe is right.



Zena and Louisa photo finish

And her final tip for overcoming adversity - **“I’ve been lied to, I’ve been let down, but I never say anything...I’m like Paul, I keep smiling! I smile a lot!”**

Louisa Draper
MOTEC Life UK
19th May 2008