

April 2016

Dear Patient,

Proposed Porthcawl Primary Care Centre

We are seeking your support and help with regards to the proposals for our move to the new Primary Care Development.

The Partnership has been in negotiations for the last ten years to progress a new Health Centre for the people of Porthcawl, and the plans for the proposed centre were due to be discussed in BCBC's planning meeting on Thursday 31st March. However, despite receiving support from the Planning Case Officer throughout the development process, we were informed, with one week's notice, that the application had now been deferred due to objections from the Highways Department. We believe that this is due to an unrealistic expectation of the number of car parking spaces that should be made available.

Working and living in Porthcawl, we have heard numerous rumours and suggestions from residents over the last few months and we would like to take this opportunity to dispel these rumours and answer some of the suggestions that have been made.

Extend Portway: We have looked into this in detail, and the current site is not large enough to provide the necessary facilities and the land close by is not available to buy. We also will have to rely on the current car park remaining.

Police station or Ambulance/ Fire Station: This is not for sale and will not be for the foreseeable future. We have approached South Wales Police / Fire Service / Ambulance Trust about this on several occasions. It is not an option.

Salt Lake and Coney Beach: This land is in joint ownership with BCBC and a private owner. It is earmarked for regeneration, whenever that may happen. Although we have asked, it is not possible for it to be sold piecemeal to provide us with a patch of land to build a surgery on, so again, this is not an option.

Sandy Bay: We have asked on several occasions if it would be possible for the council to sell a piece of land on the edge of Sandy Bay close to New Road School. However, this, like Salt Lake and Coney Beach, is not available to us.

The council did suggest 2 pieces of land as possible sites – Playground by Nottage Forge or land adjacent to Nottage Primary School. Both of these are less suitable than the Mallards Reach site due to their position.

We are very concerned about the impact that **NOT** having the new development will have on the practices and on the healthcare services to patients in Porthcawl. We are also very disappointed that the plans we have in place to make the changes to services will no longer be an option and in fact may well result in services being withdrawn.

More space will allow us to explore new systems and ways of working to improve access and to deliver services from one site. We also want to provide extended minor operations, increase diabetic and respiratory services, and offer a safe comfortable environment for our dementia patients to receive treatment. We have also expressed an interest in being able to provide Palliative Care services in the new centre which means patients will not need to travel to Bridgend or Cardiff.

We are also aware that Dr Eales, being a singled handed GP, does not have any space in his surgery to bring in another GP to support him. This could mean that when Dr Eales retires, Porthcawl will only have one surgery operating in the town and we would not be in a position, if we remain in the current premises, to absorb any of his patients. This again, could lead to Porthcawl patients having to travel to North Cornelly or Bridgend to see a GP.

We, as a Partnership, are extremely concerned about what is happening. We would like to stress again that we have been looking for a suitable site for TEN YEARS and the Mallards Reach site is the only realistic option we have ever been given. But this is now under threat. We would be very grateful if all those residents of Porthcawl, who want to see Health Care facilities improve within the town, would write to the Chief Planning Officer, quoting reference P/15/787/FUL to express their support or alternatively email planning@bridgend.gov.uk . We are aware that the developers have offered to purchase some additional land to provide additional car parking for staff but these have been rejected by the Council. It is saddening to feel that healthcare is a hostage to car parking.

We know that some of you have very genuine concerns, but we have been working very closely with ABMU Health Board and know that they are doing everything they can to address all the concerns that patients have expressed. We know, for instance that they have agreed to support the costs to extend the No 61 Bus Service from Nottage to include the new centre.

As our patients, your health and wellbeing is the reason we became General Practitioners. We want to continue to provide the best service to you that we can and to do this we need new premises. We thank you for any support that you can give us.

The Doctors
Porthcawl Group Practice