

**An Exchange of Correspondence between the Civic Society of
Shaftesbury and Abbey View Medical Centre Practice Manager,
Dan Burnham**

From:

Anthony Austin; Chair, Abbey View Medical Centre, Patients Association

Shaftesbury Civic Society is among those bodies in Shaftesbury who are very concerned about the expansion of housing in the area and the effect that this is already having on the facilities and services in the community. It has become abundantly clear that Dorset County Council and North Dorset District Council have allowed developments without ensuring that the costs of Education and Health Services match the growing needs.

I believe all patients are equally anxious about the apparent growing pressures on our Doctors and health “workers” and for this reason I have been given the go-ahead to let you have a summary of an exchange of correspondence. Between the Civic Society and the Practice Manager.

22. Dec 2014

From

Dick Ripper

Hon. Treasurer, Shaftesbury Civic Society

To:

Dan Burnham, Practice Manager, Abbey View Medical Centre

Dear Mr Burnham,

Housing Expansion in Shaftesbury

You will be aware of the current controversy concerning plans to further expand the housing in the Eastern part of Shaftesbury; two areas, one in Dorset and one over the border in Wiltshire, are in discussion.

The Civic Society's position is that **Planning Permission** for the Dorset area [Barratt's] **should be refused** at this time, on the grounds that the infrastructure [schools, roads, and **medical facilities**] which was planned and paid for when the previous housing areas were approved has not been provided, and the existing facilities are overloaded. We would take a similar position concerning proposals over the border in Wiltshire [which would in effect be part of Shaftesbury].

We believe that the medical and parking facilities at the Abbey View Medical Centre are already under strain, even though the previous development has not yet been completed, and that the medical centre would become overstretched by the construction of yet more housing.

We are not aware of any firm plans for increasing capacity. To our knowledge, no site has been identified for another medical centre, and it appears that the existing site cannot be expanded.

We would appreciate being advised of the position of the medical centre is on the matter, and whether you have been consulted by any of the relevant authorities. Do you have plans for increasing capacity? May we know what they are?

Dick Ripper

Dan Burnham's Reply

Thank you very much for your letter which I have circulated to the executive partners.

First the Shaftesbury Practice partners empathise with the Civic Society's concern over the planned residential developments in Shaftesbury. A preliminary check prior to the recent NDDC planning scrutiny & review meeting confirmed that the practice's list size has increased by 1400 to its current 15,257 patients. **It is not just the numbers: the significant proportion of social housing brings with it an increase in clinical and social complexity which has to be managed and supported.** We continue to contribute to the North Dorset District Council (NDDC) planning consultations and have brought in the NHS Area Team's planning & premises lead. **Note that the second paragraph of your letter implies that the associated infrastructure (schools, medical centres etc.) was planned and would be paid for by the developers. Our partners recall that this was not the case.**

Our most recent assessment (October 2013) showed that we have the correct clinical capacity for our existing patient list. That said we are actively engaged with NHS Area team (Wessex) and the Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group to identify the future clinical space that we will need to cope with a patient list of 17,000. There is no big pot of gold within NHS England for new surgery buildings and certainly the partners cannot afford to fund the multi-million pound cost of a new super surgery. **However getting an endorsed clinical capacity requirement will enable us to bid for grants and subsidies from NHS England to reconfigure and, possibly, expand our premises at Shaftesbury, Fontmell Magna and, post 1 April 2015, Sturminster Newton and Marnhull.**

In the short term we are:

- Seeking to quickly produce costed projects to increase the car park capacity, accessibility and drainage. Despite the fact that the surgery offers 73 car parking spaces, car parking remains major issue for our patients. **(Please note that the practice is not contracted to provide parking, cannot afford to fund the work itself & that NHS England will not pay for surgery car parking stating that this is the local authority responsibility).** The projects will be submitted via NDDC Planning Officer, to the developer to seek a proportional contribution.
- Analysing our current usage, with our Sturminster Newton partners, to identify ways to expand our clinical capacity through relocating administrative functions.

- Negotiating with other users of our facilities (district nurses, community matron, health visitors, midwives, community mental health team, counsellors, podiatry, specialist diabetic consultants, cardio rehabilitation etc.) to identify mutually beneficial ways to make better use of our facilities. **We don't want to lose these teams as co-location is key to the delivery of integrated health & social care envisaged in the NHS 5 year Plan and the ongoing Dorset Clinical Service Review**
- Use the spare capacity at Fontmell Magna surgery which is currently open four mornings per week. However please note that this comes at additional expense for the practice as there is not central funds for ongoing costs. Sturminster Newton are concurrently investigating increased utilisation of their satellite surgery at Marnhull
- Prepare and submit costed reconfiguration bids to NHS England. Any bids must meet NHS England Premise guidelines and must be supported by an endorsed future clinical capacity requirement. Despite the political rhetoric about extra money submission requirements and deadlines are tight. There is no guarantee that funding will be approved.

The merger with Sturminster Newton will enable us to provide a greater range of clinical service to our 24,000 patients, free up clinical space and rationalise support functions. GPs and practice teams make 90% of all NHS patient contacts which equates to 1.3m patient consultations everyday – 150,000 more than even five years ago – yet the share of the budget we receive stands at a record-low 8.3%. We need to merge and innovate to survive and be in a better position to exploit the future primary care contracts opportunities. With our North Dorset contemporaries we are investigating federating, in order to be able to retain future Public Health England contracts and ready for the inevitable move to 8 to 8 opening, provision of out of hours cover etc.

As always we try and think like a patient but act like a tax payer whilst remaining a viable, innovative local business.

I hope this helps.

Regards

Dan Burnham

Note from AA: I have used coloured highlights to identify those areas of significant importance.

The Patients Group is closely involved and consulted on issues. I hope you find this letter useful

Anthony Austin
11th February 2015