



Working for the Community in Rotherfield, Mark Cross, Eridge Green, Boarshead and surrounding areas

ROTHERFIELD PARISH COUNCIL ACTS TO SAVE VILLAGE SURGERY

The Parish Council Surgery Working Group, consisting of councillors and members of the community, met on Friday January 12th. At this meeting, it was agreed to recommend to Rotherfield Parish Council that, at its January 25th meeting, it resolves to proceed with purchasing the surgery premises to protect GP services in the village. Funding for the purchase and upkeep is to come from a loan from the Government's Public Works Loans Board, together with contributions from charities and community groups.

The Council has now begun the process of having the property valued in order to seek a Government loan of about £500,000 to purchase the property from the local practice, which had seen closure as the only option in order to recompense the partners, some of whom wished to retire.

At a public meeting in November, more than 400 local people packed the village hall to demonstrate their feelings against the closure and many said they would be prepared to pay to keep a doctor's presence in the village. Closure would have meant a difficult journey for elderly patients to the practice's other surgery at Jarvis Brook, as there is a very limited bus service, which stops 500m short of the surgery.

Now a local charity, The Rotherfield Trust, has pledged £100,000 towards the purchase and running costs of the scheme and the Parish Council is to seek a loan of about £500,000 from the Public Works Loan Board. Another local charity, Rotherfield St Martin, will be fund raising for the project as will The Friends of Rotherfield and Brook Surgery.

When the building is purchased and renovated, it is envisaged that apart from the doctor's presence, rooms will be let to other health care professionals such as chiropodists and therapists, to save the elderly from having to make journeys to other towns to seek treatment.

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