



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

Proposed Closure of Rotherfield Surgery

The partners have proposed the closure of Rotherfield Surgery and the transfer of all patients to the Brook Health Centre.

The closure is deemed necessary due to the difficulty of securing a new partner to support the running of both the Brook and Rotherfield surgeries. There is a national difficulty of recruiting partners to practices as most GPs prefer to work as salaried GPs.

It is felt by the practice that the practice would be more manageable if it is run from one site, and as the Brook is the larger site and has the bulk of the 7,200 patients affected, it is proposed to close the Rotherfield Surgery.

TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE

The closure process is not fully known at this point. The following is known:

- The surgery has applied to the High Weald Lewes Havens Clinical Commissioning Group (HWLW CCG) to close the Rotherfield Surgery. They presented their proposal to close the Rotherfield Surgery to the meeting of the HWLH CCG's Primary Care Commissioning Committee (PCCC) on 3rd October 2017. The minutes of this meeting will not be available until 29th November – a week before the next meeting of this committee on 5th December 2017. It is understood that at the meeting on 3rd October the Committee instructed the practice to:
 - consult and engage with patients about the proposals
 - provide evidence that the Brook is capable of accommodating the increased number of patients
 - consult neighbouring practices about possible impact.

- The surgery was initially expected to consult a number of existing patients from across their patch, but this has now been extended to all patients. Letters are expected to go out on 23rd October for reply by mid November.
- There will be a public meeting organised by the practice at 1.30pm on Saturday November 4th 2017 in Rotherfield Village Hall.
- The next meeting of the PCCC is on 5th December 2017 (there is a subgroup of this committee, the PCC Operational Group (PCCOG) which meets on 7th November at which the closure could be discussed – but the agenda for this will be monitored). It is expected that the feedback of the surgery's consultation will be presented at the 5th December PCCC meeting. These meetings are held in Lewes. Members of the public may attend but it is not usual. (Frant surgery (800 patients - part of the Wadhurst Medical Group) was recently given permission to close. This was agreed within 5 weeks of the proposal going to the 1st August meeting of PCCC, at the PCCOG subgroup, apparently without any consideration of consultation feedback.)
- The Parish Council have contacted the CCG and Healthwatch (who represent the 'users' of the health service) to ensure that the consultation process is properly conducted and considered by the surgery and the CCG.
- The practice has given notice to leave the premises to other healthcare providers located at the Brook (osteopath, physiotherapist and chiropodist) to create the space to accommodate increased patient numbers.

IMPACT

According to the HWLH CCG, the number of patients who reside in Rotherfield is 2,528. 4,157 reside in Crowborough and a further 649 in surrounding villages and so the proposal will affect between 2,500 and 3,000 patients. It is frequently already difficult to park at the Brook Health Centre and the waiting room is also very busy.

It is anticipated that some patients may choose to go to other surgeries in the area such as the Beacon or Saxonbury (Crowborough), Wadhurst,

Mayfield, Buxted and Heathfield and the practice has been asked by the PCCC to consult these.

It is proposed to accommodate increased numbers at the Brook Health Centre by expanding into the areas currently occupied by the chiropodist, osteopath and physiotherapist. Plans for increasing the already poor car parking are not known.

In the short term, from 6th November the practice intends to redirect all incoming phone calls made to the Rotherfield Surgery to the Brook Health Centre and to open Rotherfield Surgery at 9am. From the 4th December, Rotherfield Surgery will close at 1.30pm on Mondays and Tuesdays and the Brook Health Centre will open on Tuesday afternoon. They hope to close Rotherfield completely by 1st April 2018.

HEART OF THE VILLAGE FOR 40 YEARS

The Rotherfield Surgery was opened in 1980 after the commendably community minded sale of the land by Douglas Hoath to Doctor Routh to provide the service in the centre of the village, prior to this, patients had to walk to the far end of Mayfield Road to visit the Doctor.

Jarvis Brook opened in 1998 and in 2000 was expanded to provide for complementary health care, the NHS dentist and the pharmacy and again in 2007 to accommodate the expanding needs of these health service providers.

It is anticipated that the closure will have a very adverse affect on St Denys's Pharmacy, as there is a pharmacy right next to the Brook Surgery, which patients will use. The viability of the Rotherfield pharmacy has to be in question. It is currently very well used.

The reduced footfall in the Village will have an adverse effect on all the local businesses.

If this closure affected any other commercial business in the village then the village would be able to step in as a community to take over the business if it felt it was sufficiently important, but this is not possible with the surgery.

The League of Friends was founded in Rotherfield and the majority of participants in the newly formed Patient Participation Group hail from Rotherfield or even further south and east.

Transport

The only public transport to the Brook Health Centre from Rotherfield village is the 224 which runs on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. There are two buses leaving Rotherfield at 10.15 and 12.18 from which you could return to Rotherfield, at 11.41 and 13.11. A return adult fare is £3. This bus stops at Crowborough Station and the Brook is 450m further up a very steep hill. This is totally impractical for those with young children or the elderly and infirm.

There is no public transport from Mark Cross or Mayfield and Hadlow Down.

Rotherfield St Martins currently arrange transport for 177 members. They can usually manage to arrange transport for appointments booked in advance but find it very difficult to make arrangements at short notice.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Rotherfield Parish Council advise that, as soon as possible, and before the deadline for papers for the next PCCC meeting (29th November) you:

- Write to the body responsible for making the decision regarding the proposal. Their contact details are:

Elizabeth Tinley,
CCG Primary Care Contracts Manager
High Weald Lewes Havens Clinical Commissioning Group,
36-38 Friars Walk,
Lewes,
East Sussex
BN7 2PB

- Write to the surgery and return the questionnaire

Rotherfield Parish Council will:

- Write to the CCG
- Write to the surgery
- Write to Nus Ghani and Huw Merriman
- Write to Wealden District Council and East Sussex County Council
- Write to Healthwatch
- Mailshot as many houses in the Rotherfield, Mark Cross and surrounding areas as possible
- Keep the Rotherfield Parish Council Facebook and website pages up to date with the latest information