



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

23rd November 2017

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

Dear Madam,

ROTHERFIELD SURGERY – CLOSURE PROPOSAL

Rotherfield Parish Council most strongly objects to the proposed closure of the doctors' surgery in Rotherfield.

The practice is proposing the closure of the main surgery at Rotherfield and the transfer of the patients currently registered there to the branch surgery at Jarvis Brook, which is 1.7 miles away. The proposed closure will affect 3,000 of the 7,200 patients registered to the practice.

IMPACT ON THE VILLAGE

The Rotherfield Surgery has been at the heart of our village for 40 years; it is easily and centrally accessible to the many elderly patients in our Parish and those with young children and no transport. More than 25% of Rotherfield's population is aged over 65. The surgery supports the existence of a pharmacy in the village and without the surgery there is no doubt that it will be affected and that the reduction in footfall will have a knock-on effect on the other businesses in the village.

ACCESSIBILITY FOR THOSE WITHOUT THEIR OWN TRANSPORT

There is no viable public transport to the Brook Surgery from Rotherfield. There are bus services provided by Wealdlink, however, these consist of only two return journeys each morning. On a Monday, Wednesday and Friday the services call at the Crowborough Station bus stop which is 480m from the Brook Surgery, separated by a steep walk. On Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday an alternative route is followed with the nearest stop in Western Road and a longer uphill walk of 650m to the surgery. The existence of these Wealdlink community transport services is currently under threat. There is no footpath between Rotherfield and Jarvis Brook.

IMPACT ON THE PATIENTS

We have an active charity supporting the elderly (Rotherfield St Martins - RSM) which anticipates that the closure would directly affect 177 of their members. RSM arranges transport for various appointments for these members and can do this with advance notice but finds it particularly difficult to arrange transport at short notice.

Clerk: Trevor Thorpe, 82 Fermor Way, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 3BJ

Tel: 01892 664245. Email: clerk@rotherfieldparishcouncil.co.uk

Parish Council Website: www.rotherfieldparishcouncil.co.uk Twitter [@rotherfieldpc](https://twitter.com/rotherfieldpc) and on Facebook



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There are parents and children in the village who have medical needs but no transport. Many other elderly residents currently have access to some transport but this move will deny them their future independence and access to health care.

The removal of the surgery at Rotherfield may well place extra stress on the partners through requiring a greater number of home visits from those unable to access the Brook Surgery and an increased demand on accident and emergency services for the same reason.

CAN BROOK HEALTH CENTRE ACCOMMODATE THE INCREASE?

It is unclear how the Brook Surgery could accommodate the increased number of patients, even with the inclusion of the rooms soon to be vacated by the complementary health practitioners. The existing waiting room provision is cramped and the car park is already frequently full.

The road outside is congested, being near a trading estate. It is frequently blocked by articulated lorries for which this road is the only access not constrained by weight or height restrictions. Congestion is also caused by commuter parking on the road due to the surgery's proximity to Crowborough Station.

ASSUMPTION OF APPROVED CLOSURE

We are disappointed that the practice has taken measures which would assume that this decision is a foregone conclusion by already giving the complementary care practitioners located at the Brook Surgery notice to leave. We note that the NHS dentist has not yet been given notice to quit as was proposed in the practice's initial proposal to the CCG. The existence of the complementary healthcare practitioners is vital to some in the community at Jarvis Brook and their removal will be a loss to those patients.

IN CONCLUSION

The number of parishioners attending the public meeting on November 4th was testament to the great service we currently receive from the practice and the value which the parishioners place on it. The closure of the surgery would remove adequate access to healthcare for many in our community and diminish their independence.

We would ask that no decision is made until sufficient time has been given to explore all possible avenues of keeping open the main surgery of this practice in Rotherfield.

Yours faithfully,

Trevor Thorpe
Clerk to Rotherfield Parish Council

CC. Nus Ghani, MP, Huw Merriman, MP, Cllr. Phil Dixon (WDC), Cllr. Bob Standley (ESCC), Cllr. Frances Whetstone (ESCC), Cllr. William Rutherford (WDC),
Drs. Davies, Golton and Hester, Rotherfield Surgery Partners

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