

MINUTES OF A SINGLE ITEM AGENDA OF A TALGARTH TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD REMOTELY AT 7PM, WEDNESDAY 16 JULY 2020, TO DISCUSS THE HAYGARTH DOCTORS' PROPOSAL FOR A REDUCTION IN THE OPENING HOURS FOR HAY AND TALGARTH MEDICAL CENTRES AS FROM 1 OCTOBER 2020

MEMBERS PRESENT BY VIDEO LINK: Cllr W Powell (Town & Powys County Councillor), Mayor (In the Chair), Cllr P Lewis (Deputy Mayor), Cllr A Bufton (*for part of the meeting*), Cllr M Dodds, Cllr G Jones, Cllr A Lord, Cllr TMcClatchey, Cllr R Reid, Cllr S Thomas,

APOLOGIES: Cllr L Elston-Reeves Cllr C Voyle

IN ATTENDANCE BY VIDEO LINK: Josephine Rumsey (Town Clerk)

WELCOME: Cllr W Powell, Mayor, welcomed members to the second virtual meeting of Talgarth Town Council by Skype.

20/77 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: Cllr A Bufton declared a personal and prejudicial interest and left the meeting , as his wife is an employee of the Haygarth Medical Centre . Noted Cllr Bufton left the meeting at 7 10pm and took no part in the discussion or decision making. The Clerk had arranged for Cllr Bufton to sign up the Declaration of Interest form.

20/78 TO DISCUSS EMAIL DATED 13 JULY 2020 FROM HAYGARTH DOCTORS, WITH COPY OF THEIR LETTER DATED 9 JULY 2020 TO THE POWYS COMMUNITY HEALTH COUNCIL (CHC)

Clerk had previously circulated to Town Councillors, the email dated 13 July from Mrs Gwyneth Gore, Practice Manager, on behalf of the Haygarth Doctors, together with a letter which had been sent by the Haygarth Doctors, on the 9 July to the Powys Community Health Council, advising them of their proposal for a reduction in the opening hours for Hay and Talgarth Medical Centres as from 1 October 2020. Noted that this email and letter was also been circulated to the various Town/Community Councils that support their patients .

The Haygarth Partners invited representation from the Town /Community Councils, to discuss the contents of their letter to the CHC, at a virtual meeting on Tuesday 21 July at either 2.30pm or 4 pm.

The letter dated 9 July from Haygarth Doctors to the CHC, (*copy attached for reference*) makes a statement that:

“As partners, we therefore feel that we have no other choice but to reduce the overall opening hours of Hay and Talgarth Medical Centres to generate cost savings and enable us to continue to deliver the quality care that our patients deserve. Our plan would be to alter our opening hours as per the table attached.

These decisions have not been taken lightly. However, we fully believe that it is in the best interests of our patients that the total nurse triage system needs to continue, particularly in light of the current Global COVID-19 pandemic.”

The Clerk had circulated, for discussion at the meeting, a proposed draft letter to be sent, urgently, from the Town Council to the CHC, which had been prepared by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, taking into account the points already put forward by fellow Town Councillors, and from researching relevant information, expressing grave concerns at this proposed reduction in surgery opening hours for Hay and Talgarth and the reasons why, together with some further questions to the CHC regarding the Haygarth Doctors' proposals.

Discussion took place and some of the main points of concern raised by Town Councillors, included:

- That as of 1 October, the Haygarth Doctors intend to reduce surgery hours by 30% at the Talgarth site and 22% at Hay on Wye as a cost cutting measure, which will have a huge impact both clinically and socio-economically on all members of our community; but especially on the increasingly elderly population.
- That the Haygarth proposal falls well short of ‘good practice’ on their part in terms of quality, duty of care and patient engagement.
- That consultation on this matter needs to be opened to the wider public.
- That Powys Teaching Health Board (PTHB) need to engage in open and frank dialogue with the public.

RESOLVED: To accept this draft letter to the CHC with the addition of the fact, that’ it is nationally recognised that Powys has an increasingly aged population - and a matter of public record that the unemployment rate in the County has grown by 100% in recent months and in the Hay/Talgarth area by an alarming 363%’, and to forward it to the CHC urgently as they have a meeting with the Powys Teaching Health Board on Tuesday 21 July.

Agreed to share our letter of concern to Carol Shillabeer , Chief Executive, and Jamie Marchant, Director of Primary and Community Care , Powys Teaching Health Board, Kirsty Williams, MS, Fay Jones, MP and Jesse Norman, MP, County Councillors and Town & Community Councils who use the Haygarth Medical Centres and the Brecon & Radnor Express.

(The final letter from Talgarth Town Council dated 17 July to the Powys CHC, is attached for reference).

Agreed that Cllr P Lewis, Deputy Mayor , Cllr M Dodds and Cllr T McClatchey, between them, will attend both the virtual meetings on 21 July and report back their findings to the Town Council

20/79 DATE/TIME OF NEXT MEETINGS (VIRTUAL):

7.00pm Wed 29 July 2020

7:00pm AGM Wed 16 September 2020

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.50 pm.

SIGNED:

DATE:



www.hay-garth.co.uk

Dr Sean O'Reilly, Dr Julie Grigg, Dr Antonia Bradley, Dr Steven Epstein,
Dr Jamie Bingham, Dr Luke Shutts, Dr Rebecca Thomas, Dr Bethan Pritchard

Hay-on-Wye

☎ 01497 822100

Talgarth

☎ 01874 713000

The Medical Centre

Forest Road

Hay-on-Wye

Hereford

HR3 5DS

9th July, 2020

Community Health Council,

1st Floor
Neuadd Brycheiniog
Cambrian Way
Brecon
LD3 7HR

Dear Sir/Madam

We are writing to you to advise of a reduction in the opening hours for Hay and Talgarth Medical Centres from 1st October 2020.

As you will be aware, the South Powys Locality with Red Kite Health Solutions have been involved over recent years in developing a new model of primary care. This included the development of 'Pharmacy teams' and on the day triage through pacesetter projects with Powys THB.

Haygarth Doctors was able to take this a step further in piloting Total Nurse Triage through a similar funding stream, which included providing remote triage support to another local practice. The rationale behind the telephone triage is that the patient is able to see the most appropriate clinician within a suitable timescale. The results have demonstrated improved access for GP

appointments (for example the wait for a routine GP appointment reduced from over two weeks to an average of 3-4 days), an increase in appointment duration so that GPs are able to spend more time with patients of whom an increasing number have very complex needs. The system also addressed improved continuity of care, a reduction in missed appointments (DNAs), improved access, practice morale, professional development of our nursing team and enhanced multi-disciplinary team working.

More recently, in the current pandemic, whereas the national news was quoting reductions of 40% in referral rates for patients with suspected cancer our urgent suspected cancer referral rates have remained at the same level as last year. We believe that this is due to our patients being familiar with the triage system already rather than needing to adapt to a sudden change to triage triggered by Coronavirus and the system itself being flexible enough to cope with rapidly changing numbers of patients and staff.

Unfortunately, Haygarth Doctors has received a 3 month notice from Powys THB that the funding for Total Nurse Triage will cease on 1st October 2020 and have been advised to make choices regarding service provision should we wish the pilot to continue. As clinicians, we believe that the clinical outcomes of Total Nurse Triage have improved the quality of care we are able to provide to our patients. (In fact the Royal College of General Practitioners awarded the project a 'Bright Ideas Award' which are given in recognition of innovative approaches that have been tried and tested on the frontline.)

As partners, we therefore feel that we have no other choice but to reduce the overall opening hours of Hay and Talgarth Medical Centres to generate cost savings and enable us to continue to deliver the quality care that our patients deserve. Our plan would be to alter our opening hours as per the table attached.

These decisions have not been taken lightly. However, we fully believe that it is in the best interests of our patients that the total nurse triage system needs to continue, particularly in light of the current Global COVID-19 pandemic.

Yours sincerely

Haygarth Doctors

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Talgarth Medical Centre opening times

	Opening Hours	Prescription collections
Monday	8.00 am – 1.00 pm	8.00am-5.00pm
Tuesday	8.00 am – 6.00 pm	8.00am-6.00pm
Wednesday	8.00 am – 6.00 pm	8.00am-6.00pm
Thursday	8.00 am – 1.00 pm	8.00am-5.00pm
Friday	8.00 am – 1.00 pm	8.00am-5.00pm
Prescription Collections will be available from the designated prescription hatch		

Hay-on-Wye Medical Centre opening times

	Opening Hours	Prescription Collections
Monday	8.30 am – 6.30 pm	8.30am-6.30pm
Tuesday	8.30 am – 1.00 pm	8.30am-5.00pm
Wednesday	8.30 am – 1.00 pm	8.30am-5.00pm
Thursday	8.30 am – 6.30 pm	8.30am-6.30pm
Friday	8.30 am – 6.30 pm	8.30am-6.30pm
Prescription Collections will be available from the designated prescription hatch.		

TALGARTH TOWN COUNCIL

Mrs Josephine M E Rumsey, Town Clerk

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“Ty-Carreg”

Bronllys Road

Talgarth

Brecon

Powys LD3 0HH

17th July 2020

Ms Katie Blackburn

Chief Officer

Powys Community Health Council

1st Floor Neuadd Brycheiniog

Cambrian Way

Brecon LD3 7HR

Dear Ms Blackburn

On Monday 13th July, we received by email, a copy of the letter to you dated Thursday 9th July, outlining proposed changes in the opening hours at Haygarth Medical Centre, affecting both its Hay and Talgarth sites. In your statutory role to represent the interests of patients locally, we therefore write to you now, on behalf of Talgarth Town Council, with our formal response and to express our significant concerns about the proposals.

Firstly, we would contest the narrative given for reducing the opening hours at both sites. We understand that the practice received short term “pacesetter funding” from Welsh Government - not Powys Teaching Health Board (PTHB) - intended to help them test new models of primary care. This was in part to help address ongoing GP recruitment challenges and to develop new flexible ways for patients to access their services. That fixed term funding has now ended, albeit PTHB extended it from local funds for a further six months during COVID - 19 and that funding has, as anticipated, come to an end. The Haygarth practice now state that they feel they have no other choice but to reduce the overall opening hours of Hay and Talgarth medical centres to generate cost savings and to enable them to continue to deliver the quality care their patients deserve. How can they, with credibility, claim to be delivering equivalent quality care by *reducing the opening hours at Talgarth by 30% and Hay by 22%*?

In terms of engagement with patients and the community, we acknowledge that GPs have relatively few statutory requirements placed upon them, as long as they are fulfilling the requirements of the contract, which they will seek to argue that they will continue to do, by providing a service as required in statute to: “be available” from 8am to 6.30pm core hours across the two sites. However, this clearly means that patients would be required to travel from Talgarth to Hay and vice versa to a much greater extent, in order to receive medical attention. In this case, what assessment has been undertaken as to how severely this will impact on the elderly and those who rely on public transport? In addition to this, what regard is being paid to the environmental impact of the additional vehicular movements that will be necessitated by the Haygarth proposals?

The general equality duty does certainly apply, including ensuring that an equality impact assessment has been undertaken in developing such a far reaching proposal and in making a decision. Good practice

in this area would include engaging with patients to understand the equality implications of different options for responding to the end of fixed term “pacesetter funding” from Welsh Government. Demonstrating good practice in positive community relations would suggest a more proactive approach. Whilst accepting that this is more challenging during the COVID-19 pandemic, we would contend that the Haygarth proposals fall well short of good practice, in terms of the equality duty and patient engagement.

As a Town Council, with our own budgetary responsibilities, we are at a loss to understand how reducing overall opening hours at Hay and Talgarth will generate significant cost savings. Does this involve staff cuts, reduction in staff hours or reduced GP hours? If this is the case, it will clearly have a further adverse impact on quality of care in our community. We are also keen to learn if this proposal also affects the other three practices in South Powys which are part of Red Kite Health Solutions or is it only Haygarth which is seeking to reduce hours? What level of public consultation is required, as the proposal will make a significant change to the delivery of patient care by an organisation funded by the public purse? We are also interested to learn if - and in what way - the pilot has been evaluated to substantiate the claims of success made by Haygarth Doctors? If so, does the report support the claims and is it in the public domain? If an evaluation has not taken place - why not?

Finally, Regulation 20 of the General Medical Services guidelines states: 'A contract must contain a term which requires the contractor in core hours, to provide, essential services and additional services funded under the global sum, at such times, within core hours, as are appropriate to meet the reasonable needs of its patients'. How can it be reasonable to expect elderly and vulnerable people, and others who are socio-economically disadvantaged, to have to travel between Talgarth and Hay to access essential medical services? It is nationally recognised that Powys has an increasingly aged population - and a matter of public record that the unemployment rate in the County has grown by 100% in recent months and in the Hay/Talgarth area by an alarming 363%.

As a Council, we know the CHC's commitment to championing the cause of quality healthcare in our area, and therefore request that you and your colleagues look at these proposals as a matter of priority. We understand that the PTHB's Joint Services Planning Committee meets with the CHC early next week, so we look forward also to the Health Board moving quickly to a critical appraisal and definitive position on the Haygarth proposals.

We would appreciate an acknowledgement of safe receipt of this letter and a substantive response at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely

Josephine Rumsey

Josephine Rumsey

Town Clerk

cc Andrea Blayney, Deputy Chief Officer, Powys CHC

Flora Buckle, Monitoring & Scrutiny Officer, Powys CHC

Carol Shillabeer, Chief Executive, PTHB

Jamie Marchant, Director of Primary, Community Care & Mental Health, PTHB

Kirsty Williams MS

Faye Jones MP

The Rt Hon Jesse Norman MP