



UnityHealth



SAVE OUR SURGERY

Exciting plans for new community healthcare hub

Joint communication from Long Crendon Save our Surgery Working Group, Unity Health GPs and Long Crendon Parish Council – November 2020

As a result of pressure from you, the residents and patients, together with tireless work from the SOS Working Group and Parish Council, Unity Health has been able to pause its application to permanently close Long Crendon's GP surgery.

This was due to be presented to the December meeting of the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and its reprieve now means the practice can work with the community to try to enable an exciting new healthcare facility within a community led facility for the village to be built on land at Greenings, Chearsley Road.

CONSULTATION

The patient consultation has been running since the 24th August and closes on November 23rd, but GPs wanted to provide this update on progress so far. If you receive this leaflet before the closing date and want to make your views known, information on how to do this is via www.unityhealth.co.uk or collect forms from LC Butchers or the library.

SITE

LC Parish Council currently owns the land at Greenings, Chearsley Road. Before its merger, Trinity Health had an option to buy the land to build a surgery and developed an outline business case for this development, which was submitted to the Primary Care Trust (precursor to the CCG) in October 2010, but this was rejected.

The developers of this land included a surgery as part of its planning agreement, but were informed in 2015 by the CCG that any proposal for a surgery would not be supported. In 2016, Trinity Health made a successful bid for money from NHS England to look at options for the Long Crendon surgery, but in March 2017, this was amended by the CCG to look instead at the property in Thame.

At the 2020 Bucks CCG annual meeting, in response to a direct question from a Long Crendon resident, the CCG again confirmed it would not support a new surgery in the village, stating that this did not fit with the NHS Estates Strategy, which only supports new developments for patient populations in excess of 10,000 patients.

Following this meeting, the practice – now Unity Health – has met with MP Greg Smith, the CCG, our Patient Participation Group and a number of times with the SOS working group.

Pressure from you, the residents and patients, the MP and SOS group has led to the CCG recognising the need to look at alternative models of provision to serve populations of less than 10k and they see Long Crendon as an exciting opportunity to develop thinking about how these services can be provided as part of a community based primary care model.

THE FUTURE

1. The CCG has recently confirmed it will consider a proposal from the community, with support from Unity Health, to host some surgery facilities within a new community building on the Chearsley

Road site. This will not be a building focused solely on provision of health services (which it would not support) but a much more innovative, ground-breaking scheme where the provision of healthcare is an integral part of the community with the opportunity to develop a hub for community activities alongside health promotion, well-being and supported self-care.

2. This would enable dispensing to remain within the village, together with some GP/nurse/health care assistant clinics for patients unable to travel.
3. There would be support for on-line and video consultations.
4. Other allied health professionals could work from the building.
5. It would be a venue for community activities. It has the potential to be a future role model for rural general practice. Unity Health is excited to be working with the community on this project. Both Unity Health and SOS Working Group want to work with the community and CCG to get this proposal off the ground. This is important because there is a tight timescale in order to preserve the land for this use. **We must start building work by December 2021.**

PROGRESS

a) LC Parish Council has agreed the sum of £10,000 towards engaging an architect, experienced in the design of healthcare facilities, to draw up plans to be submitted for planning approval. Land and road services and utilities are in place and the build costs could be half of an original estimate of £1.4million.

b) The CCG has agreed in principle to support the rental income for the delivery of primary healthcare element from the building, subject to affordability and value for money checks.

c) There are challenges to ensure the building meets the healthcare needs as well as the needs of the community and in raising the capital to build the premises. SOS Working Group is actively investigating options for achieving this, including community fundraising.

NEW CHAPEL SURGERY - COVID restrictions mean Unity Health is still currently unable to provide clinical services in Long Crendon but are working with its dispensing team to try to offer some increased opening hours for the dispensary to make the collection of medication easier.

MODIFICATIONS – Unity Health has had an offer from a member of the SOS group to see, if once Covid restrictions ease, minor modifications to the premises can be made to enable the delivery of some clinical services from Long Crendon, if these are agreed by the CCG, pending development of the new facility.

FUNDING - The funding of rural general practice depends very much on income from running the dispensary. Unity Health has 22,000 patients across an area of approximately 200 square miles, with each site being relatively small. The funding it receives is broadly the same as a similar size practice running just from a single site. This means that its cost base is, by necessity, much higher as it has to fund a number of buildings with their own reception, clinical and other staff.

“It is income received from providing a dispensing service that enables us (Unity Health) to continue to provide GP services across the sites.”

DISPENSING - GPs are aware that local pharmacies and on-line providers sometimes target Long Crendon patients to obtain medication from them. They would appreciate your support in continuing to order your medication from the Unity Health dispensary **as its dispensing income is fundamental in enabling it to provide its services locally.**