

## Stalbridge Town Council

### Stalbridge Surgery Up-date as at Friday 6<sup>th</sup> July 2018

The present situation regarding the re-registration of patients with the Sherborne Practices is both silly and confusing.

The lack of a fully co-ordinated approach from the three Sherborne surgeries has led to dismay and confusion. People cannot understand why one Practice, or another, has been accepting new patients and is now turning them away!

It has become difficult to understand the significance of the "Boundaries" because these seem to be varying and have become fluid. Likewise, the significance of the "Inner & Outer Boundaries" and the respective discretionary obligations to patients has become hard to comprehend.

Residents of Stalbridge do not understand how one neighbour has been, or can still be, accepted by a Sherborne practice and another cannot. They cannot work out what the situation really is.

As matters stand, the Boundary of the A357 is a cut off (Inner Boundary) for the **Apples Surgery** (East v West). They are not accepting patients from the east of the A357 which divides Stalbridge right down the middle! The reason for this is that they found themselves being inundated with applications to register with them.

**Bute House Surgery** are not accepting anyone from Stalbridge and yet the **Newlands Practice** is treating Stalbridge residents as being within their Outer Boundary and accepting re-registrations, but consequently on the basis they have no obligation to accept home visits to the patient.

My contact with the Dorset CCG reveals that the **three Sherborne Practices** are abiding by their current boundaries at present, but they could exercise a little discretion and register patients who live just outside their Inner Boundary. The Inner Boundary carries compulsory acceptance for registration unless the CCG has agreed to closure of that Practice's formal Patient List.

I am told that the Gillingham surgery is prepared to offer patient registration albeit on an out of area basis. In other words, as being within their Outer Boundary. There would be no home visits, but these will be provided by another closer surgery, or by telephone, or by the Ambulance Service who are contracted to do this.

The message that the CCG are giving is that **"if patients have concerns about a prospective practice, they should contact that practice for reassurance"**.

It is also being said that **"the boundaries may change over the coming weeks (Apples, Bute & Newlands) so they could wait to see if this offers them the opportunity to register with one of them"**.

For those patients who have difficulty **travelling to appointments**, they too should be reassured that everything possible is being done to set up the **Stalbridge Community Volunteer Car Scheme** to cover transport to surgeries and other medical appointments. A Grant has been applied for and it is anticipated that the Car Scheme should be operational by early October next.

**The conclusion** to be drawn from the events of the last 12 months is that there will **no longer be a Medical Practice in Stalbridge even if any housing development takes place in the years to come.**

The service that Dr Clayton has delivered to the Community has been exceptional regarding the availability of patients to achieve early appointments, or for those times that we have chosen. Not many Surgeries Nationally can boast these levels of availability and it is **important to remember that this availability will continue up until the surgery is closed on 31<sup>st</sup> December this year**. Indeed, as patients leave the available appointments will increase! There is therefore **no necessity to rush in to registration elsewhere**.

Sadly, it is probable that we will all have to start to accept that the GP practice will no longer be as we have known it. There is likely to be the continuing merger of smaller practices and the growth of those with much larger Patient Lists. We are all in for considerable future change in the presentation and implementation of our medical services. The days of continuity of personal Doctor to Patient care may no longer be possible.

The one glimmer of **good news** is that other Surgeries in the Locality do **offer extended hours of opening** that might make things easier for some people.

**Do not forget** that there are events being held on **12<sup>th</sup> July** and **20<sup>th</sup> September** at the Stalbridge Surgery for those who have **questions about registration or related matters**. The **Events run from 1.00 pm until 7.00 pm at the Surgery**.

**Travel to access the Event is set out in the Letter dated 29<sup>th</sup> June and from the Clinical Commissioning Group**

**Tony Bishop**

(Councillor & Stalbridge Patient Participation Group Chair)

6<sup>th</sup> July 2018