

Mayfield GP Surgery

Consideration of options for location of new Health Centre

The subject of the location for a new surgery has been ongoing for some time - indeed even before the Ashdown Medical Practice took over in 2013. The Parish Council has been actively involved in the past working with the GP practice to help identify suitable locations for new premises since the council has as one of its goals to help improve the health and wellbeing of the residents of the parish.

An important aspect is that the GP practice is only prepared to rent and do not wish, or have the financial resources, to buy and/or build their own facility. This is a change from how many GPs have operated in the past and there is no longer any capital funding from government to help GPs build their own premises. The GPs also would wish the site to be fairly central in the village so as to have good access for those who have impaired mobility. Third party medical centre developers have been consulted but nothing has come of any of the discussions.

The theoretical sites that have been identified are:

1 Land at Mayfield school adjacent to North St allotments.

Meetings have been held with the school and they were not willing to sell the land. In addition vehicular access is challenging and would increase the build costs considerably

2 Cricket pitch

This idea is potentially a good one and has been discussed by the parish council and with the GPs. The problem is that the timescales for the development of the cricket pitch are out of our hands and it is unclear whether provision of a GP surgery would be financially viable for the developer, for instance they would make more money from building two detached houses than building a GP surgery. Note also that developers build at their own pace which can mean that they don't get round to building for 5-10 years post acquisition of the land. The location of the cricket pitch is also on the outer limits of what the GPs would ideally like in terms of location.

3 The field behind Erleigh

This is outside the development boundary although I understand that it has been submitted as part of WDC's SHELAA exercise. It is not clear that planning permission would be granted any time soon. Also the current access to the field is, I believe, only a single carriageway which would need to be addressed for it to be acceptable to the WDC planning department.

4 Wellbrook Farm

This site has not been pursued because it really is outside the desirable limits for easy access by most villagers and it is also outside the development boundary.

5 Various sites on the A267

These have been rejected by the GPs on the grounds that it would not be possible to walk to the surgery and a car would be essential, which is not something the GPs would countenance. There is also an issue with planning permission on all these sites because they fall outside the development boundary.

6 Court Meadow

There is space and it is close to the centre of the village. However it is recognised that not everyone is entirely happy with this location. The parish council is taking a wider view these days that one of its duties is to support the health and wellbeing of its inhabitants and that combining the proposed community centre with a GP practice creates some very appealing synergies which meet this objective.

The proposed new community centre is more than just a replacement hall in that it will, apart from providing facilities for sport and recreation, provide a base for the MAYFACS activities including a community area where people can meet etc. This is particularly relevant to the MAYFACS dementia campaign and other related activities. The Parish Council has established that planning permission would be granted by WDC for a health centre on the proposed site in Court Meadow.

Conclusion

It is for the above reasons that the parish council believes the Court Meadow site is the best available in the circumstances. The imminent public consultation will determine whether the village agrees. The arguments for and against all these different sites is given in Annex 1 attached.

Annex 1

Analysis of possible theoretical locations for new health centre

Location	For	Against	Notes
Land at Mayfield school by North St allotments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convenient for pedestrian access from the High St 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mayfield school not prepared to sell the land Potentially create more cars parking in the High St Creating vehicular access would be challenging and costly 	
Mayfield cricket pitch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not too far from centre of village In development boundary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No developer identified Build programme outside of village control No guarantee that the developer would consider a health centre on the site given the economics and that it would be more profitable to have detached properties than a health centre The GPs would not buy the land or any property created by a developer 	
Field behind Erleigh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close to centre of village Land listed on WDC SHELAA list 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single track access unacceptable Outside development boundary Planning permission unlikely under the Local Plan 	
Wellbrook Farm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Too far from village centre 	
Sites on A267	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Too far from village centre No pedestrian footway Not clear that identified land is for sale Outside of development boundary 	
Court Meadow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very convenient for centre of village Excellent parking Synergies with community centre and MAYFACS activities Financial sponsor identified Clear timescales for completion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns about possible encroachment onto the grass recreational area Concerns from some about what they consider to be a business activity on Court Meadow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only viable way ahead Will ensure a GP practice continues in the village

