

# ~ SOUTH HERMITAGE SURGERY ~

South Hermitage

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Dear South Hermitage Surgery patient

You will no doubt be aware of the proposal for our involvement in a Shrewsbury Health & Wellbeing Hub, and some of the local media responses around this. We wanted to write personally to all our patients, by ensuring we contact at least one person in each household, for reassurance and to answer some of the questions you may have.

We would like to first highlight that the hub is still a proposal. The outline business case hasn't been submitted to NHS England yet, and a full patient consultation hasn't been carried out. This will happen in the winter, and we would love as many of our patients to participate in this as possible.

We are one of the Practices looking at moving into the hub because our building is no longer adequate for us to run our service out of. It was built for 4,000 patients over 25 years ago. Our patient numbers are increasing as Shrewsbury expands (we are now 8,500). We are not allowed to stop accepting new patients (unlike dentists). We are struggling to provide enough appointments for you, and it is because we don't have enough rooms. We cannot recruit any additional clinical or administrative staff because we do not have enough space for them to work from. We have juggled space for years and have now reached capacity.

We do have land around South Hermitage to expand our premises, but there is no funding to do that. The funding for the proposed hub is available because it is a pilot project, of which there are 5 others around the country. Shrewsbury is quite lucky to have been successful in a bid to become one of them. We cannot choose to spend this funding in any other way. If we had a choice, we would probably stay here and redevelop, although that brings its own challenges. This is not currently an option of us as there is no funding for individual Practice developments available from NHS England.

The new building would be owned by the local NHS (the ICB) and space will be shared between all practices, as well as other external services. It will be community-facing and a place of wellness, not 'ill health'. This model of ownership will allow us to focus on patient care, rather than premises problems. It will help us attract new GPs to work in a modern, fit-for-purpose building, and potential new GP partners won't have to borrow huge sums of money to invest in the building as they do at the moment. This will really help us at South Hermitage as our building requires significant and costly upgrading, and some of our GP partners are approaching retirement and it is very very difficult to find new ones.

We know that some patients are worried about losing contact with their GP. Please can we reassure you that the practices that might relocate to the hub would continue to function as independent practices. We absolutely want to retain our individuality, and this is really important to us. It is a relocation, not a merger. It will still be our team of receptionists, answering our phone line, booking appointments with the South Hermitage clinicians, and you will come to our own space within the building. If we move there, the additional rooms in the hub will allow us to deliver more services, and there is hopefully space there for some that we could sadly no longer accommodate in Belle Vue, such as the mid-wives.

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We know that transport is a concern for lots of our patients, and it is for us too. We understand that the project team is working with Shropshire Council to provide a solution to public transport requirements, and also for traffic issues in the Meole area. We are seeking reassurances about free parking for patients and our staff. We would urge you to raise these issues during the consultation if they might affect you.

The next steps are that we wait for the outcome of the public consultation, and to see if NHS England will approve the funding or not. We will continue to have input into the proposed design for the building to ensure that it is going to meet both our patients needs and the needs of our team. We would love as many of you as possible to give your view during the consultation. Our main aim is that we want South Hermitage to continue to thrive as a practice, and to be able to deliver a service we are proud of to our growing number of patients. We hope this will help you have more of an understanding of the issues we face, and that this letter has helped answer some of your questions.

Yours faithfully

Dr Sue Murphy, Dr Laurie Davis, Dr Yvette Smith and Dr Annica Goddard  
Partners at South Hermitage Surgery