



Bewdley Medical Centre gets go-ahead

I'm sure you will all have learnt that Wyre Forest District Council's Planning Committee has passed the plans for the new Bewdley Medical Centre at its meeting on February 11. The decision was nearly unanimous although the lengthy debate reflected the pros and cons involved and as one senior councillor admitted : "This is not a perfect application."

Before Christmas, we met with representatives from the doctors and the developers, Matrix, when the latter gave us a preview of revised plans incorporating extra provision for car parking and amendments to the building itself as advised by English Heritage.



In essence these revised proposals will result in an additional 21 car parking spaces nett, post completion of the building works mainly as a result of extending the Dog Lane Car Park in front of Sabrina Drive and reconfiguring of Gardner's Meadow Car Park.

We were also told that a rejection to the plans would doubtless result in NHS England withdrawing its funding for Bewdley for at least 10 years. The Society's Executive Committee, in the light of this information, resolved to withdraw our original objection, which was lodged when the plans were first submitted back in July, notwithstanding other reservations which had not been addressed.

The revised plans were not formally released until January 15 and in view of them being fast-tracked for the decision on February 11, the Executive Committee decided not to convene a meeting of the Society's membership as had been promised in the Christmas Newsletter although updating emails were sent to all members for whom we have email addresses.

The Executive Committee, at its January meeting, discussed the details of the revised plans at length and expressed some concerns as regards their implementation. These concerns and wishes were detailed in a letter which was sent to members of WFDC's Planning Committee and can be summarised as follows:



- 1 Urging it be a condition that initiatives to put in place additional parking be implemented before the new building works are commenced.
- 2 That the new overspill car parking area fronting Sabrina Drive be available all year round and that proper foundations be installed.
- 3 Public consultation be carried out for the reconfiguring of Garner's Meadow Car Park with view to mitigating the loss of the amenity space there.
- 4 Public consultation be carried out for the layout of the Load Street Car Park and that provision for a pedestrian walkway from Load Street to the new Medical Centre be made with aesthetic screening and a seating area in front of St George's Hall .
- 5 Public consultation be carried out before the temporary parking proposals are implemented.
- 6 That the Council provide alternative recycling facilities as existing site will be consumed by the new building.
- 7 Provision for a new dedicated set down for coaches be made and coach car parking be made available at Blackstone Car Park.

We note that WFDC has agreed the Plans subject to a number of conditions which include many of the items enumerated above. Details will shortly be available to view on the Council's Website under Planning Application number 13/0395/FULL. Meanwhile if members wish to view a video of the actual Planning Committee meeting this can be viewed at <http://www.wyreforestdc.public-i.tv/core/> and then clicking on Planning Committee February 11.

Our objection to the original plans gave the Executive Committee no pleasure at all. We all recognise that we are extremely well-served by the doctors and staff at BMC who provide a brilliant service to the town. It was recognised that our action would attract opprobrium from some quarters and indeed it did. However I was heartened to read the editorial/advert placed in the Kidderminster Shuttle of January 30 by the Partners of Bewdley Medical Centre and I quote from the first two paragraphs:

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Planning application amended

"There has been considerable reaction to our original planning application for a new BMC on the Dog Lane Car Park since it was submitted to the District Council last July, principally centred on a loss of car parking to the town and the proposed new building's design. In response to this we have worked together with our consultants and liaised closely with local authorities and Civic bodies to amend the planning application to ensure it will have a positive impact on car parking in Bewdley as well as the design of the new building."

I believe this shows that we (and others) have been listened to and, as the District Councillor referred to above said, this is still not a perfect scenario but is one which we have been able to support.

BEWDLEY FIRE STATION

The other piece of good news received in the past few days is that Bewdley Fire Station is to get a reprieve of its closure. The fire authority had said that this was one of their preferred options when it issued a comprehensive on-line consultation document at the back end of last year. So that the Executive Committee could properly understand the implications, Cllr Paul Gittins organised a visit one evening for us to meet the staff and view the equipment. The arguments put forward convinced us that Bewdley did indeed need this facility to be retained in the town and our response to the consultation was worded accordingly. Naturally we are glad that the authorities have seen the light.



Dates for your diaries

Our next Lecture is scheduled for Tuesday March 11 when Tim Porter is to give us a talk entitled "Who were the Marcher Lords?" Tim has been highly recommended to us and it should be a fascinating subject. This is taking place in St George's Hall at 7.30pm

Our AGM is to take place on Wednesday, April 9, at 7.30pm in St George's Hall

The following outings have been arranged:

April 15, The Hurd Library and Hartlebury Castle; an evening visit

May 15, Pershore Town and Abbey, courtesy of Pershore Civic Society. Afternoon visit