

HOW DID BPC GET FROM A DOCTORS SURGERY TO A HALL

The **Doctors** surgery received planning consent to be built on the Jubilee Meadow in 2013 but the project floundered over road access disputes and the fact that the fields could not be used for a commercial enterprise Only a community benefit.

The **Doctors** surgery was viewed as a commercial operation in addition to a community benefit and disagreements within the village over these issues resulted in Zero progress and no resolution was reached.

This led to the Doctors withdrawing from the project.

Those against the project succeeded in stopping it.....

The village lost out.

When I joined BPC 3 or so years ago I was asked to look into the possibility of a doctors surgery for the village.

My researches and discussions with NHS England , The Clinical Commissioning Group(CCG) and with doctors themselves revealed that it was extremely unlikely that such a venture would be financially viable. The difficulty of getting a doctor. Per se. Ancillary staff, the costs involved and the number of patients required to make it viable were all issues.....

In September 2015 in a conversation with Simon Cole – Head of Strategic Planning at ABC

Concerning the North Street application to build housing he suggested that The council should think about what the village could gain from such a development. He was not convinced by the developers idea of a doctors surgery as it may end up as an empty building, but discussion could perhaps take place on something else. He said that his thoughts had been along the lines of a village hall but as a more multifunctional building with rooms for a possible doctor within.

In February 2016 at a meeting between the partners of the New Headcorn

Surgery and Ian Grundy (Principal Policy Planner) & Carly Pettit (Policy Planner) both of ABC took place.

At that meeting the **conclusion** reached by all parties was that as a result of the Failure to go ahead with the planned surgery in Biddenden in 2013 a New Surgery had been built in Headcorn. This opened in Jan 2014.

In view of this the doctors “ did **not** have a current need for a new GP facility in Biddenden.”

If a room became available built to NHS standards that met all of the requirements they could consider a part time facility based on patient demand but would not be involved in any finance themselves and would only pay a nominal rent.

The development proposals were, therefore, **NOT** supported **specifically** by the GP surgery.

With the proposal from Milwood to offer the village a Doctors surgery we went to meet the developer and landowner to ask if they would consider commuting the sum of money they had allowed for the surgery project towards a village hall (as suggested by the Planners at ABC)

They were agreeable to this, the landowner particularly.

In **August 2016** a meeting was held with the doctors at the Headcorn surgery to talk to them first hand. It was confirmed by them to us that they were not interested in a new surgery in Biddenden. They had 1330 Biddenden residents registered with the practice in Headcorn and had capacity for more. If there was a practice in Biddenden as well as Headcorn, they would only receive funding for these patients at one surgery site.

The facility currently in the village hall in Biddenden operates on 1 morning a week sees 5 patients only with over 90% of these residing outside the village. This facility is shortly to be inspected by the QCC and it is likely to be closed.

So BPC started to look into the advantages of a new village hall that could be multifunctional and serve everyone in the community.

A hall that would be sited away from main roads, had on site parking, rooms, that could serve the local school, young people and old people, sports people, a hall with modern facilitiesa legacy for future generations to come....

There is still an offer on the table

Will the village lose out yet again....??