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Dear Patient,

***This letter has been written in conjunction with Crickhowell Group Practice, Powys Teaching Health Board, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, Monmouthshire County Council and with input from Llais – advocating for and supporting patient voice in health and social care.***

You are receiving this letter as your address is a registered patient address at Crickhowell Group Practice. Please kindly share the content with all household members who are registered at the Practice.

You may be aware that following a period of public engagement earlier this year, the decision has been made to permanently close the Belmont Branch site at Gilwern from 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

We know that this is not what many of you had hoped for, and we are sorry to have to inform you of the closure of the branch. We would like to reiterate that this decision has not been made lightly and that it is necessary to support the future of the General Medical Services for all patients served by Crickhowell Group Practice.

Please be reassured that you will remain registered with Crickhowell Group Practice, unless you choose otherwise, and we will continue to offer you our full range of primary care services, with face-to-face appointments taking place at the War Memorial Health Centre in Crickhowell.

We hope that the attached information sheet answers the main questions you may have about the changes taking place from 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023 and how we are working to mitigate concerns expressed. We look forward to continuing to provide your General Medical Services.

A community wellbeing and information event will be taking place on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2023 at the Gilwern Community Centre from 3:30pm to 7pm to help you find out more about local resources and services that can support your health and wellbeing. Please do come along. It will be a drop in event, so you are welcome to attend without the need to book. Please feel free to share information about this event with others in the Gilwern community.

Yours sincerely

Crickhowell Group Practice

## **Closure of Belmont Branch Surgery, Gilwern**

### **When will these changes take place?**

Belmont Branch Surgery in Gilwern will close from 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

### **What action do I need to take?**

You do not need to take any action. All patients will remain registered with Crickhowell Group Practice, unless you choose otherwise, and we will continue to offer you our full range of primary care services. From 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023 all face-to-face appointments will take place at the War Memorial Health Centre in Crickhowell, or via a home visit when clinically appropriate.

### **What services do you offer online and by telephone?**

We offer a wide range of services by telephone on **01873 810255**, reducing the need to visit the practice in person. Using our telephone service, we can book appointments and respond to general queries. Telephone appointments will continue to be offered where appropriate, and the practice has multiple telephone appointment slots available each day. We also operate a 'call back' service if the phone lines are busy.

The practice offers an expanding range of services via our website which we hope many of you can visit if you have access to the internet. The address is: [www.crickhowellhealthcentre.org.uk](http://www.crickhowellhealthcentre.org.uk) You can add our website address to your favourites or shortcuts so that you can access our services quickly when you need them. Services available via our website include:

- Self-help advice
- Advice on how to make an appointment
- Requesting repeat medications
- Requesting medication synchronisations
- Requesting advice on medication
- New patient registrations
- Registering a carer
- Requesting a medical report
- Subject Access Requests
- Asking reception a question
- Changing personal details
- Feedback and complaint submission
- Wellbeing support services
- Chronic disease management questionnaires.

However, please be assured that you will also continue to be invited to the practice for face-to-face appointments, and home visits will continue when clinically appropriate.

Also, when the practice is closed you can access urgent health advice including GP Out of Hours services by contacting NHS 111 Wales. They can be contacted by telephoning **111**, or by dialling **18001 111** from your textphone or using the Relay UK app if you are deaf, hard-of-hearing or speech-impaired. A wide range of useful information is available from their website at [www.111.wales.nhs.uk/](http://www.111.wales.nhs.uk/)

### **Do you use the NHS Wales App?**

A small number of practices across Wales have been involved in piloting a new NHS Wales App. We are not yet part of the NHS Wales App, but we are exploring options to become an early adopter. This will provide another option to access our services going forward.

### **What support is available for travel and transport?**

We know transport may be a worry for some patients. Should you have difficulty with transport to Crickhowell, there are several options available to you as follows:

- **Grass Routes Community Transport** (for people living in Monmouthshire): Monmouthshire County Council's scheme makes door-to-door trips on request, weekdays between 9am and 2pm. It provides low floor, fully accessible transport on a membership basis. Concessions are available. For more information:  
**Call: 0800 085 8015**  
**Email: [contact@monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:contact@monmouthshire.gov.uk)**  
**Web: [www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/buses-trains/grass-routes-community-transport](http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/buses-trains/grass-routes-community-transport)**
- **Crickhowell Community Car Scheme:** The Community Car Scheme is a service for those who have no transport for their essential needs. There is a £10 per annum membership charge and then trips are charged at 45p per mile. If you are attending a hospital appointment and you are in receipt of any benefits you may qualify for reimbursements of the journey. Please call for further details. Essential needs vary but examples are medical trips, travelling to day centres or clubs, and hospital visiting. If you feel that you meet the essential needs and could benefit from the Car Scheme telephone:  
**Call: 01873 812177** (Crickhowell Volunteer Bureau)
- **Crickhowell Dial-a-Ride:** This offers door-to-door transport that's accessible to people using wheelchairs or who have difficulties using steps. This membership-based scheme is for older people or those who have difficulty using existing means of transport due to disability. It operates 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. For more information:  
**Call: 01873 811097**  
**Email: [office@brecondialaride.org](mailto:office@brecondialaride.org)**
- **Bridges Community Car Scheme:** The Bridges Community Car Scheme is based in Monmouth and operates county wide. It is supported by volunteer drivers who use their own cars to offer a door-to-door service for people who require additional support with transport. The Scheme is very popular so

currently has limited capacity in this area but hopes to recruit more drivers next year. For more information on their plans for 2024:

**Call: 01600 228787**

**Email: [carscheme@bridges.org.uk](mailto:carscheme@bridges.org.uk)**

### **Can we still access services at John Williams Pharmacy in Gilwern?**

Yes. There will continue to be a range of additional healthcare services at Gilwern via the community pharmacy. Their services include the Common Ailments Service giving your free access to NHS treatment for a range of common ailments from sore throats to eye infections without the need for a prescription. More information about the Common Ailments Service is available from the pharmacy or online at:

[www.111.wales.nhs.uk/localservices/pharmacyfaq/](http://www.111.wales.nhs.uk/localservices/pharmacyfaq/)

The pharmacy also provides emergency medication supply, contraception services, flu vaccination, medication administration records, discharge medicines reviews, supervised consumption, smoking cessation, NHS hearing aid battery supply, and the waste reduction scheme. Contact them to find out more. The practice will continue to work closely with the pharmacy to ensure all medications requested for collection at the pharmacy will be available.

### **What other health and wellbeing services are available for children and young people in the Gilwern area?**

As well as continuing to access services from Crickhowell Group Practice, a range of support is available for Children and Young People in the Gilwern area. A useful source of information and advice is the Healthier Together website at

[www.abbhealthiertogether.cymru.nhs.uk](http://www.abbhealthiertogether.cymru.nhs.uk)

We will also work with the local school nursing service to make sure that information about the Practice and our services are promoted in local schools. Chat Health is a confidential and anonymous way for children aged 11–19 to seek emotional and/or physical health support via a qualified School Nurse by SMS Text: 07312 263262.

See <https://chathealth.nhs.uk/>

### **What other health and wellbeing services are available for adults/older people in the Gilwern area?**

Useful information about services in Monmouthshire is available from the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board website at [www.abuhb.nhs.wales](http://www.abuhb.nhs.wales). Melo Cymru - Mental Health & Wellbeing Resources, Courses & Support is another good resource:

<https://www.melo.cymru/>

### **What should I do if I wish to change practice?**

All patients will remain registered with Crickhowell Group Practice unless you choose otherwise. We look forward to continuing to provide you with primary care services and hope that you choose to remain registered with us. We encourage you to contact us to discuss any concerns you may have. You can do this by writing to us at the War Memorial Health Centre Beaufort Street, Crickhowell NP8 1AG; by calling

on **01873 810255** or by using our online feedback form at [www.crickhowellhealthcentre.org.uk/navigator/feedback/](http://www.crickhowellhealthcentre.org.uk/navigator/feedback/)

If you would like to consider registering with an alternative practice, you can find details of local GP practices by entering your postcode at: <https://abuhb.nhs.wales/healthcare-services/gps-dentists-etc/gps/> OR you can contact ABUHB Primary Care Team on 01495 241246 who can assist you further.

### **How do I give feedback?**

The team here at Crickhowell Group Practice aim to offer a high standard of service to our patients and hope you will never have cause for serious complaint. If, however, there are occasions where you feel you need to make a complaint, please contact the Practice Manager or their deputy.

We hope that you feel comfortable raising concerns directly with us, but the Patient Experience Team at Powys Teaching Health Board can also assist you in raising concerns. More information is available from <https://pthb.nhs.wales/contact-us/feedback-and-complaints/>

### Additional Information

#### **Patient Voice - Information about Llais**

Llais, the Citizen Voice Body for health and care in Wales, provides a free, independent, client-led advocacy service that covers all aspects of NHS treatment and care, as well as social care. More information about Llais is available from <https://www.llaiswales.org/> or by contacting **01874 624206**.

