

A Special Meeting of the Town Council was held with Dr. Liam Taylor, Deputy Divisional Director, Mrs. Sian Millar, Divisional Director and Ms. Rachel Prangley, Deputy Head of Primary Care, ABUHB on Wednesday, 13 March 2019 in the Council Chamber, Orchard Street, Brynmawr at 5.30pm.

Present:- Councillors B. M. Sutton (Chair).  
Mrs. O.M. Swales  
D. Lyn Elias  
W.K. Hodgins  
J. M. Sutton  
R.J. Hill  
G.D Jones

In Attendance:- N.J. Williams (Asst. Town Clerk).

Apologies:- M. I. Morgan, Miss S.M. Morgan  
H.J. Swales, T.S. Hughes,  
A.C. Davies (Town Clerk/RFO).

The Chair welcomed Dr. Liam Taylor, Mrs. Sian Millar, and Ms. Rachel Prangley to the meeting.

Dr. Liam Taylor started by informing members that Brynmawr Wellbeing Centre has a New Clinical Lead G.P, Dr. Victoria Whitbread who has had a very positive impact on the whole practice. The appointment system has greatly improved. Patients can make an appointment for 2 days later or they can make an appointment for 2 weeks in advance or an urgent appointment on the day of ringing. Once all appointments for the day are full, anything urgent gets placed on the triage screen and a G.P. will ring the patient/patients to give advice and possibly be offered an appointment on that day. The Medical Centre has a team of Nurse Practitioners, Pharmacist, Occupational Therapists and Mental Health Practitioners which has taken a lot of pressure off the G.P's.

Dr. Liam Taylor informed the meeting that the practice is still short of permanent G.P's but many Locums are staying longer and hopefully they will take up a regular post at the Medical Centre.

Dr. Liam Taylor said that the receptionists are undergoing Care Navigation Training where they will train how to communicate with patients more professionally and how to make the best of signposting. The receptionists will be feeding back to the Primary Care Team on what is working well and what is not.

Dr. Liam Taylor said that there are two Care Navigators on site at the Practice ensuring that patients get the right support which can free up appointments for the G.P's. You can request an appointment and repeat prescriptions online and reminders of appointments are being sent via text message to patients.

A member said there has been a vast improvement when booking an appointment even when ringing at 12.00pm he was offered an appointment for the following day. The member said there is a lot of historic anger with the receptionists from the former surgeries but hopefully this can change in the future.

Another member said that patients will need to adjust to the running of the new Medical Centre by being redirected to Pharmacist/ Nurse Practitioner etc.

Mrs. Sian Millar explained that they started using this system in Bargoed some time ago and they are only now getting good feedback from patients who now realise that they are getting a better service.

A member said that the appointment system has improved but informed Mrs Millar that the self booking system breaks down regularly which leads to patients having to report this to the receptionists. Mrs. Millar said they will look in to this matter.

A member asked how many permanent G.P's are employed at the moment.

Dr. Taylor said there are still only three permanent G.P's and three regular Locums throughout the week.

A member said that she had to wait three hours for a prescription to be signed by a G.P. as there was only two G.P's at the Clinic that specific day and both of them had an emergency to deal with. Mrs. Millar said that the staffing level at the Brynmawr Medical Centre is much higher than any where else in Blaenau Gwent and that they are working on the problem regarding prescriptions.

A member asked is the bulk of prescriptions now dealt with by the Pharmacy. Dr. Taylor said yes the bulk is dealt with by the Pharmacy and is expected to be turned around within forty eight hours.

A member asked when you attend for your medication review and your tablets change, why is it when you collect your prescription the new tablets are not on your script. Dr. Taylor said they would expect it to be dealt with on the day of your medication review and the script be amended accordingly.

Mrs. Millar said that hospital Consultants and G.P's get together to find out where the patients information from one to another is being sent. Some specialists were thinking they are sending letters to the G.P's but the G.P's are saying that they never received the information. Mrs. Millar said there is a glitch in the system at the moment and is working to improve the situation.

A member said when a patient attends a hospital appointment for tests they have to ring the Medical Centre for their results and are told to make an appointment with your G.P to discuss the outcome which could take several days. In the meantime the patient/patients get very anxious and worried there might be something seriously wrong. Dr. Liam Taylor said that the letter from the hospital should state in brackets "Not Urgent" but would be very proactive with urgent matters and reassure patients with non urgent matters.

A member asked for an update on the 111 System. Mrs. Millar said it will not be starting on Tuesday, 2 April 2019 due to additional staffing issues in Gwent. Mrs. Millar said they are hoping that it will now start in July 2019 where there will be very little change and patients will receive the same service that they have now. Mrs. Millar said that the 111 System has worked well in Swansea and West Wales with positive results. G.P. Out of Hours Service will stay the same.

Mrs. Millar explained how the 111 System works.

- The patient answer questions about their symptoms on the website, or by speaking to a fully trained adviser on the phone.
  
- The patient can find out what local service that can help them.
  
- Be connected to a Nurse, Emergency Dentist, Pharmacist or G.P.
  
- Get a face-to-face appointment if the patient needs one.
  
- Be told how to access medication a patient needs.

A member expressed his concerns regarding the transport links for people living in Blaenau Gwent to the Grange University Hospital, Llanfrechfa, Cwmbran where it would take several bus changes for people from this area to visit relatives/friends at this Hospital.

Mrs. Millar said that patients will be transported by Ambulance to the Critical Care Hospital. Critical Care will no longer be available at Nevill Hall Hospital. There could possibly be a shuttle bus between areas to get families/friends to the hospital. Mrs. Sian Millar said she would feed this concern back to the Planning Director.

The Chair thanked the guests for meeting members of The Town Council for an update on the Brynmawr Well-Being Centre.

Meeting closed at 18.25.