



Torphins Community Council

Serving the Electoral Districts of Torphins, Glassel and Tornaveen

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Item No.	<p align="center">Minutes of Public Meeting about Future of Torphins Medical Practice organised by Torphins Community Council & Torphins Patient Participation Group with Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership (AHSCP) 16th December 2021 at 7:00 pm on Zoom</p>
1.	<p>Present: 64 Participant screens with two or more people on many, including: TCC Members Present: Eric Day (ED); Iain Firth (IF); John Lucas (JL); Will Maclean (WM) (Chair); Andrew Macpherson (AM); Malcolm Miller (MM); Liz Moore (LM); Colin Rouse (CR); Stephen Salter (SS) TCC Apologies: Hamish Booth (HB); Rev Holly Smith (HS) Patient Participation Group: Rona Alexander; Ann Conroy; Ann Blake; Richard Leah; Beryl Watson In Attendance: Shona Strachan, Interim Partnership Manager, AHSCP; Moyra Duncan, Primary Care Manager, AHSCP; Cllr. P. Argyle (PG); Cllr G. Blackett (GB) Cllr. P. Gibb (PG) Dr. Gwen Thomson; 44 participant screens of Residents/Patients of Torphins Medical Practice</p>
2.	<p>Introductions: Will Maclean opened the meeting by thanking everyone for attending and apologising for the unavoidable postponements at very short notice of earlier proposed in person meetings due to Storm Arwen, then the Omicron outbreak. Senior Managers of AHSCP have agreed to explain the process for the provision of primary care to succeed the existing practice. Torphins Medical Practice is an outstanding feature of our community that is loved by all so we are all concerned in case there are negative changes. We really do want to know what is happening. Following introduction by Cllr. P. Argyle we have arranged for the attendance of Shona Strachan, Interim Partnership Manager, and Moyra Duncan, Primary Care Manager, from AHSCP to meet with the community. We welcome Shona and Moyra to explain the structure of GP Practices in the NHS; the process to replace the Torphins Medical Practice, which has been handed back to the NHS; and the current stage and potential outcomes. All information has to be constrained by the confidential bidding process, which is in progress. There will be time for questions after the presentation.</p>
3.	<p>Background and Process for Replacement of Torphins Medical Practice: 3.1. Shona and Moyra explained that most GP surgeries are independent partnerships which are contracted by NHS Grampian “to provide services to those who deem themselves to be unwell”. The practices will have a managing partner, other partners, and salaried staff, providing a range of primary care services. Where no partnership is available to provide services, for whatever reason, then NHS will provide the services by the direct employment of salaried GPs. Currently in Aberdeenshire there are 3 Board administered practices and 27 independently contracted practices with a budget to provide services. In general there are more salaried GPs than partners these days. 3.2. With the senior partner Dr. Neil Campbell leaving the practice Torphins Medical Practice had to decide how to maintain services. The other partner, Dr. Gwen Thomson was not able to take on the wider senior role, which includes full responsibility for the business and risks associated, as she cannot work a heavy full time load due to personal circumstances. The senior position was therefore advertised, however no suitable applicants were available. Thus the decision had to be taken to hand back the practice with 6 months notice to 31 March 2022. 3.3. Following hand back AHSCP has to enter the standard process to appoint a new practice to deliver the Torphins area primary care services. Invitations to bid were issued to a range of potential bidders. Responders are required to cover six key areas in their business case submission.</p>

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3.	<p>Background and Process for Replacement of Torphins Medical Practice (Continued):</p> <p>The six areas in the business case are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 - Service Delivery and Service Continuity (range of services, high quality patient centred service, blend of face to face and virtual options and for face to face be available from Torphins Health Centre) 2 - Workforce (retention of staff, development/training of staff, development of multi-disciplinary team) 3 - Sustainability (demonstrate sustainability and innovative ways of working) 4 - Strategic Alignment (how it is person centred and is high quality) 5 - Early Intervention (measures to be taken on early intervention, prevention and self management) 6 - Health Inequalities and Equalities Outcomes (demonstrate a commitment to reducing health inequalities and protecting vulnerable groups). <p>A representative panel was appointed to consider and score the business cases submitted against the matrix of requirements. This panel includes:</p> <p>Shona Strachan, Partnership Manager, AHSCP Moyra Duncan, Primary Care Manager, AHSCP Dr. Mike Steven, GP Sub-Committee Dr. Mark Grandison, Cluster Quality Lead for Marr Mr. Dan Shaw, Manager, Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action Ann Conroy, Patient Participation Group</p> <p>The scoring has been completed and the preferred bidder presented to the Panel on 16th December 2021. The outcome is not yet known and will remain confidential until details are agreed and the contract signed. The community will be advised of the outcome in due course.</p>
4.	<p>Questions/Comments/Answers:</p> <p>Will Maclean thanked Shona and Moyra for their presentation and opened the Zoom to questions to be submitted by the chat feature or raising ones hand. Apologies we did not manage to keep track of any raised hands, however a wide range of questions were received via chat. Submitters were invited to voice their questions, with Shona and Moyra responding to each with answers and explanations. A representative range of questions and answers are presented here to cover the majority.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stephen Salter - How have the community been consulted when nobody on this call appears to be aware of the process until now? Answer – Notification has been sent out to selected parties, namely those involved in the tendering process, local Councillors, and the Third Sector. All the Councillors said they had not been made aware and only received notification on 4th November when the hand back became public. AHSCP committed to look into communication and improve for future. • Malcolm Miller – Please clarify the commitment to continue to provide GP services based/located in the surgery in Torphins, and is it to be indefinite? Answer – There is a commitment to retain face-to-face services in Torphins. Banchory and Aboyne are not currently accepting patients from Torphins to protect the viability of the patient population for the Torphins practice. • Hazel Appleton – How long will the process take and when do we get to know the decision? Answer – The time to find an alternative provider is 6 months from 1 October 2021 to 31 March 2022, with the fall back position being a Board administered service to continue services in Torphins. • Robbie Dow – Two questions please: When do you expect to be in a position to say if you have a preferred bidder or not, and if there is no suitable bidder after this process, what happens then? Answer – When contract details are finalised with the preferred bidder the award will be made public. This will be prompt to enable the successful party to prepare to take over on 31 March 2022. In the event of no suitable bidder the Board will operate a salaried GP service from that date. • Jayne – Can you share with us how many separate bids were received and what proportion commit to maintaining a resource within the village? Answer – The number of bids is confidential, however the requirements include maintaining face-to-face services in the village.

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4.	<p>Questions/Comments/Answers (Continued):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stephen Salter – Who in the third sector is involved? Answer – Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action, who represent a range of voluntary services has been informed and should be working with Torphins community. A Whyte, W Maclean, and Others – AVA has no connection with and are not active in Torphins that we are aware of, and have definitely never contacted TCC about the matter. • Yvonne – Will the level of service remain the same if NHS Grampian take over the service (i.e. number of GPs, waiting time for appointments, etc.)? Answer – The service will not stay the same as NHS Grampian would offer a wider range of primary care services with a receptionist triage process to direct patients to the appropriate service to meet their actual needs rather than automatically seeing a GP in all instances, when that may not be the best solution to the individual need. This is the preferred model of NHS Grampian and encouraged by Scottish Government. • Iain Firth – If this becomes a salaried practice, where will AHSCP find GP’s bearing in mind Alford are also going through this process? Answer – There is a national shortage of GPs and a strong trend towards salaried GPs rather than partners, therefore sourcing salaried GPs is less challenging than attracting GPs to become practice partners with business as well as clinical responsibilities. A multi disciplinary team approach is preferred to focus on all needs. • Joan Donald – If the receptionist has the responsibility for deciding the correct discipline to see what training will they have? Receptionists are familiar with the services available and can call on support to make the proper decisions. • Will Maclean – If the GP model we enjoy in Torphins works and meets the needs and wants of patients why is there a drive to the multi disciplinary model with receptionist triage, which we only hear negative comments about from patients of other practices? Does Government listen to patients? Answer – We believe the multi disciplinary approach offers a wider and better range of services to patients and makes the best use of resources to meet patient needs. • Dr. Gwen Thomson advised that Dr. Mercer and herself are hoping to continue working at the practice, which should provide continuity of care and a respect for the level of care that is currently delivered. It was not feasible to commit to fulfilling the senior partner role due to the significant growth in time and effort the senior partner role demands, which could not be met along with her family commitments. • Several individuals praised Dr. Thomson for making this commitment to the community. • Cllr. Peter Argyle stated the AHSCP are working through a robust process to fill the medical services for Torphins area in difficult circumstances of the shortage of GPs and massive demand on all medical services at this difficult time. We need to be patient to allow the process to complete, which will be fairly soon. Cllr. Argyle went on to strongly praise the current practice and the truly outstanding service provided to the community over many years. • Caroline Argo – Tendering the practice is always a two way process: as much as someone may want to bid they also need to know and value the community they are coming to. How can we engage in this process? Answer – The Panel includes Ann Conroy of the Patient Participation Group and bidders are scored against requirements, which are defined to meet the community needs. • Colin Rouse – How widely has the position been advertised, within Scotland or UK wide? Has there been a proactive effort to promote the merits of the practice area to maximise the interest? Answer – the position has been widely advertised across the usual media for such positions and will have been seen nationally.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Whyte – If Torphins fails to attract a partnership how many different GPs are likely to be providing services if this were to become an NHS managed service instead, and when are we likely to know the outcome of the existing tender? I find it worrying that some of the current staff at Torphins do not know whether they will have a job come April. Thank you to TCC for organising the meeting so we know now what is about to happen. • Linda – How will we be kept informed? I only heard about this through a friend in Torphins. Answer – TCC will keep asking for updates and post them on our website and Facebook page when we can. Updates are also discussed at our monthly meetings, which are open to the public, and the minutes are posted on the notice board and on our website torphins.net. • Cllr Paul Gibb – Does the business manager have to be a GP? Answer – A practice could be organised under a manager who is not a GP but this is not usual.
5.	<p>Next Steps: AHSCP are optimistic for a successful outcome from the procurement process and agreed to communicate new information when it becomes available, confirming to contact Torphins Community Council through the Secretary WM.</p>
6.	<p>Close: Thanks were extended to Shona and Moyra for agreeing to attend the meeting for AHSCP; for clearly explaining the process; and for providing answers to the many questions posed by the attendees. All the community participants were thanked for attending and actively and courteously participating. Thank you to Ann Conroy for her important role on the Patient Participation Group, now, and in the past. Finally, Will Maclean thanked the Torphins Medical Practice for their valued service and extended particular thanks and best wishes for the future to Dr. Neil Campbell.</p>