



# Burton and Bransgore Medical Centres and Orchard Surgery Proposed Merger to become Christchurch Medical Practice

## PATIENT QUESTIONS RECEIVED TO DATE:

### 1. Why is there a need to change?

There are many very good reasons for the practices to merge. Some of these are basic economic reasons, for instance you will all be aware through the media of the huge pressure that GP surgeries are under through increased workload/pressures and difficulty in recruiting new GPs. This has in turn led to difficulties in providing sufficient appointments for our patients. Working as a larger more flexible practice can help to safeguard the merged practice a little more from these pressures.

There are also other excellent reasons for this merger though – they include a shared culture and approach to providing excellent patient care and to considering new ways of providing this level of care.

### 2. I understand that there have been discussions about merging for a long time – why has it taken so long to engage with the patients regarding this?

Each of the practices operates as an individual partnership. Many of you will know that this means that their business dealings are not subject to public scrutiny or discussion. Many of you will also know that decisions about merging can be extremely complex and involve many different factors, some which can have considerable impact on the GPs livelihood and personal circumstances. It is therefore not possible to publically discuss merging until a certain number of key decisions have been agreed. It would also not be possible to discuss with any patients until all staff are aware of plans and how they might be impacted.

### 3. Who has made the decision to merge?

As per answer 2 above, each of the practices operate as a partnership. All business decisions are therefore made by the full agreement of all the Partners within each practice. Decisions like these take a considerable amount of time to reach and then very careful review, planning and work to see through to completion.

### 4. Why don't B&B merge with Twin Oaks and establish a single service for the local population? Similarly why do Orchard not merge with Barn and Farmhouse to provide a single service at Purewell?

As per previous answers, all these practices are private Partnerships. The business decisions that each practice makes are therefore their own business. Both B&B and Orchard have been in conversations with other practices over the last two years with a view to other possible mergers and it may be that in the future there are more mergers for the new Orchard +B&B practice. It is important to note, however, that Orchard has worked very closely with Barn and Farmhouse for a number of years and it is the intention that this will continue for the new practice.

### 5. Why are B&B merging with a Purewell Practice?

Orchard and B&B have worked together for many years, e.g. through the Clinical Commissioning Group. All Partners feel that there is a good cultural mix, same approach to innovation, patient care, training and improving patient provision. We also share very similar patient areas which will help make the merger work.

## **6. Will both B&B surgeries' future be under threat?**

There are no intentions to close either Burton or Bransgore surgeries. Indeed one of the appeals of B&B is the space capacity that there is at Bransgore to help provide new services. It remains the intention to keep all the three surgery locations operational.

## **7. Will there be less services provided at B&B? Does this affect the availability of my regular INR blood tests at Burton?**

The exact logistics of where services will be provided is being planned, but it is not the intention to remove services from Burton or Bransgore that the patients need to have access to, and this will include the ongoing availability of blood tests at Burton.

## **8. Will there be less appointments available at B&B or at Orchard?**

As per answer 7, there is no intention for either existing practice to become a 'base' for all patients, neither one of the surgeries has the capacity for many more patients. We are working hard to try and ensure that there remains fair and sensible provision for all members of the patient community.

## **9. I am struggling to get an appointment within my surgery at the moment – how is merging going to improve this situation? Is this going to impact on the already extended waiting times for an appointment to see a Doctor?**

We have been listening to our patients and their concerns about access to appointments. As already mentioned, all GP surgeries are struggling to cope with the level of demand within the context of recruitment difficulties. Orchard and B&B are therefore working on a new model of delivering patient care which will result in more appointments being available for all patients. The model will focus on patients getting the *right care, in the right place and with the right clinician*. This will mean that an appointment request will be assessed based on clinical need and booked with the clinician best-suited to provide the best care for each patient. With the merger we will have an extended team of clinicians, including highly skilled Nurse Practitioners, Physiotherapists, Paramedics, etc. We will, however, always work to try and fit to any patient request.

## **10. Who will be my GP?**

Your GP will not change with merging. The ideal, however, is that we will be able to create a service that means you can see a clinician quicker – however, this may not be your usual GP.

## **11. Will I have to go to Purewell to see my GP or Nurse?**

There may be some services e.g. sexual health provision, that are only provided at one practice in the merged surgery. This would be established where we can ensure a better level of service or economies of scale, e.g. having all supplies or materials in just one place rather than in three different places. These logistics are not yet decided and all patients would be given plenty of notice of any changes.

## **12. Will appointment times at Purewell take into account the difficulties in public transportation?**

Orchard Partners have been made fully aware of the transportation difficulties that some B&B patients experience and they are committed to working with B&B to minimise these problems wherever possible.

## **13. What are the benefits or potential losses to the patients?**

Orchard and B&B Management and Partners are working hard to ensure that all their respective patients will be able to enjoy the benefit from having a stronger and more sustainable provision than you are currently able to enjoy. This will be achieved through economies of scale, by new processes and by being a more attractive prospect for new GPs and other allied health professionals to come and join.

## **14. When might this happen?**

There are a considerable number of business matters that need to be taken care of, so it is unlikely that the businesses will be officially merged until 1 October 2017....however, the practices have started to

work together already and collaborate on new ideas and processes, and it is likely that you will see evidence of this work before an official merger.

#### **15. Who will keep me informed?**

As per the advertising of the patient events, we will keep our websites updated with any key information, but all patients are welcome to complete forms kept at all three receptions for the Managers/Partners who will respond on a regular basis and make sure that answers are available for all to see.

#### **16. Do I have a say in this merger?**

If you have been a patient with either B&B or Orchard for any period of time you will know that both practices are always willing to listen to their patients and where at all possible make adjustments to service provision. There may be decisions that are made that cannot involve the patients that are either partnership or contract matters.....**but** it is not the intention of merging to ignore the patient voice. Both practices are keen to listen and make appropriate adjustments where it is possible to do so.

#### **17. Do I have a choice or is it a done deal?**

The road from commencing a merger conversation to completion of a merger is a long one, as many of you will probably know. There is no such thing as a 'done deal' in merging until the paperwork is all signed..... While as stated in Q16 above, Partners remain keen to listen to the patient voice, the patients will not have a vote over whether a merger goes ahead or not – these decisions remain partnership decisions.

#### **18. Can I move to TWIN OAKS?**

Any patient can move at any time to any surgery where they live within the boundary that the practice can operate. **We would very much hope, however,** that neither Orchard nor B&B patients feel that they need to move from us without sitting tight and seeing what improvements we are able to realise through merging.

#### **19. How will any changes be monitored to ensure patient satisfaction?**

The importance of patient satisfaction is one of the main motivators that Orchard and B&B share. All changes/processes are continuously monitored through Partnership meetings and also feedback that we receive from payments. We also intend to strengthen the Patient Participation Groups for the merged practice, developing the actual PPG as well as a virtual PPG. We are always interested to hear from patients that would like to be part of the discussions and become 'critical friends' to the practice. Please see a member of the Reception Team to leave your contact details if you are interested in being involved with your practice in this way.

Claire Richards and The Partners  
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**Please direct any questions to:**

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