

Mr John Kay
Clerk, Uley Parish Council
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Ms Tricia McClelland
Pharmacy Market Management Services
Primary Care Support England
PCSE Enquiries
PO Box 350
Darlington DL1 9QN

16th July 2021

By Post & by email to PCSE.marketentry@nhs.net

Your Ref: ME1122

Dear Ms McClelland

Re: Application for a relocation of premises after outline consent has taken effect by Cam & Uley Family Practice from The Surgery, 42 The Street, Uley GL11 5SY to The Surgery, Glebelands, Cam, Dursley, GL11 5NE

Thank you for your letter, dated 30 June 2021. We understand from your accompanying documents that the partners at Cam & Uley Family Practice are requesting permission to relocate Uley's dispensary to its premises in Cam.

I am writing on behalf of Uley Parish Council (UPC) to strongly object to the closure of the existing dispensary at the surgery at Uley, which will severely impact in excess of 3500* patients located in rural areas in Uley and the surrounding villages.

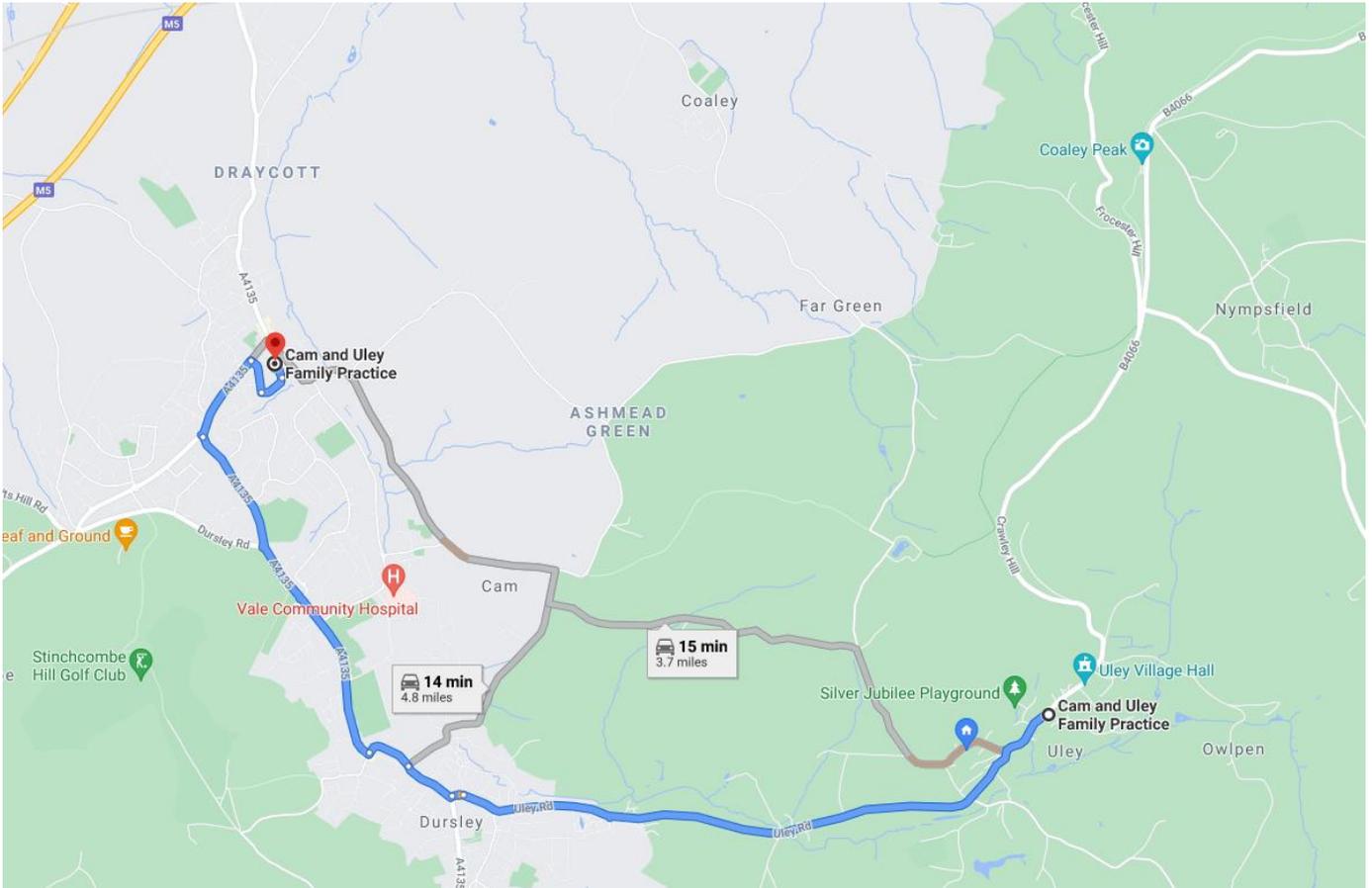
Whilst UPC objects to the closure of the Uley dispensary, it does not object to an alternative dispensary being set up at the Cam Surgery, despite there being a Boots pharmacy in Chapel Street within 50 yards or a minute's walk down a passageway from Cam Surgery. We understand that this existing pharmacy serves Cam patients efficiently.

Many residents of Uley have already contacted the Parish Council in large numbers to voice their objections, and a petition will follow in due course, signed by local residents. We also have the confidence and support of our MP, Siobhan Baillie.

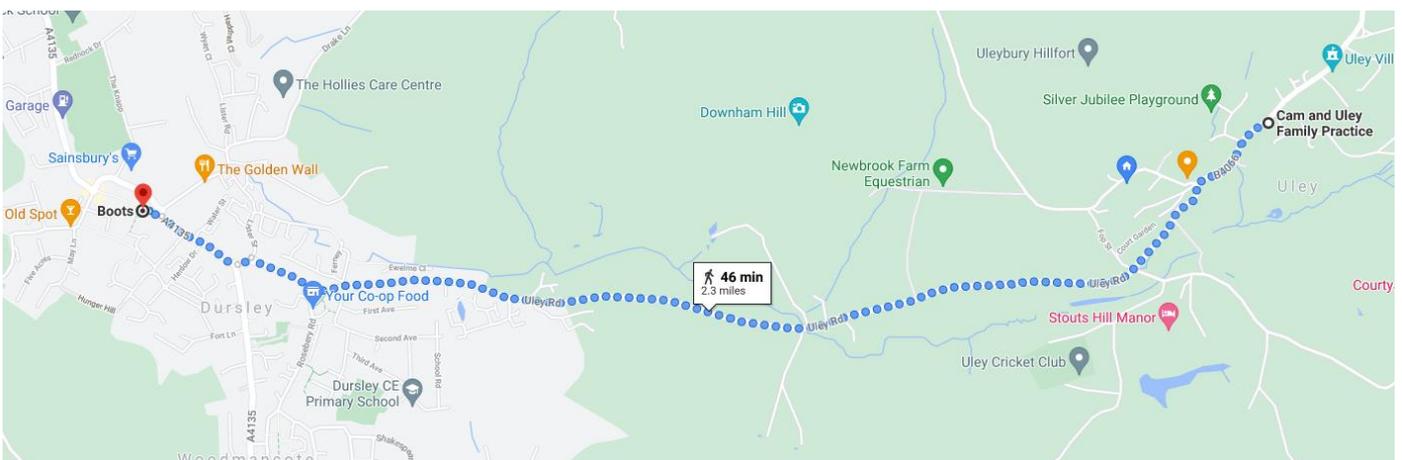
Objections fall into the following broad categories:

1. **Improvements to Patient Care** – both the government and the NHS are focussed as a priority on making continual improvements to patient care; Uley has had a dispensing surgery in the village for over a century because it is situated in a 'controlled area of rurality'. Removal of the dispensary from the surgery in Uley or, indeed the surgery itself, cannot be considered by any stretch of the imagination to be an improvement to patient care and will seriously disadvantage at least a third of the patients in the Cam & Uley Family Practice.
2. **High Existing Satisfaction with Uley Dispensary & Surgery** - patients from the Uley Practice are more than satisfied with the existing service offered by the current dispensary at the Uley Surgery. It is highly valued, extremely efficient and has been a lifeline to villagers over the last year and a half of Covid in particular. It is also vital for blood and urine tests for local people and those with acute or critical conditions.
3. **Government Policy** – existing Government guidelines mention 1.6 km as an acceptable distance between pharmacies. Uley Surgery is 3.7 km from Boots in Parsonage Street, Dursley and 6.7 km from Cam Surgery, the site of the proposed new dispensary. As access to public transport declines in this rural area, the need for proximity to a dispensing surgery grows, to ensure continuity of care for the elderly, carers, the vulnerable, the sick and those living in or close to poverty.
4. **Lack of Alternative Provision** - there would be no easy or satisfactory alternative for Uley patients to obtain prescriptions if the Uley dispensary is closed. Many older residents do not have their own transport and/or

access to the internet, and so cannot order repeat prescriptions online and often struggle with using the telephone appointment or reordering system. Calling into the surgery in Uley is vital to their welfare.



- Lack of Transport Provision** – The sick, elderly, or infirm should not have to travel too far to access medication. Having the dispensary in the village ensures that up to 3500 patients have easy access to prescriptions. Uley is a rural practice with an extremely poor bus service of only two return services a day to Dursley, the nearest town with a pharmacy. Boots in Parsonage Street is just under 2.5 miles from Uley Surgery, or 3.7 km. Walking is only possible for the fit as the route is extremely hilly and the pavement is narrow and overgrown. Once things get back to normal, and assuming 2 clinics a day at Uley x 4 times a week, and that each appointment is 10 minutes, doctors at Uley could see 40 patients a day. If only two thirds of these patients need a new prescription this could mean 30 additional separate new trips into Dursley for medication every day, or 120 per week, where parking is not easy. We are supposed to be aiming to reduce car journeys, so what impact will this have on local pollution rates? Additionally, it is extremely difficult to co-ordinate appointments with the local bus service, and for anyone in a wheelchair, or with a pram and a sick child, the journey is virtually impossible. **Please see the map below and Appendix A, which illustrates the issues of public transport.** Walking to Dursley along the undulating main road is so hazardous that the County Council has recently offered free school transport to Dursley to all Uley children to avoid this danger, despite only half the village falling into the free transport catchment.



6. **Hardship** – there are many people in this rural area living close to poverty. Taxis cost in the region of £11 each way to Cam and about £8 each way into Dursley; they are not numerous in this area so there is often a delay. Moving the dispensary out of Uley will cause significant financial hardship.
7. **Timing/effect on health** – anyone who does not have transport and needs to return the next day due to collect a prescription will not start treatment on the same day – for a frail person, or an extremely sick child, this could be the difference between starting to get better or an ambulance trip to the local Accident & Emergency if things deteriorate overnight. This cannot be acceptable for vulnerable patients.
8. **Capacity – could the Boots and other pharmacies in Dursley cope with the additional demand for prescriptions from Uley residents?** Most Uley patients would not attempt to go to a dispensary in Cam, as the parking is so poor at the surgery and in Chapel Street. In addition, patients often cannot get prescriptions filled immediately, which is prohibitively expensive if you have a taxi waiting. In Uley it is easy for the majority of patients to pop back later in the day to collect medication, or to ask a neighbour to help, but if patients in the future are forced to travel to Dursley or Cam to hand the prescription in and cannot wait, or will miss the bus back, then it means another journey the next day.
9. **Building availability: Irrelevant justification from the Practice** – The ending of the Uley Surgery lease in 2022 has been quoted as a reason to move the dispensary to Cam to safeguard demand. UPC has confirmation that the building is available for renewal of the lease when the current arrangement expires.
10. **Community Sustainability:** The Stroud District Council Local Plan defines Uley as a “Tier 3” settlement (Core Policy CP3). Such settlements “possess a limited level of facilities and services that, together with improved local employment, provide the best opportunities outside the Local Service Centres for greater self-containment.” It is a recurring theme within the SDC Local Plan that communities should be kept sustainable where possible; indeed, Strategic Objective SO1 contains policies aimed at “Maintaining and improving accessibility to services and amenities for our communities”, whenever development is proposed. It seems ironic that when adding a facility, one must have regard to these policies which are aimed at community sustainability, but when removing one no regard should be had at all. This seems at the very least to be contrary to the spirit of the SDC Local Plan.
11. **Concerns for the Future of the Dispensing Surgery in Uley & Lack of Consultation** - UPC is extremely concerned that this proposal to close the dispensary in Uley could be a first step towards consolidation of the practice at the Cam site which, given the points raised above, would further isolate vulnerable rural patients from Uley and the surrounding area from appropriate access to local medical care and medication. Of similar concern is the fact that to date Cam & Uley Family Practice appears to have made absolutely no effort to consult patients, or even most of their own staff, despite having a moral obligation to consult existing patients.

Feeling is running extremely high in Uley about the proposed loss of the dispensary. **Uley Parish Council strongly advises that permission SHOULD NOT be granted to close the existing dispensary in Uley.**

Uley Parish Councillors, together with our District and County Councillors, and our MP, expect to be fully consulted before any decision is made and, if a meeting or hearing is convened, will attend, and will also liaise with representatives listed below in order to contact the numerous patients of the practice who will be grievously disadvantaged by closure of the dispensary at the Uley Surgery. Strength of feeling in the village is such that a petition against closure of the dispensary, signed by many local people, will be sent to you in due course.

Yours sincerely

Cllr. Melanie Paraskeva
Chair, Uley Parish Council

CC:

Siobhan Baillie MP
Dr Steve Alvis
Cllr Martin Percy – District Councillor, Coaley & Uley
Cllr Wendy Thomas - County Councillor, Dursley
Chair - Nympsfield Parish Council
Chair - Owlpen Parish Council
Chair - Coaley Parish Council
Chair - Frocester Parish Council
Chair - Leonard Stanley Parish Council
Uley Village Hall Committee
Sally Lamerton – Chair of Uley WI
Uley Post Office & Village Stores
Uley Society
Dr Simon Opher - Chair of Trustees at Prema Arts Centre
Graham Turnbull – Chair, Uley Millennium Green
Gordon Scott - Director, Prema Arts Centre
Andreas Paraskeva – Chair, Uley Allotment Association
Nicola Rogers - The Vestry Café

Uley Players
Uley Singing Allsorts
Uley School
Uley Playgroup
Uley Toddlers
Cam & Uley Family Practice:
Dr Marion McDowell – Partner & Registered Manager
Dr Neil Fletcher – Partner & Registered Manager
Dr Kat Bristol – Partner
Dr Rebecca Brydon – Partner
Dr Melanie Edgar
Dr Mike Armstrong
Dr Maggie Warlow
Dr Thomas Moore
Dr Simon Lawrance-Owen
Dr Laura Corbett
Mr Ian Cawthorne – Practice Manager & Registered Manager

**The Uley Medical Practice merged with the Cam Medical Practice in 2012, bringing a list of c. 3,500 patients to give a new practice total of c. 10,500 at the time.*

APPENDIX A

Factual account of trip to Cam surgery using the current bus service by a Uley patient with a respiratory condition who is on oxygen. This person is a seasoned bus user and advises that this is the best and the only way to make the journey.

9.20. Left home to catch the No. 65 bus from the bus stop opposite Uley Post Office & Village Stores.

Arrived at Cam Pitch and walked to surgery for 10.00 AM appointment.

After the appointment, because there is no return bus available at this time, caught the No. 61 bus from Cam Pitch to Stroud at 10.45 AM.

1.15 PM – caught the No. 65 bus service back to Uley, arriving back in Uley at 1.50 PM.

Factual description of taking a taxi to the Cam Surgery from Uley (narrated at the Uley Parish Council meeting on Wed 7th June 2021 by an elderly Uley patient).

Taxi one way = £11 – must be booked some time in advance.

Taxi will not wait at Cam Surgery whilst you are inside for your appointment.

After the appointment you then have to call a second taxi. More waiting, which can be considerable.

Cost £22 plus.

There is, in theory, a Good Neighbours' Scheme, where volunteer drivers will take you to the Surgery in Cam and will wait for you for £10 return, but since Covid this is difficult and there are not enough drivers to cope with higher demand. You must book this service well in advance and so it is not suitable for emergencies.