

COUNTDOWN TO DILKE D-DAY STARTS

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The Forest's much-loved local hospitals were discussed as the countdown starts to deciding their future. West Gloucestershire Primary Care Trust hosted the discussions at Whitemead Park in Parkend, and have described the day long event as 'constructive and positive'.

The Forester has teamed up with the trust to find out what you want from your hospitals - the Dilke Memorial and Lydney Hospital.

The Dilke needs large amounts of cash spent to bring it up to modern standards, and the trust have appointed consultants to help assess the three options for the miner-funded hospital:

- Spending the £1,300,000 needed to refurbish the building at its current woodland site outside Cinderford.
- Rebuilding the hospital on the same site.
- Moving to a new site shared with other local health services like Cinderford's overstretched health centre.

Chief Executive of West Gloucestershire PCT, Stephen Golledge said: "Local people in the Forest of Dean are passionate about their Community Hospitals. We fully understand the deep traditions and history behind the establishment of these hospitals, but we also share a desire to make sure that services can expand and develop in the right way for the future.

"An integral part of our vision is to increase the availability of healthcare services in the Forest, reducing the need to travel to Gloucester for treatments that we can deliver more locally. We need to have an open, transparent and objective debate about how we can ensure that Forest healthcare doesn't stand still and how we can together secure the future for the delivery of a broad range of local services from purpose built facilities in the Forest."

New therapies could be offered at the Dilke and Lydney and the trust would like to hear your views.

Use The Forester's freepost form to tell them what you think, you can also give your views at www.westglospct.org.uk .

A report from consultants is due in the autumn with a decision due after a three month public consultation exercise, the trust say they have no preferred option at this stage.