

Letter from BACH to Brian Gibbons AM, Kirsty Williams AM, Nick Bourne AM,
Brecon Community Health Council.

Builth Hospital Casualty Closure (10/11/06)

10 November 2006

Dear Sirs

I understand that the Casualty Unit at Builth Hospital has suddenly been closed, with no notice given to, let alone consultations with, local communities, the General Practice or hospital staff.

This appears to be the latest outrage in the 'death by a thousand cuts' which is increasingly afflicting health services in rural areas of Wales such as ours. The timing, late on Friday afternoon, shows this for what it is - a cynical and cowardly act by those at the LHB who are supposed to be the custodians of the trust of Powys people.

It will inevitably stoke further the anger that is quickly building up, both against the arrogant and dissembling way in which the LHB and its chief officer have treated Builth over the last 18 months, and those - be they at local government, regional health agency or national levels - who seem to be content to stand by and watch this happen, and take no steps to defend the services the LHB is stealing from us.

No doubt Powys LHB feels pretty pleased with itself to have pulled off this callous and contemptible move, smug in thinking it has managed another clever 'win' against the trusting citizens of a small town who can't move fast enough to defend themselves. But every succeeding example of the LHB's duplicity earns it more enemies, more loathing, more contempt, and makes it more likely that its victim communities will find the determination to exact their revenge.

The LHB must be overhauled, or replaced. Its management, which has shown itself so completely careless about the interests of those it is supposed to serve, must be replaced by people who can display competence, honesty, and a determination to deliver, not remove, services. How long will it be before the disparity between what is provided in metropolitan and rural parts of Wales becomes a matter for a case at the European Court of Human Rights? How can Assembly members hope to retain their seats unless they can show they really are up to the challenge of controlling LHB's and making them serve their constituencies?

Are you satisfied with the way the Powys LHB is handling itself in its relations with its client communities?

Are you content that the proper processes of consultation, negotiation and above all realistic planning for the future are being gone through?

Are you happy that the future health care of people in this areas really is safe in their hands?

I would be pleased to hear your views - frankly I'm disgusted that this state of affairs has been allowed to develop, and that no-one seems willing to take the responsibility for telling the LHB it cannot go on like this.

Yours,

Jonathon Morgan, Chairman B.A.C.H. - Built Against Closing Hospitals