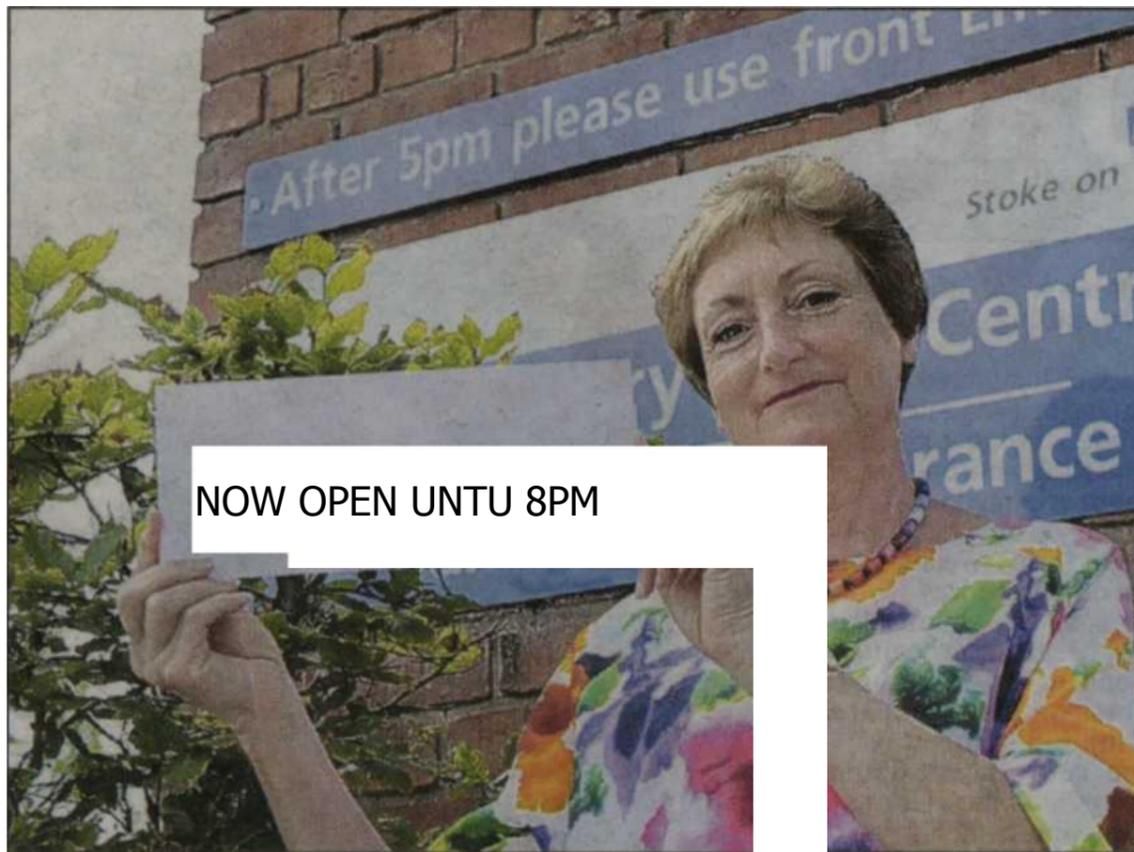


Car park will stay open late as outcry forces management



PARKING VICTORY: Pam Bryan and, right, Meir Primary Care Centre. Picture: Ben Warburton

Patient power beats NH

BY ALEX SMITH alex.smith@thesentinel.co.uk

PATIENTS are celebrating after forcing health centre managers to scrap plans to cut a car park's opening hours.

They were horrified after discovering Meir Primary Care Centre was trialling the closure of its rear car park after 5pm on weekdays and all day on Saturdays in an attempt to save £25,000 in security costs.

The rear car park is frequently used by disabled or elderly patients because there is a dropped kerb leading to the back entrance of the Weston Road surgery.

But the trial has now been scrapped after patients complained to the health centre's management team. The surgery's second car park was unaffected.

Patient Participation Group (PPG) member Pam Bryan, of Weston Coyney said: "It's a real victory for common sense and also a victory for all those people who made representations to the surgery to try to reverse the decision."

Mrs Bryan who is also the secretary of the Stoke-on-Trent Area Network for Disability (STAND) campaign group, added: "I've been a patient there for several years.

"I was absolutely horrified when I first found out about this at our PPG meeting. Everyone at the meeting was astounded that this had been allowed to happen so the fact this has been reversed is very pleasing.

"On Saturday morning, I met an elderly man on crutches who told me he had struggled to get to the front door of the health centre. He didn't have a blue badge so had walked from

the car park even further away very slowly in the pouring rain and when he got to the entrance there was no chair for him."

Patient Trade Elkin, aged 52, of Fenton, said: "If this very stupid rule had persisted I would have had to change my GP practice."

She added: "I've been disabled for around 25 years.

"I'm due to have one of my knees replaced in September plus my hips are failing so I'm in severe pain and my mobility is very poor. I walk very slowly on crutches.

"Considering it's a health practice, they weren't taking people's health into consideration -1 was horrified, not just for myself but also for other disabled people as well as the elderly.