



TATTENHALL & FARNDON NEWSLETTER WINTER 2018 ISSUE 5 - email – vsg.ppg@nhs.net

What a difference a year makes...

It hardly seems possible that your Patient Participation Group (PPG) has just held its AGM and has elected/re-elected the positions of Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary for 2018/19.

The last 12 months has been a very steep learning curve for all, working towards many of our initial aims and continuing to act as your 'critical friend' to the VSG.

Our Patient Participation Survey allowed us to identify strengths and weaknesses in the services offered by the VSG and to seek positive outcomes where necessary.

We have sought to provide Patient Access 'drop-in sessions', equipping individuals to book and cancel appointments online and to order repeat prescriptions.

Car parking issues at the Farndon Practice have been resolved.

We have ensured that the VSG Website has been updated to create a more user-friendly experience; providing a clearer format and a simpler navigation menu.

We have highlighted a raft of services that are available locally, promoting healthier lifestyles and improved condition management.

We have also drawn up a comprehensive 'aide memoire' which covers your 'Route to Health Care'.

Our spotlight feature on local pharmacists was very well received. Our pharmacists are keen to widen their portfolios and offer greater clinical expertise, signposting you in exactly the right direction.

We will continue to act as a 'critical friend' to the VSG, providing a positive voice within our communities.



INTRODUCING DR TEPLICKY

The Practice is delighted to welcome Dr Teplicky BA, MS, MBBS, MRCGP (2018), to the team and who joined us as a GP in September. Dr Teplicky has wide experience in the UK, Europe and the United States. Her particular areas of interest are nutrition and obesity.

Dr Teplicky works six sessions per week and can be seen at both the Tattenhall and Farndon surgeries.

MISSED APPOINTMENTS

Missed appointments with a doctor and/or practice nurse continue to be an issue which we are seeking to address. For the months of September and October, **106** and **148** appointments were missed respectively.

If you have a pre-booked appointment which you know you will be unable to attend, then please let the practice know so that your appointment can be cancelled, and that space be re-allocated to someone who might need to see one of our practitioners.

'HEALTHBOX' IS BACK EVERY THURSDAY IN TATTENHALL

The very popular Healthbox Classes are back.

The team is offering anyone living with a long-term condition, a **FREE** programme of classes.

This is aimed at living well with long term conditions and is a terrific social morning, which includes well-being advice, support and activities.

The classes are held every Thursday at St Alban's Community Room, Tattenhall, from 9.30-10.30am.

We know how popular the Healthbox Team is — so don't delay and call in to start your free programme.

For more information Tel: 01513550205 or email info@healthboxcic.com





As we get older, our bodies respond differently to the cold which can leave us more susceptible to serious health problems. But with a little preparation, and by following some simple suggestions, you can stay healthy, safe and comfortable this winter.

Prepare for Winter

- Have your Heating System serviced annually.
- Check your stopcocks move freely.
- Your Energy supplier may have advice on preparing your home and guidance to see if any financial help with heating bills is available.
- Have a few extra items in your freezer or dry goods cupboard.
- If you live on a quiet road the Council Highways (0300 123 7036) may install a Grit Box so that residents can put down their own grit & salt mixture.
- Keep a torch handy in case you lose power.
- Keep a list of emergency numbers, such as your utility companies, by your phone. If there is a power cut, call the 105 electricity helpline.

How can I keep myself warm?

Even if it isn't a severe winter, cold weather makes us more susceptible to certain illnesses. Follow these tips to stay healthy and keep warm indoors and out.

- Several thin layers of clothing will keep you warmer than one thick layer. Clothes made from wool or fleecy synthetic fibres such as polyester are a better choice than cotton. Start with thermal underwear, warm tights or socks.
- Use a hot-water bottle, wheat bag or an electric blanket to warm the bed.
- Check whether your electric blanket can be kept on all night. Some blankets should only be used to warm the bed before you get in. If you have continence difficulties, talk to your doctor before using one.
- Never use a hot-water bottle and an electric blanket together as this can be dangerous and get your electric blanket checked every three years by an expert.



How can I stay healthy in Winter?

Staying active will not only keep you fit and healthy, it will also generate heat to keep you warm.

- If it's not too cold, take a short walk in the middle of the day.
- Look for ways to keep active - get up and walk around, make yourself a warm drink and spread any chores throughout the day.

Keep your hands clean

Good hand hygiene is the simplest way to avoid getting colds or flu and stop it spreading to other people.

Wash your hands regularly with soap and warm water, or use alcohol-based gel or wipes.

MALPAS CANCER FRIENDS

Malpas Cancer Friends are volunteers who have all had cancer and who believe that in using their experience and training, they can help cancer patients to overcome some of their fears.

They aim to help people with cancer and their families by:

- reassuring people that their reactions are normal
- providing information from health professionals about treatments/side effects
- increasing their sense of control
- reducing feelings of isolation
- sharing practical tips on coping with cancer
- providing a place to express feelings, relax, laugh and be themselves.

Meetings are held monthly at Malpas High Street Church (dates of these meetings will be well publicised and usually take place on the 1st Thursday of each month between 10.30am-12noon).

Knowing you are not alone and being able to share your hopes and fears with like-minded people can be a great help. Emotional support has been shown to significantly reduce anxiety and depression.

Leaflets advertising this service can also be found in the waiting rooms of both surgeries.

If you feel you would be more comfortable chatting on a one-to-one basis rather than at a group meeting, please contact : **Mervyn Pearson on 01948 860970 or by email: malpascancerfriends@gmail.com**

And ... A Date for your diary: Malpas Cancer Friends Christmas Fayre is on Saturday 8th December 2018 at the Jubilee Hall, Malpas between 10.00am-1.00pm

Pharmacy2U is NOT your local Pharmacy

We are aware that many patients have received a leaflet by post, inviting them to obtain their repeat prescription medicines from a company called Pharmacy2U. While, after full consideration, this may be an option you feel might suit you, we want to ensure you are aware of the facts.

Despite the NHS logo, Pharmacy2U is NOT your local pharmacy and is not connected to them in any way. It is not endorsed by your GP surgery, despite the marketing on their leaflet. It is an internet-based distance selling pharmacy located on an industrial estate. As a patient you would have no face-to-face contact with a pharmacist or pharmacy staff and your medicines would be delivered via Royal Mail.

You are, of course, free to choose where your prescriptions are dispensed, but please remember that the staff at your local pharmacies are committed to giving you a personalised and caring service.

They offer support and can access your medication records, to provide valuable prescription and over-the-counter advice and recommendations when needed. In addition, they often liaise directly with the VSG on your behalf, when clarification may be needed.



We wouldn't want to lose them!

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 100 CLUB WINNERS

The Village Surgeries Equipment Fund (VSEF) is delighted to announce the following winners from the draw held on Saturday, 3 November

1st – M Kirk and M Moore (£75 each)

2nd – P Bowen and B Payne (£50 each)

3rd – K Kenney, S Morris, B Robinson and J Nevitt (£25 each)

Forms are available for 2018-2019 and more information will be provided in the next Newsletter. For immediate queries, please contact Helen on 0780 304 5024 or helen.jowett1@btinternet.com

Our thanks to you all in supporting the VSEF which provides monies for equipment not ordinarily funded by the NHS and from which we can all derive benefit.

More 'Insider Tips' that we suspect you didn't know about your GPs

Your Doctor is self-employed ...

This makes a difference because GP partners own the business of the practice and are 'independent contractors' to the NHS. Many members of staff at the surgery, including some of the GPs, will be employed by the surgery and not the NHS.

This has several implications:

- Your GP receives a set amount of money per patient per year. The average is around £140 per patient per year. This is really good value (**less than 40p per patient per day**), particularly when you consider this is the money the practice receives to provide all the services and pay all the staff including the doctors.
- The surgery is contracted to provide certain things, and not others. It's worth remembering, therefore, that you will sometimes be asked to pay for things. For example, your GP is contracted to provide medical care, but not to do things outside of this such as the multitude of letters they are asked to sign.
- The payment GPs receive is not affected directly by referrals or prescribing – the costs for this are in a separate budget. If your GP decides to prescribe an expensive medicine for you, they are not paying for it themselves. Patients sometimes think that GPs switch medicines to cheaper ones in order to gain personal financial benefit. They are simply doing this to help the NHS budget.
- Because they are small businesses, they bear increasing costs themselves. Rising indemnity fees (insurance against being sued) must be paid by the GPs themselves. A doctor working only 2 days per week can be paying £6,000 per year on indemnity insurance. Why does this matter to you? Because if they are paying £6,000 on that, then they are not spending that £6,000 on another receptionist, nurse, or doctor. The higher the costs, the less likely the surgery is to be able to offer additional services.

Your Doctor wants the best for you ...

If your GP decides not to refer you, not to prescribe, not to further investigate ... then it is usually because they don't feel you need any of the above. They also understand, probably better than you, the risks associated with over referral, over treatment and over investigation. GPs aim to keep you healthy, investigate when appropriate, and treat when required. Bearing this in mind, your GP will not mind explaining this to you – just ask. If you were hoping for an X-ray, mention this and have a mature conversation with your GP about the pros and cons of doing that.

Your Doctor is not taking part in a medical drama ...

It is not always possible to get a diagnosis right on a first visit (this is not a TV drama). Many conditions are not at all obvious, and time is the only sensible way to start to determine an accurate diagnosis. Serious illness often initially presents the same as mild, self-limiting illness. For example, a cough can be caused by a simple viral infection or might be the outcome of lung cancer. Importantly, ask your GP about the things that you should watch for and under what circumstances you should return for review.

Your GP's Workload ...

The waiting room might seem empty, but most GPs see 13-15 patients in morning surgery, followed by visits, and then a further 13-15 patients in the afternoon. Many GPs see more than this. In addition, there might be face-to-face consultations, there will be phone calls and paperwork. Paperwork is an essential part of patient care and takes time. It consists of looking through results of any investigations that have been ordered, reading letters from consultants, acting upon these letters (consultants will not infrequently give actions for the GP to undertake), signing prescriptions (signing prescriptions is one of the riskiest things that GPs do – be aware of this and don't be upset if there is a query over your medication – this might just mean that the GP is taking the trouble to check that this is safe for you) and arranging the investigations and referrals from the previous surgery.

If you are waiting for the results of an investigation, this can be stressful, and you quite rightly will want the results as soon as possible. Here are some things you should consider:

- If the test was arranged by your hospital consultant – that's who you should go back to for the result. Ring the consultant secretary (ring the hospital switchboard and ask to be put through) and ask when the consultant is going to convey the results to you. If they say they will send the results to your GP, explain that you want the results from the specialist who arranged them who is by far the best person to give appropriate advice.
- If your GP did arrange the test, the smart thing is to make sure you know from the outset when and how you should expect to get the results. Are they going to phone you, or do you need to call? Speaking to the receptionist if you are uncertain is the way to go – explain your problem and ask how to proceed – they will probably be able to help you.

Your GP has entrusted their reception staff with an important job ...

Reception staff deal with enquiries, book appointments and generally ensure all is running smoothly. They are not medically trained, but will have a good understanding of the services offered.

By entrusting them with a rough idea of the problem that you have, they can direct you to the most appropriate course of action. Don't forget that everyone who works in the surgery is covered by the same confidentiality clauses. You can trust that the receptionist is NOT going to be talking about you to others. Increasingly doctors' surgeries include clinics run by nurses, physios, pharmacists and more. If you ring and insist on an appointment with a GP, without explaining that it's because you have a bad back, you might have missed out on seeing the physio – probably a better option for you.

If you are polite and friendly to reception, they will be polite and friendly to you. They are not trying to be obstructive – you might be anxious and stressed but try to keep calm. The receptionist can be the key in getting the right help as quickly as possible – just remember, that help might not be the GP.

HAVE YOU HAD YOUR FLU JAB YET?

You are eligible for the free flu vaccine if you are pregnant, are aged 65 years or over, have a long-term health condition, or are a carer. Children aged 2 or 3 years are also eligible.

Not sure if you are eligible? Check the website for more information or contact reception on **01829 771588**.

Should you still require the Flu Jab – please call to make an appointment and keep an eye out on the website and surgery Facebook page for further flu clinics.

CHRISTMAS OPENING HOURS

Keep an eye on the VSG Website www.thevillagesurgeriesgroup.co.uk and the VSG Facebook for our Christmas and New Year opening hours at both Surgeries. **DON'T FORGET** if you have a Repeat Prescription that you will need over the festive period, then the last date to hand this in is **Thursday 20th December**, to ensure you have it in time.

