

NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 17

A word from our editor

Dear reader, I hope this is a welcome return for the Red House PPG Newsletter. A year has flown by since our last edition, but the PPG has continued to busy itself supporting the surgery and identifying new opportunities to support our patient population in the increasingly difficult times faced by the NHS and, in particular, General Practice.

Our longstanding Chairman, Steve Bates decided to step down from his committee role this year, but we are delighted that he continues to be an active member of our PPG from the backbenches.

Our new Chair, Mark Pitman, has launched us on a path of looking at increased engagement with our patient population and growing our active membership as we have now shaken off many of the lingering difficulties that afflicted us in the post pandemic lock-down world. This includes more engagement and co-operation with the PPGs in other surgeries in the Bletchley area.

In September members of the PPG will be out and about at the surgery on the 9, 11 and 12 of September. We will have a stall selling a variety of items, including the legendary bird-boxes made by PPG Member Bob Gould. Hope you manage to come along to say hello - and find out more about what we do and how you can become more involved in the life of the Red House. You can also get in touch with the PPG by email at redhouseppg@gmail.com

I hope you enjoy our newsletter. Shona Manson [Ed.]



Red House Surgery

Thank-you to our outgoing Chairman, Steve Bates

After more than 7 years as our PPG Chairman, Steve has decided to step back from the role. Having supported the PPG for more than 10 years, he has led the PPG through much change in the NHS and specifically through changes that have impacted general practice. These have included the establishment of Primary Care Networks in 2019 and the merging of Milton Keynes, Luton and Bedford Care Commissioning Groups in 2021. Pressure in secondary care and



Our new Chair and outgoing Chairman enjoying some summer sunshine

changes in the roles of other sectors in healthcare provision have impacted and necessitated change in General Practice. Steve has ensured the PPG has remained on top of the changing landscape and able to support the Surgery in providing the best care for its patients. On top of this, Steve continued to champion the PPG by chairing virtual meetings through the Covid pandemic and lockdown, and it is a credit to his leadership that the group remains so strong today. We are very pleased he will continue to be a contributing member of the group, sharing his knowledge and experience.

Tell us what you think!

The PPG would like to know more about your interactions and experiences with the surgery and the PPG, what we and the surgery do well and where there are opportunities to improve. We are launching a short survey to run throughout September. For the tech savvy amongst you (or with helpful grandchildren) you can use the QR code here to access the survey, alternatively a paper version of the survey is available from the surgery.



Your PPG Committee

At our AGM in May the following committee members were elected

Chair – Mark Pitman

Secretary – Elspeth Woods

Deputy Chair – Sarah Setterfield

Treasurer – Christine Cartwright

We are very grateful that Christine accepted a nomination to continue as Treasurer, but she has expressed a wish to hang-up her calculator this year. So, the search has been on for a suitable replacement.



In August some of our PPG enjoyed time relaxing at a garden party hosted by one of our longest standing members John Neale.



Working with other PPGs

In July, a PPG conference took place at the Tech Space at the South Central Institute of Technology, part of the Bletchley campus of MK College. Representatives from Red House, Whaddon, Westfield Road and Bedford Street Surgery PPGs attended, and we had a very lively and constructive evening talking about what each PPG's priorities are and how we might work together for some things in the future to help promote the PPG and also help in the wider Bletchley community. The conference had been arranged by our Secretary, Elspeth Woods, who said "it was great to see enthusiasm and commitment for working together and a clear wish to meet regularly to share what we are doing and where we can help". The next joint session is scheduled for early October, so more to report in our next edition.

Surgery closure for staff training

There are forthcoming dates for you to note which are set aside for staff training across Milton Keynes. The surgery will be closed between 2.30pm and 6.30pm on:

- **Wednesday 18th September 2024**
- **Thursday 21st November 2024**
- **Wednesday 19th February 2025**
- **Thursday 24th October 2024**
- **Wednesday 22nd January 2025**
- **Wednesday 19th March 2025**

Changes at the redhouse

As always, the team at the surgery has seen some changes during the year but we are delighted to welcome our new additions and sad to say good-bye to some old friends.

Our fabulous nursing team has been joined by Jodie Chard and Charlotte Miles, both fully qualified Practice Nurses. Frida is now concentrating just on our diabetic patients, working Tuesday - Thursday.

Dr Adio is our new salaried GP joining the team in September. She will be working three days per week. We are also joined by Dr Tasneem Sewilam who joins us as our GP Registrar to complete her final year of GP training.

Our reception team has new members, Karen and Jodie. Kasie and Michelle are care navigators but also now undertaking phlebotomy duties and enjoying their additional skills. Jan one of our senior receptionists has decided to enjoy some quality time with her family and leaves us at the end of September. We shall miss Jan and her kindness.

Shaen Dalvi is our new PCN Manager for the CROWN PCN which consists of Red House and Whaddon HealthCare.



Our practice manager, Jane says *"We always realise how lucky we are to continue to have such a great team at Red House. We value the feedback from our Friends and Family survey and appreciate the support that our patients offer us."*

Around the Surgery



Celebrating 75 years of the NHS last year our staff were all given a bottle for hot or cold drinks.



Receiving our bleed kit from the Lions.



Undertaking fire safety training



Bruce Battams our trusty garden volunteer



Our PPG event last year

What is social prescribing?

Many things affect our health and wellbeing. A lot of people who visit the GP are affected by loneliness, isolation, stress, money and housing problems, or managing long-term conditions. All of which affect our mental and physical health. That's where our social prescribing link worker comes in. The link worker is there to listen (a problem shared is often a problem halved). The link worker can put you in touch with the people and activities that might help you feel better. They might introduce you to a community group, a new activity, a local club or support you to meet like-minded people. Or they might help you find legal or financial advice or counselling. Our social prescribing link worker through the CROWN primary care network (PCN) is Anna Bright who introduced herself in our last newsletter.

Bletchley Harmony Hub (singing for health-and fun) – Come and Join Us



Our singing group started in February 2021 and continues to thrive, welcoming singers of all abilities (including those of us who generally restrict our singing to the shower or the car (we all do it)).

The group is led by Kat Stephens a singing teacher, and choir leader who is absolutely passionate about all things singing. Kat teaches groups of all ages and believes wholeheartedly that singing is blooming marvellous for the brain, the body and the soul! She loves giving her groups valuable opportunities to perform and share their love of singing with their family and friends.

Kat is still performing herself in a 1940's trio 'The Songbook Singers', and sings Musical Theatre numbers with her best friend, 'The AliKats'.

She'd get the whole world singing if she could!

Concerts at Water Eaton raised funds for Macmillan Cancer Support and the local Parkinson's Societies. Other events where the group

have performed include the Bletchley Pathfinder event, The Whaddon Walkers annual picnic and there are further events in the pipeline at a local care home, MK Hospital and a couple of other organisations that have approached the group.

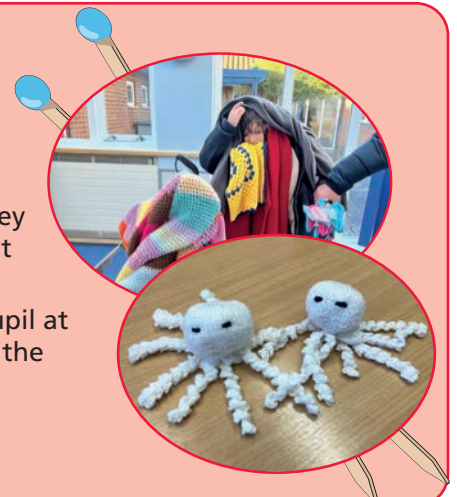
If you enjoy singing for fun and want to come along, we are keen to welcome new members – Wednesday evening at Water Eaton Church Centre @ 7.15pm. There is no audition and you don't need to be able to read music.



Knitters

Our Red House knitters continue to wear out their needles with their tireless production of items to help our community. For the hospital they knit boobs (as teaching aids for breast-feeding) and octopi for the premature babies who can hold the tentacle like they would an umbilical cord and it stops them pulling at any tubes.

Blankets and hats production continues. Nicole a pupil at Redway can often be found hiding under several of the beloved blankets.



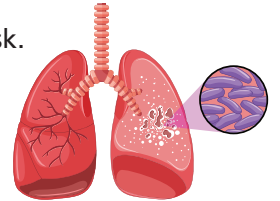
TB (or not TB)

Tuberculosis (TB) is now often thought of as a disease of the past, but it's not. It is an infection that usually affects the lungs, but can move to any part of the body. It is treated by antibiotics and there is a vaccine to protect some people who are at a higher risk of TB.

You can be a carrier of TB for years without making you sick. This is called latent TB or inactive TB. Without treatment, inactive TB can develop into active disease and make you sick. You can take medicine to prevent the development of active disease.

If you were born outside the UK in an area of high prevalence for TB you are more at risk. If you are taking immunosuppressive drugs or have HIV, diabetes, or an occupational lung disease you have an increased risk of TB.

To find out more visit the nhs website www.nhs.uk/conditions/tuberculosis-tb or if you have concerns about TB contact the MK TB nurse team on tbnurseteam@mkuh.nhs.uk



Cancer Screening

The UK screens for only five types of cancer, lung, bowel, cervical and breast. It can save lives by finding cancers at an early stage, or even preventing them. Red House breast cancer screening took place last Autumn. 1854 of our patients were eligible and 20% (373) simply did not take up the offer. If you weren't able to attend but would like to take advantage of this very important screening, please contact the breast screening office on 01908 995883.

Cancer & Beyond

We are busy organising the next meeting of our "Cancer and Beyond" support group, for patients, carers, and family, which we hope will include speakers from the new radiotherapy unit at MK Hospital. If you are interested in attending this event or any future C&B meetings, please let a member of the staff know and we will be sure to add you to our mailing list.



Hard of Hearing Group

Losing your hearing can be a very isolating experience. MKSensory Services run a Hard of Hearing Support Group. The Group meets at Gloucester House, 399 Silbury Boulevard, Milton Keynes, MK9 2AH with refreshments provided and a chance to meet, chat with friends and more.

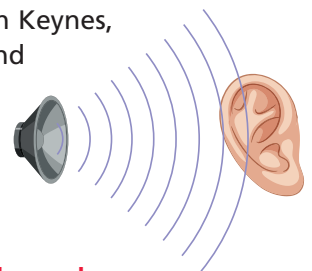
The group will meet on the following dates with discussions on:

Hearing aid maintenance - Thurs 12 Sept (2pm - 4pm)

Fire Service visit - Tues 15 Oct (10am - 12pm)

Hearing loops - Wed 6 Nov (10am - 12pm)

You can just go along and join in or contact the group on 01908 401135 or mkss@bid.org.uk



Chair Exercise Group

Hopefully many of you will have heard about the chair exercise group for patients registered with a Bletchley GP. The group runs weekly on a Wednesday afternoon at the Bletchley Youth Centre in Derwent Drive in Bletchley. If you have a limited mobility due to frailty, obesity, osteoporosis, pre/post-op this may be the opportunity you need to explore the benefits of increased exercise. The group is run by Zoe Neal who has a wealth of knowledge and experience and those attending are having a lot of fun. If you are interested in attending, please do speak to a member of the team.



Winter Vaccination Programme



The COVID19 pandemic reminded all of us of the benefits of vaccination programmes. These have for many years been the key to significantly reducing (or eradicating) numerous infectious diseases, saving countless lives and improving public health.

At the start of the year, there was a sharp rise in children with measles in the UK. This has been the result of a drop in parents having their children vaccinated against measles, mumps and rubella (the MMR vaccine) Complications from measles can be life changing, so hopefully all our younger patients have all now had their vaccinations.

RSV – Respiratory Syncytial Virus

This virus is a common cause of coughs and colds. It usually gets better by itself, but it can be serious for some babies under six months, children who were born prematurely and adults over 75 year, especially if they have a weakened immune system, or long-term heart or lung condition.

RSV is spread by coughs and sneezes. Good hygiene includes washing hands and wiping down toys and surfaces; not sharing cutlery/cups will also help reduce the spread. If you are coughing or sneezing use disposable paper tissues and bin them immediately.

From September the surgery will be giving vaccinations to help protect against RSV. Those eligible for vaccination are:-

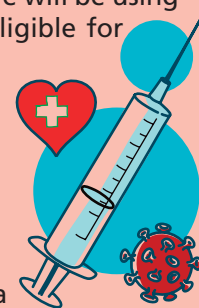
- Patients aged 75-79 years. The surgery will be contacting you to offer the vaccine but if you haven't heard, please keep your eye on the website or FaceBook page or speak with a member of the team.
- Our expectant mothers (28 weeks +). This will help protect the baby for the first few months after birth. Please speak with your midwife/GP about the vaccination.

Covid

We shall be starting our vaccinations at the beginning of October and as in previous years we will be using the Water Eaton Health Centre in Fern Grove, Bletchley as our vaccination site. Those eligible for vaccination are:-

- adults aged 65 years and over
- residents in a care home for older adults
- individuals aged 6 months to 64 years in a clinical risk group (immunocompromised)

Details of the clinics, which will be on a Thursday, will be published as soon as we can confirm delivery dates of the vaccine. If you are eligible, you will receive a text informing you that booking is open. Alternatively, please visit our website for details, or speak with a member of staff. We will also put a message on our 'phone system and FaceBook page.



'Flu

Children and pregnant women are being offered the 'flu vaccination from September, but the latest science shows that the effectiveness of the vaccine can lessen in time for adults, so a later start is better.

Clinic dates at Red House will be Saturday 5th and 12th October.

Eligible adults

- those aged 65 years and over
- those aged 18 years to under 65 years in clinical risk groups
- those in long-stay residential care homes
- carers in receipt of carer's allowance, or those who are the main carer of an elderly or disabled person
- close contacts of immunocompromised individuals

Please contact the surgery to book your appointment. If in any doubt, please speak to a member of the team.

Ed. If you are eligible for a vaccination – just get it!



iCaSH - integrated contraception and Sexual Health

There are currently high incidences of Chlamydia and Gonorrhoea in MK. Our patients under 25 are encouraged to use one of the free testing kits available from the surgery. The test is carried out via a urine sample or vaginal swab by the person concerned in the privacy of their own home. They then send the sample via freepost for testing. All results remain confidential, and the surgery is not informed (unless the patient asks for their result to be sent to their GP.) Please pick up a kit from the waiting area or ask at reception.

To help guard against sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), the practice is working closely with iCaSH and has signed up to the C-Card scheme where any of our registered patients, 16-24 years, can ask for a c-card which entitles them to obtain free condoms



from here or any other outlet that is signed up to the scheme. Patients over 25 can obtain free condoms from the iCaSH website <https://www.icash.nhs.uk/where-to-go/icash-milton-keynes>. Anyone 13-16 years can also obtain advice and condoms at a registered site, the closest to Red House is at The Saplings Centre, Queensway, Bletchley.



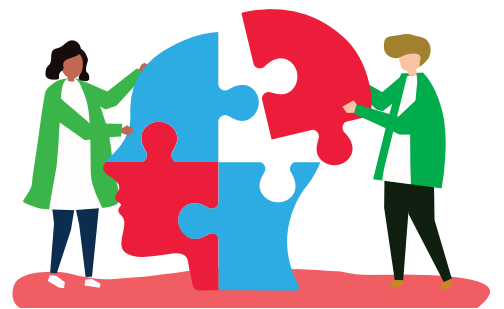
For further information and help with preventing unwanted pregnancies and STDs including HIV please contact the iCaSH website - www.icash.nhs.uk

Mental Health

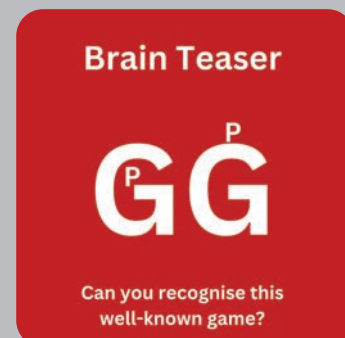
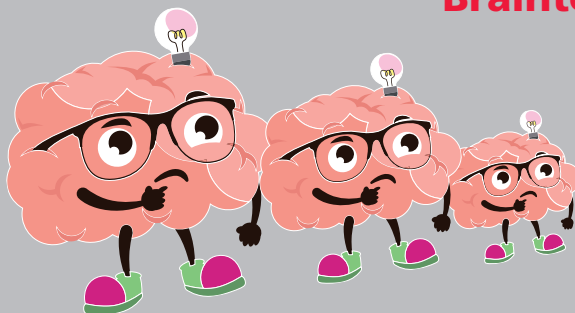
Increasingly many of younger patients are struggling with their mental health. A Young Person's Sanctuary supporting young people aged 14-17 years with their mental health across Milton Keynes is now open 365 days a year between 4.00pm and 10.00pm

The Sanctuary at CAMHS Eaglestone Health Centre, Standing Way, MK6 5AZ is a safe and inclusive space where your needs are listened to. You can just drop-in there is no referral is needed.

To find out more call 0300 330 0648 or email yps@mind-blmk.org.uk



Brainteaser



Answer on back page

Stayin' Alive

Many of us will sadly witness someone having a cardiac arrest (heart attack). Some of you may remember Vinnie Jones on television showing us how to do CPR to the tune of the Bee Gees 'Stayin' Alive – not sure if there is a Taylor Swift equivalent.

More effective might be an online training course with RevivR, a free, interactive online CPR course. It takes just 15 minutes and could help you save a life. You just need your mobile phone or tablet and a cushion to practice on (and a tune with a good beat).

The training can be found on the British Heart Foundation web-site

[Learn CPR in 15 minutes | RevivR | BHF - BHF – www.bhf.org.uk](#)



Here is a sample of the interesting and informative talks we have had in the past 12 months. These include a focus on organisations who can assist our patient population stay safe and independent in their own homes and a fascinating insight into the skills of Red House staff.

Milton Keynes Community Alarm and Telecare Service



Richard Graham, a member of the Milton Keynes Community Alarm response team, visited us to explain the service which is available for anyone, of any age, who lives in the Milton Keynes Council area and:-

- is disabled or frail with medical problems or at risk of falls including anyone discharged from hospital who requires some additional support.
- is at risk of domestic violence, harassment, victimisation, or distraction burglary.

The Community Alarm Service is a 24-7 service which provides personal alarms and sensors to help vulnerable adults who need emergency care. A member of the team can be with you within 45 minutes of you using your alarm to summon help. Once the alarm is activated staff can speak to you if able, but will mobilise if they get no response. The team work closely with the emergency services and can always summon the right help.

Richard explained the wide range of devices that can be used to help keep loved ones safe in their own home.

More information can be found at [Community Alarm Service | stay safe 24/7 with a personal alarm | Milton Keynes City Council \(milton-keynes.gov.uk\)](#)



Ali Jaffer – What Does the Pharmacist Do?

Our in house pharmacist Ali Jaffer gave us an interesting and entertaining talk on the role of pharmacists; they do more than just dispense medication. In 1948 approximately 225 million medications were dispensed by the NHS, in 2018 that had increased to 1.3 billion (costing the NHS nearly £150 million).

The community pharmacists on our high streets are an important point of first contact to reassure us and offer help with minor ailments. The first hospital pharmacists were only in place in 1958. Today they deal with the more serious medications and discuss the side-effects and options with individuals.

As a pharmacist Ali had to complete a 4 year degree, 1 year 'on job training and a further 2 years additional training to be a hospital pharmacist.

Ali is using his skills as both a community pharmacist and hospital pharmacist to:

- explain medications, why they are offered and their interactions with other medication and herbal remedies
- review medications and make recommendations 'deprescribing', where appropriate
- suggest alternative medications where there are shortages and
- discussing what works for you.



If you take multiple medications (five or more) – and 8.4 million people do – there is an increase risk of adverse reaction and error. If you want to discuss your medications why not speak to Ali.

Falls Prevention Service

Venkat Tikkireddi is an advanced physiotherapist practitioner and clinical director of the Milton Keynes Integrated Falls Prevention Service. Venkat gave an interesting and thought provoking presentation on the work of the service. The team take referrals from social services, third parties and self-referrals. There are automatic referrals for anyone with weight-bearing fractures.

There are more than 300 reasons why people over 65 will fall. Some of them are intrinsic factors of aging as we become more unsteady, also loss of sensation which can come through diseases such as diabetes. There are a range of services including assessments, equipment and exercise classes where the team help people recover their mobility and prevent further falls.

The team can also offer advice on living with osteoporosis.



Important messages from Venkat were to keep moving and keep hydrated.

A referral form and more information is available on the website [mkfalls – www.mkfalls.co.uk](http://www.mkfalls.co.uk)



CarersMK

We have in previous newsletters mentioned Carers MK and Lynette their Adult Carers Service Manager recently came to speak to us. The surgery can record that you are an unpaid carer on



your medical record. If the surgery know that you are helping someone else who can't cope without your support, they can offer you help, support and advise or tell you about other support services.

We don't often recognise ourselves as carers and therefore we don't have access to vital support available. 9% of the total population have a caring role. In the Red House population of around 14,000 patients only 378 of our patients (or 2.7%) have identified themselves as carers. There are no young carers registered.

The surgery can only help if they know you are out there.

Carers MK can offer support to carers and help with contingency and emergency plans if you as a carer are unable to meet that role.

Every carer has a legal right to a carer's assessment (which is undertaken by the local authority) but Carers MK is there to assist with ongoing support. If you would like to discuss support available as a carer or available support if you are/have a young carer then contact the social prescriber at the surgery or Carers MK

Carers MK | Dedicated to supporting carers – Carers MK (carersmiltonkeynes.org).



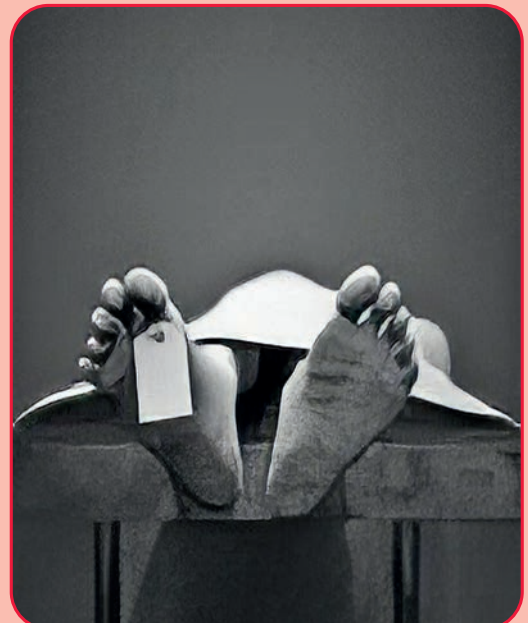
The last taboo

For our final speaker in this round up we had a fascinating talk from our very own Kasie who gave an insight to her former profession as an embalmer.

Any of you who have met Kasie will know she has a great commitment to helping people and a bubbly and engaging personality.

We might have been a little apprehensive about the topic, but Kasie explained the privilege she felt spending time with her Nan after death, and making her look her best which had led her to shadowing a friend, who was an embalmer (admitting she nearly fainted at the first encounter). But not daunted she undertook the rigorous training required to be an embalmer. The work is hard and physical and as a freelance embalmer the work is undertaken in a variety of funeral homes, often with challenging facilities!. Kasie was happy to explain to us the benefits an embalmer can bring to preserving a body which might need to be transported and the comfort it can bring to the bereaved to see a loved one peaceful and at rest, just how they remembered them.

It was a fascinating insight into a life event which some of us may experience, and the absolute respect shown by those who care for us after death.



Pharmacy First

Our in-house pharmacist Ali Jaffer features in our newsletter but did you know our local community pharmacists can help you with seven common conditions without needing a GP appointment?

There are some age restrictions but if you have:

- **Earache** (children and young adults aged 1-17 years),
- **sore throat** (adults and children from 5 years and over),
- **sinusitis** (adults and children from 12 years and over),
- **impetigo** (adults and children from 1 year and over),
- **shingles** (adults – 18 years and over),
- **infected insect bites** (adults and children from 1 year and over), or
- a **urinary tract infection** (women aged 16 to 64 years)

NHS
England Pharmacy First

then pop along to your local pharmacy first.

Let's Get Physical

Wednesday 18 September is National Fitness Day. There will be thousands of free, fun events for people of all abilities taking place at sports clubs, gyms, pools and leisure centres across the country, as well as online. The theme of the day is 'Your Health is for Life'. You can find your nearest centre simply by entering your postcode in the National Fitness Day Location Finder www.nationalfitnessday.com/finder

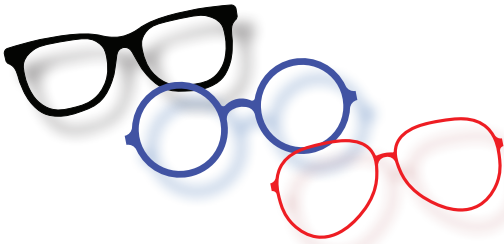
**NATIONAL
FITNESS
DAY**

Keeping active helps us all but if you are living with type 2 diabetes and want to be more active you might be eligible to join the Milton Keynes University Hospital smart watch research trial. Find out if you are eligible and express interest in taking part by going to <https://tinyurl.com/5e3surj7>



Collecting Spectacles

Our last newsletter featured the Milton Keynes Lions Club and their work in collecting old spectacles for distribution through Médecins Sans Frontières to people who have no access to opticians. There is a drop off box in the surgery at Red House and we recently received a Certificate of Appreciation from the Lions Club.



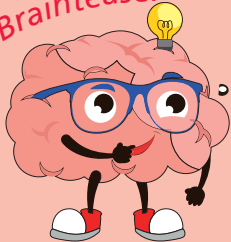
Looking for an indoor gardening project?

Microgreens could be the answer! Microgreens are baby plants grown from seedlings. They are usually harvested before they reach full size. They are very nutritious and delicious and can be added to salads, soups, stir fries, sandwiches, wraps, pasta dishes, burgers, pizza or anything you like to eat.

1. Choose your microgreen seeds from any local garden centre.
2. Find a container, a seed tray or old yoghurt pots.
3. Line the bottom with felt or kitchen roll before filling with compost.
4. Make a shallow hole in the compost and sow a dense but evenly spaced line of seeds.
5. Place on a bright windowsill and lightly water – be sure to keep the seeds moist
6. Your microgreens will be ready to harvest in a week or two. Simply snip them at the base and enjoy.



Brainteaser



Answer is
Ping Pong



redhouse
SURGERY

SURGERY ADDRESS:

241 Queensway, Bletchley, Milton Keynes MK2 2EH

Telephone: 01908 375111

www.redhousesurgery.co.uk

 Red House Surgery

SURGERY HOURS: Monday-Friday 8.00am to 6.30pm but we also hold "early bird" surgeries on a Thursday morning between 7-8am to cater for those who commute or cannot visit the practice later in the working day.

APPOINTMENTS: To see a doctor call the surgery on **01908 375111** or book online. **You will need to register for this service.** The majority of our appointments are booked on the day of the request with only a few bookable in advance.

In the case of an emergency outside surgery hours please telephone NHS **111**. This service is available 24 hours a day and a nurse can give you advice over the telephone.

Don't forget to log on to our website www.redhousesurgery.co.uk. The website provides useful information, advice and support to all of our patients. Also giving details of how to register for Online services where you can make an appointment, order a repeat prescription etc. The website can also direct you to self care information promoting general good health and wellbeing. Next time you are feeling a little under the weather click on www.redhousesurgery.co.uk you may be able to avoid a visit to your GP.

EMERGENCIES TAKE PRIORITY AT ALL TIMES