

NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 16

A word from our editor

Greetings Readers! It has been some considerable time since our last newsletter but our Surgery Staff and PPG Members have been kept busy as we have all got slowly back to something closer to normal life after the pandemic lockdowns and the vaccine rollouts. More of that inside.

The PPG is now looking to the future and what we can do to represent and support our patient population and the surgery in what continues to be challenging times for healthcare with increasing demands on the surgery.

Members of the PPG will be out and about at the surgery in early August so come along and say hello - and find out more about what we do. You can also get in touch with the PPG by email at redhouseppg@gmail.com or come along to our monthly meetings (some details of the interesting speakers who have attended the meetings in the last 12 months are inside).

I hope you enjoy our newsletter. Shona Manson (Ed.).



Red House Surgery

In Memory of Nigel Vaughan (27 April 1933 – 21 July 2022)

It was back in 2009 when the surgery started talking about patient participation and the wish to set up a group known countrywide as Patient Participation Groups.

The surgery agreed that we would put up posters asking for volunteers to help us shape a group of patients who would work hand in hand with the surgery staff to ensure that views of patients would be heard and understood. Patient education was considered a worthy topic both for the understanding of the NHS system but with particular emphasis on the inner workings of Red House Surgery and how we might be able to do things better.

Nigel was one of the first to step up and keenly offer to meet with doctors, staff and other patients to find some common ground and develop the PPG. Already busy with his own business, family and other responsibilities, including looking after a local couple, and playing the violin, Nigel still gave his time to attend meetings, usually twice per month. Not only did he give of his time, but he generously assisted with the organising, setting and printing of our surgery newsletters which so many patients have benefitted from since. We have had many compliments on our professional newsletter, which his son David has continued since Nigel retired, and are the envy of many a PPG in MK. Nothing was ever too much trouble and Nigel would often donate printed items for patient use such as appointment notes and posters advertising the PPG and events.

Nigel remained an active participant of our group until his health deteriorated but we will be forever grateful for his full and varied contribution as a founding member of our PPG.



An important anniversary

Many of you will have seen the news that 5 July 2023 marked 75 years of the National Health Service. I imagine few of us can remember, or imagine, life without the NHS. Treating 1.3 million people a day in England, the NHS touches all our lives. We should do all we can to support it.



Your PPG Committee

At our AGM in May the following committee members were elected

Chair – Steve Bates

Deputy Chair – Sarah Setterfield

Secretary – Elspeth Woods

Treasurer – Christine Cartwright

The AGM saw our long-standing Deputy Chair Jan Lloyd step down from the Committee. Jan has our thanks for her many years of service. Jan remains an active member of the PPG and organiser of our varied and interesting speakers at our meetings.

The PPG meets monthly in the upstairs waiting room of the surgery. Meetings start at 6.15pm.

Our next meetings are:

14 August

11 September

9 October

12 November

11 December



The Doppler Effect

The PPG are always interested in new developments within the surgery which help both our medical staff and our patient population so we were all very intrigued when we are asked if we could assist the surgery to obtain a MESI Doppler machine. Sounding like a cross between a world cup winning footballer and a time machine we wanted to know more.



Some of our readers may have already benefitted from the nurses using the new kit, which is very bright and cheery but provides a fast and accurate reading of a patient's "ankle brachial pressure". This is a measure of blood-pressure which can indicate peripheral arterial disease. Prior to the new machine arriving the tests were time consuming and laborious for both patient and nurse. The new machine provides a greater degree of accuracy improving the treatment of debilitating leg ulcers and saves valuable time.

The PPG were pleased to be able to contribute £500 towards the purchase.

“Changes at the Red House”

The team at the Surgery have had some changes

Emma Barnes joined our nursing team back in the Autumn and looks forward to meeting you when you need any nursing care.

We have several new faces in the reception team, with three new Care Navigators – **Michelle, Claire and Kasie**. This strong team are here to assist with any queries and are the first point of contact when visiting or telephoning the surgery.

We said goodbye to Liz and Penny from our admin team at the beginning of the year and a new secretary, **Stephanie** has joined the team.

Rob Kempster, a paramedic is now working at Red House undertaking clinics and home visits as and when required.

We also have two new members of the CROWN Team working with the surgery – but I’ll let them introduce themselves.

Our practice manager, Jane commented “We are delighted to have such a great team and appreciate the support that our patients offer us particularly during very busy times.”



Meet our new CROWN team members

My name is Anna Bright and I am the new Social Prescribing Link Worker with the CROWN primary care network (PCN) which includes Red House Surgery. Born and raised in Bedfordshire, I attended the University of Bedfordshire where I gained my Bachelor of Science in Sports Therapy, achieving a First-Class honours. I then went on to work for a semi-professional rugby team in the academy, second team and first team sections. I was part of the medical department of this team for 7 years.

I have a passion for helping and supporting people and will always try my best to help in the best way I possibly can. I am excited to be working in primary care, using my skills and experience within this social prescribing role and I look forward to meeting up and engaging with patients and their families. If you feel I can be of any help to you, please do speak to a member of the practice team.

Outside of work I enjoy playing sports, video games and being with family, also spending time with my 10-year-old West Highland White Terrier, Bo.

Ed. *Social prescribing link workers connect people to community-based support, including activities and services that meet practical, social, and emotional needs that affect their health and wellbeing. This includes connecting people to other services for example housing, financial and welfare advice.*

My name is Dawn Gibson and I am a Mental Health Practitioner. I have always had an interest in mental health, I’m not sure what started me on this path except I used to love to read books on the subject, still do and the way people think, behave and the perception the public have with regards to mental health has always been fascinating. I initially trained as a secretary many years ago and I suppose started my mental health career as a volunteer for the Samaritans when my knowledge of mental health was very limited, which probably made me embark on a career of nursing. I qualified as a mental health nurse in 2005 and started off working in a psychiatric unit in Luton.

The work was very challenging, but I gained so much experience in a short space of time. I then went on to be part of a pilot scheme working with the Acute Home Treatment Team, now known as the Crisis Team, who opened a unit for people needing low level nursing intervention in a more homely environment with shorter stays for no longer than a week. I returned to working in a psychiatric unit in Milton Keynes in 2008 where I remained for many years. I enjoyed the challenge of seeing people who were at their worst and then for the most part their journey to recovery. I felt privileged to be in a position where people are at their most vulnerable and to be part of their recovery.

I’m often asked why I didn’t go into management, but I knew that it would take me out of the environment I loved, and I would’ve missed the patient contact. I was excited when I saw the opportunity to work in GP surgeries as a mental health practitioner as I could use the experience, I had gained to support people in primary care services before they reached the stage of crisis. I would also maintain the one-to-one contact which I love. I hope to make a valuable contribution to the team at Red House. I wish I could say something exciting about how I spend my spare time but quite honestly, I’m happiest doing the simple things in life such as walking my dog!



“Speaker articles”

At our regular monthly meetings (upcoming dates on page 2) we often have interesting speakers. Here is a sample of the interesting and informative talks we have had in the past 12 months.

John Lourie: Retired Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon “Half a Century of Club Feet and Other Stories”



We were hugely entertained as well as deeply impressed by John’s talk on his experiences of working for the Impact Foundation in Bangladesh. The Foundation works to help people who needlessly live with disabling conditions which could be prevented or treated if medical care was available.

John gave freely of the skills he had in undertaking, what would be seen in the UK as uncommon operations to correct club foot. In the UK this is a condition dealt with at birth by treatment through manipulation and strapping, rather than operations. The work was done in a floating operating theatre in Bangladesh, on a ‘riverboat hospital’ ship named “Jibon Tari”. *Ship of Life*. John told of badly deformed feet he had helped correct, transforming the lives of over 400 individuals some of

whom had travelled over 250 miles just to access treatment. Some of the deformities the individuals had lived with were humbling and not only did we admire the health workers’ immense skill but we all left with a heartfelt appreciation of the benefits of our own NHS!

John was accompanied on some of his trips by his (sadly late) wife who found herself an unexpectedly teaching English classes on the boat! A testament to enterprising local initiatives.

You can learn more about the work of the Impact Foundation at <https://impact.org.uk> - a very worthwhile charity with very low overheads.



Organ Donations

Barbara Hoggarth spoke to us last July about the importance of organ donation. Barbara is part of a team of volunteers throughout the country who provide education on organ donation and we certainly learned a lot! Barbara’s journey started when her son Ian died very suddenly following a sudden cardiac incident at the age of 31. Ian had carried an organ donor card and, as a consequence, and his brave family honouring his wishes, he helped over 30 people.



In addition to major organs, we perhaps think of as being donated - kidneys, heart, lungs, liver and pancreas - almost every part of you can help someone else or save another life after your death.

Did you know you can donate tissue? Your cornea (eyes), tendons, skin, bone marrow and even your nerves and veins can help another person.

Barbara joined us via the internet and despite some initial technical difficulties her enthusiasm and passion for her subject shone through the screen. Since May 2020 everyone is now automatically considered to be an organ donor unless they have opted out but you can still record your decision to

be a donor. It is important to let your family and friends know your wishes as they will still be consulted after you die.

You can find more information (and register to be a donor) at www.organdonation.nhs.uk



Milton Keynes Hospital Radio

In a world when it feels to most of us like we have 24-hour entertainment via our phones or tablets, this is not true of everyone. Many of our patient population don't have or can't use these devices. So, what happens when you find yourself in hospital, unwell, and cut-off.

Milton Keynes Hospital Radio is what happens. Phil Yates a volunteer with MKHR spoke to us in November about their exciting new initiative.

For a variety of reasons universal access to entertainment and hospital radio has disappeared. Who of you remember headphones plugged into the panel behind the bed or dashing down to top-up cards for the televisions which swung across the beds? These have gone, since 2019, the MK Hospital Trust have provided entertainment over WiFi to our own phones, tablets and laptops.

This includes the Hospital Radio but it excludes patients who didn't have the technology to access the internet. There is evidence that our elderly community can quickly become isolated if they have a hospital admission and the radio can be a vital service in combatting this.

MKHR decided to find a way to bring the radio to those patients. A prototype was built based on an old radio set. The technology is housed in a 3D printed case which patients can use with suitable headphones. Within it the technology allows access to MKHR (based on raspberry pies for those readers who understand these things – if I say programmable IT, it probably doesn't mean much more). For the users it operates much like a traditional radio with a simple on-off/volume switch which connects you to hospital radio.

Teaming up with a sub-group of Men in Sheds - Maker Space at Kiln Farm - they produced 20 test radios which were distributed by volunteers to patients in a single ward before looking to roll them out across the whole hospital. The radios are set to only use the free hospital WiFi and play MKHR output thereby rendering them pretty useless for any other purpose which minimises any loss throughout their lifetime.

If you are interested in volunteering either to distribute and collect the radios or helping the volunteer team to produce programmes or fundraise then you will find more information at www.mkhrs.org.uk or email chairman@mkhrs.org.uk



Bletchley / Milton Keynes Lions Club

We were pleased to welcome two speakers from the Lions Club.

John Miller spoke about the Lions taking up the challenge of Helen Keller to be "knights for the blind" and since 1967 Lions Clubs have collected unused spectacles. The Lions collect our old spectacles (no cases – although these are often recycled through charity shops) and through a central team in Chichester our old and often simply discarded glasses are passed to Médecins Sans Frontières who can distribute them to people who would have no access to opticians to improve their vision and ability to read. We have a collection box in the surgery so clear out your drawers and drop off those old spectacles.



John also spoke of another initiative based on a "message in a bottle". The Lions support and distribute The Message in a Bottle scheme. This helps you store your personal and medical information in a bottle stored in your fridge door, so it can be found quickly by emergency services. This simple idea could help to save your life.

The little green bottle means you can give the emergency services your important medical information and contact details, if you have an accident or sudden illness at home.

The fridge has been chosen to store the bottles as most people have one and it's easy to find. The insulation properties and construction of a fridge mean that in the event of a fire, the contents of the fridge usually survive.

Graham Kilroy also visited us to promote a life-saving scheme. The Lions are distributing bleed kits throughout Bletchley. Promoted by the Daniel Baird Foundation bleed kits can save the life of a person who has been stabbed, an all-too-common occurrence in society today. The kits are given free to pubs, clubs and shops and have all the necessary items to reduce blood loss until the emergency services arrive. The initiative was started by Dan Baird's Mum, Lynne, after Dan tragically lost his life after being stabbed on a night out with friends but catastrophic blood loss can arise from an accident at work or in a car.

Graham related an incident where, having supplied a bleed kit to a pub in Bletchley he was contacted the next day to ask if they could have another. Thinking the original had been misplaced Graham was told the kit needed replaced as it had been used the previous evening following a stabbing outside the pub and a young man's life had been saved. An instant demonstration of the value of the kits.



HRT Prescription Prepayment Certificates (PPCs)

From 1 April 2023 NHS Prescription charges increased to £9.65 per item. Many of you may already be aware that if you regularly pay for your NHS prescriptions you can save money by paying in advance for all prescriptions you might have in a 3 or 12 month period.

Now a new HRT PPC has been introduced to help reduce the costs of certain Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) medicines.

All types of PPC can be purchased directly on-line from the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA).

www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/ppc

www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/hrt-ppc

or ask at you local pharmacy as many are registered to sell PPCs

| PPC type | Suitable if you pay charges for | Price from 1 April 2023 |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 3-month standard PPC | 4 items or more in 3 months | £31.25 |
| 12-month standard PPC | 12 items or more in 12 months | £111.60 |
| 12-month HRT PPC | 3 HRT medicines or more in 12 months | £19.30 |

CROWN Singing Group – Come and Join Us

We are delighted that the CROWN Singing Group which started in February 2021 continues to thrive – but we are always open to new voices. Don't be shy - the mental health, respiratory health and general well-being benefits of singing are enormous, and we welcome enthusiastic singers of all abilities. The singing group is led by professional singing coach, Nicki Rogers and meets on a Wednesday evening at 7.15 pm at Water Eaton Church.



Do you care?

Do you look after, or give help or support to anyone and are not paid for this?

If so, 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 advice or tell you about other support services.

The information is only on your medical record for as long as you provide the support. The surgery will record if you look after a family member, partner or friend who needs help because of illness, frailty, disability, mental health problems or addiction. They will also keep a note of any plan you have in place if you cannot provide the support.

#NHSThinkCarer

CarersMK

Carers MK is a local charity based in Bletchley which exists entirely to support the health and wellbeing of carers. They support carers from all backgrounds including young carers. Carers MK can provide practical support, with up-to-date information and advice on carers' issues, including knowing your rights and entitlements, help with health and social care services and creating an emergency plan. They also provide emotional support through opportunities to meet other carers as well as a listening ear to talk to someone in confidence and a free counselling service.

With patient consent the surgery will help put you in touch with Carers MK or you can contact them by telephone (01908 231703) or email (mail@carersmiltonkeynes.org).

Flu Clinics and Shingles Vaccinations



While summer seems to have deserted us the 'flu season will soon be upon us again. Those eligible for free flu vaccinations will be

- those aged 65 years and over
- those aged 6 months to under 65 years in clinical risk groups for flu
- pregnant women
- all children aged 2 or 3 years on 31 August 2023 and primary school aged children (from Reception to Year 6)
- 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
- frontline workers in a social care, working for a registered residential care or nursing home,
- registered home care providers
- voluntary managed hospice providers and
- anyone employed by someone receiving personal health budgets, such as Personal Assistants

Look out for notice of the clinics starting in September

While we are talking of vaccinations. The **Shingles National Immunisation Programme** is expanding.

You are already eligible when you are aged 70 to 79 and can have the vaccination at any time of year. From 1st September 2023 you can have the vaccination if you will be 65 or 70 on your next birthday. You are eligible for the vaccine after your birthday. The shingles vaccine is not available on the NHS to anyone aged 80 and over because it seems to be less effective in this age group.

Immunocompromised individuals aged 50 or over (with no upper age limit) are also now eligible for a shingles vaccination. The surgery will contact you if you are eligible but if you are unsure, please check.

New premises?

In our last newsletter we reported that the surgery was in discussion with the Clinical Commissioning Group to build a new, purpose-built surgery within the new housing scheme at Eaton Leys (just near the Hunter's Farm roundabout). The practice has outgrown its current location both in terms of our patient population and the capacity to accommodate our staff and patient care and support. We are feeling the impact of this in the ability to meet all requests for appointments.

Sadly, those proposals have fallen through as the new Integrated Care Board for Beds, Luton and Milton Keynes (BLMK) were unable to commit to ongoing financial support to new premises despite capital funds being available as a consequence of the housing development. So, we are back to the drawing board although we remain in the position that our much-loved current site can't be upgraded or adapted any further.

The surgery remains in negotiation with the ICB for alternative sites. The PPG will be assisting the surgery in all consultations about any proposed move and if you have any questions then please email us.

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 20 September 2023**
- **Thursday 23 November 2023**
- **Tuesday 20 February 2024**
- **Tuesday 17 October 2023**
- **Wednesday 24 January 2024**
- **Thursday 21 March 2024**

Let's Talk About Poo

NHS bowel cancer screening checks are sent by post to everyone aged 60 to 74 years every two years and are being rolled out to people aged 50-59 over a four year period between 2021 and 2025

The tests are called a FIT test (or to give it its grand name faecal immunochemical test) and checks for tiny amounts of blood in your poo which can be an early warning sign of bowel cancer. If you are concerned about doing the test the NHS have a helpful video on YouTube which explains more about the tests. How to use the bowel cancer screening FIT kit | NHS - YouTube

In addition to the regular screening the doctor may ask you to take a similar FIT test and reception will give you the test kit and instructions.



Always see a GP if you have symptoms of bowel cancer which can include changes in your poo that are not usual for you for more than three weeks, including needing to poo more or less often. If there is blood in your poo, which may look red or black. Other symptoms can include tummy pain, bloating, losing weight for no reason or feeling tired for no reason. More information can be found on the NHS website

www.nhs.uk/conditions/bowel-cancer/symptoms/

Ed. – the test is really easy and quick. It saved my Mum with a very early diagnosis so don't be put off!

Red House Breast Screening Campaign Starting this September

All women aged 50 up to their 71st birthday are invited for breast screening every 3 years. Your first invitation will be sent to you sometime between your 50th and 53rd birthdays. If you are aged 71 or over, you are still at risk of breast cancer. Although you will no longer receive screening invitations after your 71st birthday, you can still have breast screening every 3 years. You will need to ask your local breast screening unit for an appointment. Find details of your local unit at www.nhs.uk/breastscreening.


Red House patients will be invited from September.

You will be sent a letter with a location, date, and time which you are welcome to change if it is not convenient. Breast Screening is held at either the Breast Care Unit located at the main hospital or the mobile unit which is located at the Kingston Centre adjacent to Tesco.

Your breasts may change between screening appointments, so it is important to check your breasts regularly to know what is normal for you and please talk to your GP if you have any concerns.



We are with the AAA

 An abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA) is a swelling in the aorta, the main blood vessel that runs from your heart down through your tummy.

It can be serious if it's not spotted early on because it could get bigger and eventually burst (rupture).

In England, screening for AAA is offered to men during the year they turn 65.

Men aged 65 or over are most at risk of getting AAAs. Screening can help spot a swelling in the aorta early on when it can usually be treated.

Men registered with a GP are invited for screening at 64 or soon after their 65th birthday. If you are over 65 and haven't been screened, you can ask for a test by contacting your local screening service directly www.nhs.uk/service-search/other-health-services/abdominal-aortic-aneurysm-screening

The Red House assists with the screening programme by letting the team use a room at the surgery, so screening is available in Bletchley to avoid you having to travel.



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