

NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 19

A word from our editor

After an exceptionally warm and sunny summer autumn is upon us and this newsletter looks forward to the usual round of flu and covid clinics, the surgery is running a combined clinic this year. September was Alzheimer's awareness month and there is an article highlighting the challenges of living with dementia. We have our usual range of articles highlighting support services in the area and surgery news and updates. I hope you find the newsletter informative and entertaining.

Ed. Shona Manson



Why it is important to get vaccinated against Measles

Vaccinations are an important way to keep us all healthy and safe from sickness. Think of a vaccine as special training for your body's defenders. When children get their vaccinations, it helps their body learn how to fight off the germs that cause diseases like measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) without them ever getting really sick.

Measles is a viral infection that causes symptoms of fever, cough, red eyes and a distinctive rash. It used to be a very common childhood infection but had largely disappeared from the UK population due to an effective vaccination being part of the childhood immunisation schedule. Unfortunately, due to reduced uptake of vaccination, measles cases are on the rise – in 2024 there were over 11,000 suspected cases of measles, compared to 360 in 2021.

Although measles is often a mild illness, it can have severe complications including pneumonia, meningitis, seizures and blindness. It is also harmful to unborn babies and can cause miscarriage or stillbirth.

If you think you or your child has measles, then please contact the surgery – initially by phone – to be assessed. You should also speak to a GP if you are pregnant or have a weakened immune system and you have come into close contact with someone who has measles.

If you need advice about getting you or your child vaccinated, please speak to a Practice Nurse



Autumn Flu and Covid vaccinations

We shall be vaccinating on Saturday the 4th of October 2025. There will be further dates to accommodate anyone who cannot make the 4th. If you are eligible you will receive both vaccinations on the same day.

This Autumn we have decided to vaccinate patients at the Red House Surgery and will not use the Water Eaton Health Centre. We hope that this may be easier for patients to attend.

We look forward to seeing those eligible in this Autumn cohort, which is slightly different to last year.

Anyone who wants their vaccinations on separate days can, of course, request this.

'Flu

- Patients 65 years or older or 18-64 in a clinical risk group.
- All residents of care homes
- Registered carers / or those caring for older or disabled person
- Close contacts of immunocompromised individuals
- Children 2-3 years will be invited to attend the surgery for vaccination.
- All children at school up to year 11 will receive their flu vaccination at school.
- Children in clinical risk groups aged from 6 months to 17, will be invited for vaccination at the surgery but can choose to have their vaccination at their school if preferred.

Covid

- Patients 75 years or older and those aged 12-74 who are immunocompromised.

We shall of course be visiting those in care homes or who are housebound and unable to get to the practice.

Update from the redHOUSE

Dr Omar Abdalwhab has decided to take early retirement and leaves us at the end of September. We wish him a long, happy and healthy retirement.

Belinda Wetherall our amazing first contact physiotherapist is cutting down her hours and moving into semi-retirement. You can still book an appointment with Belinda in our Saturday clinics going forward.

Dr O Falayi – joins our team, working 3 days per week and we are sure you will join us in welcoming her to the Red House team.



Four new Care Navigators have joined us – **Jenny, Helen, Tracey and Kelly**. Working in the reception team is hard work but we know from the great feedback received that our patients appreciate all the efforts they make to support patients with their appointment requests and general queries. Our care navigator Kasie has moved on to pastures new and we wish her well.

From our Editor. Shona Manson

The staff of the Red House is what makes our surgery special. The PPG wanted to thank Belinda who has provided valuable support to many in our patient community and to recognise her contribution to an in-house physiotherapist service which has been highly effective for so many of us. Our Deputy Chair Sarah Setterfield presented Belinda with a rose, having reduced her hours Belinda will have plenty of time to spend in her garden.

MK Prostate Cancer Support

Care, Connect, Communicate

MK Prostate Cancer Support offers support and comfort to people in the Milton Keynes area affected by prostate cancer. Friendly, informal meetings can help you find out what to expect; chat with others who have been on similar journeys to yours and listen to medical professionals speaking about the latest developments. Visit www.prostatemk.org for details of their meetings or ring for a friendly chat on 01908 110763

Overall, one man in every 8 gets prostate cancer (but it's one in 4 for Black men). If your father or brother has been diagnosed with prostate cancer your risk of having the disease is more than doubled. 144 men a day are diagnosed.

Latest data shows more than 12,000 men died of prostate cancer in one year. Most of them died because their cancer was not detected early enough. 490,000 men are living with or after prostate cancer. Prostate cancer is expected to be the most commonly diagnosed cancer by 2030.

Some of the symptoms are:-

Waking up too often in the night to pee

Difficulty starting, dribbling, weak flow, straining or taking too long to finish; feeling that your bladder hasn't emptied properly.

Needing to rush to the loo, pain when peeing, blood in your urine, painful ejaculation.

If you have any of the above symptoms see your GP and get yourself checked. Early diagnosis is vital prostate cancer that has not spread is generally curable.



Wool donations greatly appreciated

Our Red House knitters continue to wear out their needles with their tireless production of items to help our community. In previous newsletters we have featured their blankets – for premature babies and children at the Redway school - hats, boots (knitted ones as teaching aids for breast-feeding) and octopi for the premature babies who can hold the tentacle like they would an umbilical cord (it stops them pulling at any tubes).

They are running out of wool, so if you have any you could donate, please drop it in at reception.



Carer Support in Milton Keynes

Many of our readers will be aware that Carers MK, featured in previous newsletters, sadly discontinued their services in April 2025, after 20 years of providing invaluable support to carers in our area.

Since 1 May 2025 Citizens Advice Milton Keynes have been responsible for Adult Carer Support. Further information on their services and referral process can be found via their website www.miltonkeynescab.org.uk

For Young Carers and Young Adult Carers (aged 5-25) you should contact **CHUMS** chums.uk.com (or telephone 01525 863924) who provide 1:1 mentoring, support groups, drop-in sessions and activity days.



**Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing
Service for Children and Young People**

Carers MK still have a support worker based at Milton Keynes University Hospital. For further details of the support available can be found on their web-site www.carersmiltonkeynes.org

Do more with the NHS App!



- 🔗 Order repeat prescriptions
- 📞 Use NHS 111 online
- 📍 Find NHS services
- 📄 View your GP health record
- 📅 Book appointments
- ✉️ Get reminders and messages

And much more...

You can also use these services by logging in through the NHS website

Need help?
Get support in the app or visit nhs.uk/helpmeapp



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GET IT ON Google Play

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Prescription tracking in NHS App

In May NHS England launched a new service to allow you to track your prescriptions through real-time "Amazon-style" updates. Almost half (45%) of phone calls to community pharmacies are estimated to be from patients asking if their prescription is ready, the new service helps free up time for pharmacists to provide advice to patients.

Initially nearly 1,500 high street chemists – including every Boots in England – signed up to offer the service and over the next year it is hoped that the service will be available in more than 60% of high street pharmacies.

You need to register and order your prescriptions through the NHS web-site or App www.nhs.uk/nhs-app/ to use the service.

Digital Smear Results

From September, the NHS plans to start sending digital results from the NHS Cervical Screening Programme, utilising the NHS App.

In September, those who have a negative test result will be notified of this by an NHS App message. It will also appear as an NHS App notification. If the NHS App message isn't read within 72 hours, a letter will be sent as a failsafe.

Abnormal result letters will continue, for the time being, to be sent by post.

This change follows the successful rollout of digital invitations and reminders in June 2025. Since the launch, 9 out of every 10 invitations are being sent digitally, with the remainder being sent by post.

Patients are encouraged to download the NHS App www.nhs.uk/nhs-app/

Do more with the NHS App!





DementiaUK

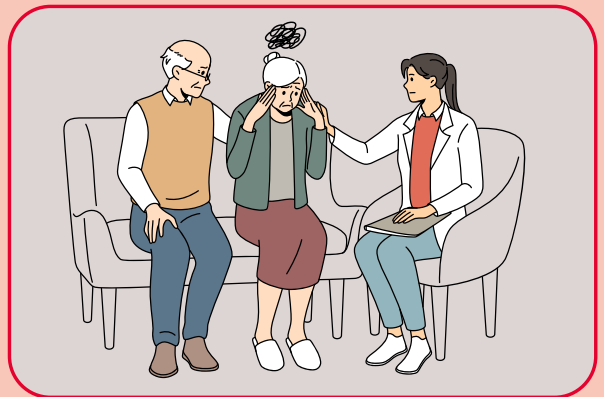
Dementia is a broad term for losing memory and awareness (cognitive decline), while Alzheimer's disease is a specific condition that causes dementia. According to the Alzheimer's Society:

- There are approximately 944,000 people living with either dementia or Alzheimer's disease in the UK
- About 1 in 14 people over the age of 65 have dementia
- The likelihood increases significantly with age, affecting 1 in every 6 people over the age of 80
- Approximately 7.5% of people with dementia are under the age of 65, which is around 70,800 people.

The main difference between Alzheimer's and dementia is that Alzheimer's is a disease in the brain, whereas dementia is a collection of symptoms. Alzheimer's disease causes cognitive decline, eventually leading to dementia. It's the most common reason why people get dementia.

Dementia can be caused by many different diseases all of which affect the brain in different ways. Most often, these changes will show up as a loss of mental abilities such as thinking, problem solving and memory, as well as differences in mood and behaviour.

Alzheimer's disease starts in the brain many years before symptoms start to show. Most people who develop Alzheimer's will do so when they are over 65 years old. Early symptoms are mild and so don't stop someone doing their normal everyday activities. It's only later that symptoms become severe enough to be called 'dementia'.



Other common causes of dementia include vascular disease, which prevents blood from getting to the brain properly, and Lewy body disease.

It can be very difficult coping with a loved one with dementia you lose the person you loved and perhaps once relied upon yourself.

People find lots of coping mechanisms – “playing along” and not challenging too much, distracting the person with music or videos to break repetitive behaviour and humour

Carer's support

It is confusing for the dementia sufferer as well. One man described to his daughter that he knew ***“my brain is wrong, it's like someone keeps pouring sand into it and I can't pour it out”***.

How modern technology can support people:

- Smart Home Devices: Automated lighting, smart thermostats, and voice-activated assistants like Amazon Alexa can help manage the home environment, providing reminders and controlling appliances



Alzheimer's Society

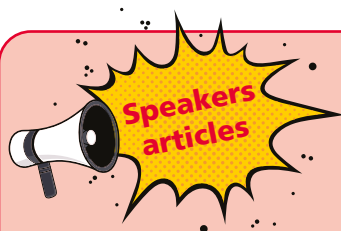
- **Medication Management:** Smart pill dispensers ensure that medications are taken on time, reducing the risk of missed doses or overdoses
- **GPS Trackers:** Wearable devices can track the location of individuals, helping to prevent wandering and ensuring they can be found quickly if they get lost. CPR Guardian <https://www.cprguardian.com/> sell a smart watch that not only monitors things like heart rate but has a GPS in it. It's made specifically for vulnerable people.
- **Fall Detection Sensors:** These sensors can detect falls and automatically alert carers or emergency services, ensuring timely assistance
- **Memory Aids:** Digital calendars, reminder apps, and electronic photo frames displaying familiar faces and events can help with memory recall.
- **Brain Training Apps:** Apps like Lumosity offer games and exercises designed to stimulate your brain and slow the progression of dementia.
- **Isolation can make the symptoms worse.** Technology helps keep individuals connected with their loved ones:
- **Video Calling** like FaceTime or Zoom enable face-to-face communication, helping to maintain social bonds and reduce feelings of loneliness.
- **Care Management Apps:** allow carers to manage medical information, track symptoms, and coordinate care with other family members or healthcare providers.
- **Online Support Groups:** Virtual communities offer emotional support, advice, and resources, helping carers feel less isolated and more empowered.



In Milton Keynes, the Dementia Information and Support Service (DISS) can provide personalised help and advice face to face or over the phone. Depending on need, they can offer information and signposting or ongoing support regardless of whether you are worried about your memory, have a diagnosis of dementia or are a carer, family or friend. Their expert team will listen, answer your questions, and connect you to the support you need.

You can contact DISS on 01908 232612 (Mon-Fri 9am-5pm) or email them at miltonkeynes@alzheimers.org.uk





Speakers

We have had only one guest speaker at our meetings since the last newsletter. Samantha Lennon came to show us the plans for Bletchley under the Town Deal Project.

Town Deal is a pot of money allocated by the Government to try to reinvigorate town centres which have suffered decline with a lack of business particularly post Covid. The Bletchley Town Deal Board is made up of representatives from local business, schools, councillors, charities and the college. They were awarded £22.7m for specific projects to help attract businesses back to the high street - with extra funding from the city council, Network Rail, Bletchley Park and MK College. Work has started on projects to make a difference to the town.



The masterplan for Bletchley town centre was approved in June and Sam who looks after Community Engagement on the Project came to show us the plans to improve the public spaces around the town centre area providing a better connection between cars, bikes and pedestrians to address some of the congestion issues, and improvements to the train station to give better access to the town centre. Improvements include a better, brighter Aylesbury Street where work started in July and improvements to Queensway and Saxon Street which will begin in September/October.

The Board have ambitious plans to make a difference to Bletchley encouraging business back to the high street and generally improve the experience of shopping and spending time in the town centre.

There are a number of drop-in sessions where you can see the plans and meet a member of the Town Deal team.

West Bletchley Parish Council Whaddon Way	Bletchley Leisure Centre	Frank Moran Centre	Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council Sycamore House	Bletchley Library
Mon 2-4pm	Wed 4-7pm	Mon 2-4pm	Mon 2-4pm	Thurs 5-7pm
20 Oct 2025	24 Sep 2025	22 Sep 2025	29 Sep 2025	25 Sep 25
19 Jan 2026	26 Nov 2025	17 Nov 2025	27 Oct 2025	20 Nov 2025
23 Mar 2026	17 Dec 2025	16 Feb 2026	24 Nov 2025	22 Jan 2026
	28 Jan 2026		26 Jan 2026	19 Feb 2026
	25 Feb 2026		23 Feb 2026	19 Mar 2026
	25 Mar 2026		30 Mar 2026	

You can also keep up to date with news on the projects at
www.groundbreakingbletchleyandfenny.co.uk



PPG Events

In July the PPG held an awareness event over three days, this consisted of a fund raising tombola which proved very popular and raised £499.50 and discussed and promoted the work of the PPG. The whole event was, in the main, managed and manned by Bob and Vanda Gould who have featured in previous newsletters for their outstanding support of the surgery and the PPG.



RED HOUSE SURGERY

PPG



In August we held our annual PPG garden party generously hosted by PPG member John Neale (look out for a spotlight feature on John in our next newsletter). Many members of our Singing for Health group attended, and we were treated to a lovely concert in the sunshine.



Girl Pack Power

Girl Pack is a volunteer led period support charity that provides emergency period packs and products to people who are in need. Started in 2018 by two thirteen-year-olds who found that their classmates didn't have access to period products. They devised the period pack and took them into their school where they were an instant success.

**GIRL
PACK**
**SUPPORTING
EVERYONE'S PERIOD**

Now period packs are available right across Milton Keynes. Partner organisations display a poster showing they have packs and where they can be collected. All you require is a need, whether it's being able to afford to buy your own products or simply having your period when you least expect it. Each period pack contains a full packet of period pads, intimate wipes, a pair of knickers and hand sanitiser. The packs come in 6 different sizes. There is also a special primary school pack that contains bright knickers and character hand sanitiser.

Girl Pack accept both money and product donations and

are always looking for volunteers to fundraise or help pack their products

They accept donations of the following:

- Period Pads
- Tampons
- Intimate Wipes
- New Knickers in All Sizes
- 50ml Bottles of Hand Sanitiser
- Liners
- Incontinence Pads
- Reusable Period Pads
- Cups & Period Knickers



Digital Accessibility Guide for Milton Keynes City Centre

My Milton Keynes Business Improvement District have launched a digital accessibility guide designed to help anyone with accessibility needs to plan a visit to the city centre with confidence. The guide includes up-to-date information from step-free routes and accessible toilets to parking and venue layouts.

The guides have been commissioned by a leading disability charity AbleAccess. It features the city centre's key destinations each with their own guide and the team are working with individual businesses to encourage them to produce their own detailed guides to add to the site.

You can scan the QR code below to access the guide



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. **Saturday opening for booked appointments 9-5pm.**

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