

HEALTHY TIMES

The Newsletter for Faringdon's
White Horse Medical Practice

May 2015



A warm welcome from your Doctors

First we would like to repeat our very warm welcome to all our new patients who have transferred from the Fern Hill Practice. Although you will find that some things have changed, most of the faces are the same and we are determined to ensure that you will always get the very best care.

It seems an age ago that the two Faringdon Surgeries merged but it's only been two hectic months. We know that there have been teething problems but, thanks to the detailed planning and very hard work of both the clinical and admin teams, we've settled in together very quickly.

So we'd just like to give all our Faringdon and area patients a brief update on what's happened since April and say what further work we need to do. We know that some people had problems with the phone system and apologise for that. This should now be sorted but please do let us know if you're having any difficulties with contacting us – there's more info on the phones in this newsletter.

For the time being we are having to use two waiting areas but we hope the signage in the foyer is proving helpful. We have also reinstated the touch-screen system for checking in and that will also direct you to the right waiting area – but please do ask if you're at all unsure as we'd hate you to miss your appointment.

All our GPs are in the White Horse Practice consulting rooms. Most Nurses and Health Care assistants are in the old Fern Hill rooms. We usually have one phlebotomist working in the White Horse side too, so we ask all patients to check in at the main reception and then you will be directed to the correct waiting area. Even though we have a full team of doctors and nurses it is extremely busy at present and we are under intense pressure to provide enough appointments. We are

now testing a triage system where every patient who requests an emergency on-the-day appointment will be called back by a GP to assess the degree of need. Please think carefully before asking for an emergency appointment. Is it something that you have to see a GP about? There's useful info in this issue about the town's Chemists where their trained pharmacists can give you excellent advice on minor complaints.

Now for the future. We are planning to start a building improvement program at some stage but, until the funding for this has been sorted, we will have to be smart with using the resources we've got. See over-leaf for more on the improvement grant.

Stay well!

Dr Gavin Bartholomew, Dr Anna Douglas and Dr Simon Cartwright

Housekeeping update

Following the merger of the two Practices we have made changes to our telephone and on-line booking systems.

On line bookings and renewals

We now have a new and better system for making online appointments and requesting repeat prescriptions. Unfortunately this means that you will need to re-register if you were on our previous system. But it's much more straightforward now! All you need to do is come to Reception with some form of identification and a note of your email address. This ease of joining applies to new registrations too. Please do try our online set-up and, if it's not for you, you can just switch back to the trusty phone.

If you have a browser shortcut to the old service you will need to remove this and update it with a link to the new site.

Phone system

Please call 01367 242 388 to make all appointments. The old Fern Hill number is diverting calls to 242 388 for the time being. When the number of calls to the old number has reduced to a minimum we will close that line.

The automated telephone appointment booking system is available for you to book, cancel or amend appointments using the three straightforward options.

Faringdon Surgery awarded £686,000 grant

The Surgery has been awarded an NHS improvement grant worth up to a maximum of £686,400 - dependent on the Surgery contributing a further £343,200 to the project and getting final NHS approval. Dr Simon Cartwright says "We are delighted that our plans for bringing our building up to date have been approved. Unfortunately the NHS grant is top-up money so, to access the full NHS amount, we'd need to find over £300,000 ourselves before we can start. Sadly we currently have no prospect of raising that amount so we have put the big plan on hold for now. However we are hoping to make some minor alterations to the building in the coming months."

Important changes for Carers

With more and more people needing to be cared for the government revised the Care Act last year and it came into effect this April. This section of the newsletter brings together three items about caring: the Care Act itself, the almost-hidden world of youngsters who are carers and, of course, the pressing needs of those with Dementia and their carers.

The Care Act 2014 has made changes to the way care and support is provided from April 2015. The previous two sources of grants have been replaced with a single provider – in our case it's Oxfordshire County Council's Carers Oxfordshire division. The new law places emphasis on promoting the wellbeing of Carers so that they can look after themselves properly while continuing their caring role. There are three levels of grant available for carers; £200, £400 and £600 with the emphasis on the money being spent, by the carer, on themselves.

Caring for someone can mean many different things; such as providing support to a relative, partner, friend or neighbour by helping with their washing, dressing or eating, taking them to regular appointments or keeping them company. The new system means that the carer has to complete a self-assessment questionnaire to be considered for a grant. These have to be done online, either in person at www.carersoxfordshire.org.uk/cms/content/carers-assessments or over the phone 0845 050 7666, or a home visit can be arranged.

It will take around 4 weeks for a response on the assessment and then a further 2-6 weeks for any grant to be paid. Only one grant will be made in a year but carers can apply again in successive years.

The Assessment will consider a carer's physical, mental and emotional wellbeing and could result in them receiving information about local support groups, practical help such as respite care, or money to spend on the things that make it easier to carry on caring. You can find out more from the Carers Oxfordshire website or by phone.

Dementia care update

Here's a short list of some of the local sources of help and advice for dementia sufferers and their carers.

- [White Horse Surgery](#). Dr Masterman is the GP in charge of assessments and advice at the White Horse Medical Practice. You will also find leaflets in Reception.
- [Age UK Oxfordshire](#). Advice is available from dementiainfo@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk who have two new excellent guides on dementia as well as giving advice about local services in our area.
- [Wantage](#). There's an Alzheimer's Day Centre in Wantage open Mon, Weds and Fridays 9.30am to 3pm at £10 per day. www.octoberclub.org.uk. Contact teresaoctoberclub@talktalk.net or 01235 760 428.
- [Grove](#). The Grove Cornerstone Christian Centre Dementia Drop-in is open to give advice and support on the 2nd and 4th Mondays each month. 01235 772 280 and office@cornerstonegrove.org.uk
- [Young Dementia](#). This national charity is based in Witney. www.youngdementiauk.org or 01993 776 295

Do you have an interest in Dementia? Our Patient Group is always looking for local people with an interest or expertise in important branches of medicine to help us better understand what our Surgery's patients need and to put forward suggestions to the Doctors on ways they could improve their patients' lives. Please contact us via the website www.whitehorsepracticeppg.org.uk/contact.html

Young Carers

Providing time off for Adult Carers is important; it is probably even more so for Young Carers. One of our Patient Group members is involved with helping young carers here in Faringdon through the local Rotary Club. Last year they set up the Young Carers Club which meets at FAZE on Tuesdays for a couple of hours after school. As well as just having a good time together the youngsters can find invaluable support if their family's needs are proving more than usually difficult.

Who can join? A Young Carer is someone under the age of 18 who looks after a family member who has a physical illness or disability, or a mental health problem, or is dependent on drugs and/or alcohol. These young carers have to look after a parent or a sibling which can include washing and dressing, cooking, cleaning, medical appointments and providing daily emotional support. All this in addition to growing up, going to school, developing their own social circle! No wonder they need time off for themselves.

If you or someone you know would like to hear more about this club, as a member or a supporter, please email Lynda Scott lyndascott53@btinternet.com or phone her on 01367 810 606.

Save on prescriptions by pre-paying

If you need more than 12 prescribed medicines each year you could save money with a 3 or 12 month Prescription Prepayment Certificate (PPC) – it's a bit like a Season Ticket. You could save £190 a year with a 12 month PPC if you get 3 items a month. Details and how to apply are on www.nhs.uk/chq/pages/2422.aspx or at any pharmacy.

Minor Injuries Units

If you've got a minor injury such as a cut, graze, sprain, strain, broken bone, bite, sting, minor eye infection, scratch or something stuck in your eye then there's no need to join the queues at A&E where they will be prioritising life-threatening injuries. Simply go to your local Minor Injuries Unit where there's no need to make an appointment. They are run by a team of highly

qualified nurse practitioners with a lot of experience and expertise in the treatment of minor injuries.

Open 7 days a week from 10am to 10.30pm
Abingdon MIU, Marcham Rd. OX14 1AG 01865 903 476
Witney MIU, Welch Way. OX28 6JJ 01865 903 841
Also at: Bicester, Chipping Norton, Henley & Wallingford.

Nursing Homes

Our local NHS (OCCG) has asked GPs to provide care for patients in Nursing Homes in our area. The Faringdon Surgery is one of only two in our region to take on this extra work where a doctor will make a regular weekly visit to three local homes with nearly 170 beds. The doctor will review any patients who are causing concern, manage chronic conditions and review medication.

PPG Research on maternity services in Oxfordshire

Marcus Laphorn, one of the founder members of Faringdon's Patient Group (PPG), writes here about some influential research and reports he has written and presented on behalf of the Group.

"In 2014 our PPG decided to investigate the provision of maternity services in South West Oxfordshire. This was prompted by the sharply increasing number of houses and therefore population in Faringdon. We wished to highlight this expansion, its phasing and the expected population increase.

1. We first reported in April 2014 and drew on research published by the National Federation of Women's Institutes (NFWI) in 2013. Their report stated:

"There are chronic shortages (5,000) of midwives. The NFWI calls on the government to increase investment in the training, employment and retention of midwives in England and Wales to ensure services are adequately resourced and are able to deliver a high standard of care".

We also consulted the March 2013 Faringdon Neighbourhood plan. This showed that Faringdon's population was estimated to increase by 52.4% between 2011 and 2016. We suspected that there would be insufficient NHS capacity in Oxfordshire to cope with this huge growth in population. We addressed our initial report to the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (OCCG).

2. The next stage – Maternity survey. We then conducted a maternity services survey in all GP Practices in S.W. Oxfordshire. This was run jointly with the Patient Group at Church Street, Wantage.

This 10-question survey amongst mothers generated 88 replies from five G.P. Practices. They told us their views on giving birth at: the John Radcliffe Hospital, Spires birthing unit Oxford, Wallingford Hospital, home births, Great Western Hospital Swindon and the Horton Hospital Banbury. Some Mothers provided non-attributable comments which were highly illuminating and ranged from very positive to most alarming.

3. Royal College of Midwives. After analysing these findings we discussed them with their President, Professor Page.

4. The Oxford University Hospitals Trust. It was noticeable that there had been alarming experiences for some mothers when giving birth at the John Radcliffe Hospital so we shared our findings with the Deputy Chairman of the Trust, Geoffrey Salt. The Trust then asked one of their senior managers to investigate and, in March this year, we heard from Sir Jonathan Michael, Chief Executive of the OUHT. He suggested we meet the Clinical Director, Dr. Veronica Miller and the Head of Midwifery, Jane Herve which we will do shortly. This next meeting is for the Trust to identify any necessary actions arising out of our maternity study.

5. Conclusion. Our original aim was to raise awareness in Oxfordshire of the potential, if not actual, shortage of midwives. Our second aim was to see an increase in the number of midwives for our area. We feel that we achieved our first aim, but we cannot yet be sure that more midwives have been employed. The work continues."

Pharmacy hours in Faringdon

Patients who live more than one mile from Boots can get their medication and appliances from the Practice Dispensary. Other patients must take their prescriptions to a town pharmacy. Here are their current opening Hours;

- WHMP Dispensary. 01367 245 403: Mon-Fri 8.00am to 6.30pm. Closed Bank Holidays.
- Boots Pharmacy. Market Place Faringdon SN7 7HP. 01367 240 505: Mon-Fri 9.00am to 6.30pm, Sat 09.00 to 5.00pm. Closed Sunday & Bank Holidays, except Good Friday.
- Faringdon Pharmacy, London St, SN7 7AA. 01367 244 632: Mon-Sat 7:00am to 11.00pm, Sunday 9.00am to 1:05pm. Open most Bank Holidays.

Both Boots and the Faringdon Pharmacy have a pharmacist available during opening hours. And both have a free in-Faringdon delivery service for those who have difficulty in getting out. Both can also supply medicines in a dosette pill organiser box, to help you take the right pill combination at the right time.

Repeat Prescriptions

You can choose for your prescription always to be sent to either Boots or the Faringdon Pharmacy.

Online via <https://patient.emisaccess.co.uk/Account/Login?ReturnUrl=%2f> You will see a confirmation of the items requested and an acknowledgement that the request has been received. Please allow 48 hours before collection. N.B. You must first register for the online services – details in this newsletter.

By post. Just tick the items you need on your repeat prescription request, and mail it to the Surgery. It will be available two days after they receive it.

At the Surgery. There are two frequently checked post boxes just outside the main entrance and the pharmacy counter. If you do not have your repeat prescription slip which came with your medicine you can fill in a form from the dispensary.

Village post offices: We offer a village collection and delivery service at Kingston Bagpuize, Uffington, and Stanford in the Vale (Co-op) Post Offices. Please speak to the dispensary about this service. Allow 3 working days.

What is Faringdon's Patient Participation Group?

The Patient Participation Group for Faringdon, or more easily known as the PPG, was set up in 2012 on the initiative of the Faringdon Area Project. The main purpose of the PPG is to provide a two-way communication channel between the Surgery in Faringdon and its 14,000 or so patients. We like to think of ourselves as the friendly local link between you and your doctors.

Originally GP Practices could foster PPGs if they wished but, in the last year, they have become a legal requirement of a GP's contract. The NHS expects a PPG to be "representative of the practice population." And "the PPG will need to include obtaining patient feedback and, where the practice and PPG agree, acting on suggestions for improvement."

We in Faringdon are proud that we have anticipated these NHS requirements and have a productive 'critical friend' relationship with our Surgery – this newsletter was largely written by us on their behalf, for example. But we can do better, much better. In particular our core group of eight members represents the retired, white and middle class patients in Faringdon but we really need a wider range of views and experiences if we are to do the best job for the area.

How can you help?

The most valuable thing you could do would be to give us some of your time to help with our research, information gathering or networking, for example. If you have knowledge of the Health Service then that would be fantastic.

But we also need people who are frequent users of the Surgery to give us their expert advice on what could be improved. Do you need frequent treatment because of a long-term condition? Are you a mother with a new baby? Are you a carer? Do you have a disability? If so, we're really keen to set up panels of these special types of patient so, when an issue comes up, we can get in touch and check out ideas or gather factual information. Drop us a line via the website

www.whitehorsepracticeppg.org.uk/contact.html or leave a note at the surgery Reception.

The Patients Group and White Horse Medical Practice take great care to ensure that information in this newsletter is accurate, however we advise patients to check any external contacts or sources themselves to confirm the details.

White Horse Medical Practice

Faringdon Medical Centre, Volunteer Way, Faringdon SN7 7YU
01367 242 388 www.whmp.co.uk

PPG The Faringdon Patient Practice Group works with the Surgery to improve local health services and patients' knowledge of them. If you would like more info on anything in this newsletter or to join the Group, please contact us, either through www.whitehorsepracticeppg.org.uk or by asking at the Health Centre.