

# AVISFORD MEDICAL GROUP PRACTICE NEWSLETTER

**Yew Tree Surgery**



**Middleton Medical Centre**



**Sponsored by Friends of Avisford PPG**  
Charity No: 1074882

**Issue 3**

**September 2022**

**FRIENDS OF AVISFORD MEDICAL GROUP**  
**CHARITY NUMBER: 1074882**  
**SUPPORTING YOUR SURGERY**

**A Note from the Chair**

A warm welcome to our latest newsletter.

Like many things in life our activities have been much affected by the pandemic but now we are once again working hard on your behalf to fulfil the role of the Friends as the Patient Participation Group for the Avisford Medical Group.

Our main role remains ensuring that your voice is heard. We also support the Partners and Practice Manager to deliver the best service to you - the patients.

As you will see in the following pages there are two big challenges: the continued effects of covid. Despite every effort - staff at both surgeries have been significantly affected, which in turn impacts directly on the services they can deliver.

Also, as many of you will know, for several reasons there is a significant shortage of GPs and clinical staff nationally from which we are not immune.

One of the responsibilities of a Patient Participation Group is to represent the surgery to health service commissioners and planners. The number of new houses being built in the immediate area, together with the possibility of a high dependency care home locally represent real challenges to our over stretched surgeries and we will be making representations to ensure everyone is aware of the potential impact of the developments.

Finally, as this is the first newsletter since the AGM, I should like to thank Gill Henry, my predecessor as Chairperson. Gill not only carried out the duty of Chairperson but was, and remains, our Treasurer. Gill kept in touch during the pandemic and ensured that concerns about services were kept firmly in focus.

John Thompson MBE

At the time of the Friends establishment, it was a members’ organisation and patients who wished to be part paid a small subscription. However, in 2016 it was agreed that membership would be free and all patients would automatically become members when they joined the surgery. At this point the Friends took on the role of the Patient Participation Group.

If you have access to the internet you can keep up to date with our activities via our website – [www.avisfordfriends.co.uk](http://www.avisfordfriends.co.uk) and when you visit the surgery you can check out our noticeboard and pick up the latest edition of the newsletter.

If you have ideas for talks or events you would like to see us hold, or equipment you think would benefit patients, if you have any concerns, please either drop a note into the surgery or email us on: [avisford.friends@gmail.com](mailto:avisford.friends@gmail.com)

**GIFT AID**

From time to time, patients like to make donations – which are used to purchase much-needed items for the Practice. If you would like to donate, cheques should be payable to: The Friends of Avisford Medical Group.

**Gift Aid it!** If you are a UK tax-payer, the Friends can claim back the tax you pay from HMRC. If you are eligible and you would like us to claim Gift Aid on your donation, please sign below – and be sure to enter your address as required by HMRC.

I would like to make a donation of £....to the Friends of Avisford Medical Group

Signature.....Date.....

Please return completed forms (ideally in an envelope) addressed to Friends of Avisford Medical Group, to either surgery - or place in the book money honesty box. **By completing this form, you are agreeing to the above information being held on paper and/or electronically by the Friends’ committee. It will not be shared with any other organisation, company or person unless required by law.**

### LATEST PRACTICE NEWS

As can easily be imagined, the last year has presented many challenges, meaning that despite bringing in procedures and systems aimed to make life easier for both staff and patients, we have been going forward two steps and then back one.

To add to this, in addition to the usual problems associated with keeping a busy GP surgery running, the Covid-19 booster vaccine targets were changed, adding to our workload. We supported this additional request from the surgery resources and provided over 500 vaccinations to our patients, mainly with staff carrying out this work in their own time.

We were also advised that there would be another CQC inspection, which took place earlier in the year but which added another layer of things to be dealt with in addition to our normal activities. Following this latest inspection, we achieved a rating of **GOOD** under the section of “Well-led”.

On a different note, in June this year Dr Peters finally took his well-deserved retirement from all things NHS after many years dedicated service. We all wish him the very best for a well-earned rest.

Although we all hope the worst of the Covid 19 pandemic has passed, it is still having a considerable impact on the Practice, causing a much higher level of staff absence than we would normally see. This, of course, affects our ability to give you the high level of service we are striving to achieve.

### BUILDING WORK

During the period since the last newsletter, the building work at Middleton has been completed, resulting in two new clinical rooms being available for use by staff.

The building work at Yapton has also been finished, following the move of the pharmacy from the surgery to the village. This space has been developed into two new clinical rooms and additional office space, both of which were desperately needed.

The only 'down side' of the change has been the need to close the back door of the surgery into the twitten. Although it was appreciated it could cause difficulty for some patients, unfortunately the move was essential as we needed greater control of access to the building and unsupervised access to the surgery could not be permitted.

We also needed to have greater compliance with GDPR regulations, since the original Reception window faced into the patient waiting area and other patients could potentially overhear private conversations. The new layout is not perfect, but is a significant improvement on the previous arrangement.

A member of the Friends committee is looking into the possibility of whether a gateway could be created in the flint wall. However, this involves considerable research and liaison with the Local Authority and must therefore be viewed simply as a potential, long-term, option.

We will, of course keep you informed of any progress via the Friends' website at [www.avisfordfriends.co.uk](http://www.avisfordfriends.co.uk)

### STAFF NEWS

Since our last newsletter in July 2021 there have been significant changes in both personnel and staff levels. There are many reasons for this, not the least being that once the restrictions of Covid were finally removed, staff were able to look for new challenges

We were sorry to lose Dr. Jamie Wood, who decided to return home to Perth, Australia and other GPs left who during the period include Dr. Heather Beaumont, Dr Sam Sheppard and Dr. Margaret Mansi. There have been several reasons for this, from wanting to work closer to home to looking to work in different areas.

This, of course, reduced our clinical staffing capacity and at present it is notoriously difficult to recruit Salaried GPs so we have needed to consider alternative ways to support our patients, whilst continuing to try to recruit a Salaried GP.

Added to this, the Practice began a big recruitment push for additional clinical roles, including that of a Paramedic, a Paramedic Practitioner and an Advanced Nurse Practitioner to compliment and support the surgery and patients - as a result of which a total of 22 new staff have been employed and we have welcomed

Dr Georgeta Miu,

Carole Phillips and Kate Dunn - both of whom are ANPs

Fiona Watson (paramedic practitioner),

Marion Brewer (paramedic),

Rebecca Mepstead (paramedic).

And although one of our Paramedic Practitioners left - retiring for a well-earned break - luckily for us she continues to perform locum work for the surgery. Many of these roles are new, in a further effort to support patient needs.

### **LOCAL HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS**

As everyone will be aware, new housing schemes are being proposed – and built – all around the area. While we all accept that more housing is required for the increasing number of people moving to the area, this means a considerably increased load on the Practice. Recently, on one day alone, the Practice signed on 15 new patients.

This has a direct impact on the availability of appointments. The more people seeking to see a GP, the less appointments are left. The same applies, of course, to telephone calls – the more patients trying to access the surgery, the longer the wait for a reply.

## APPOINTMENTS

The three most common complaint we hear are

- We couldn't get through on the phone
- There was too long a wait for the phone to be answered
- I couldn't get an appointment when I needed one

We fully understand the frustration when a patient waits a long time for the phone to be answered – only to be told there are no more appointments available

Everyone wishes we could be in a position where phone calls were answered quickly, and appointments available for all who needed one. Unfortunately, we cannot manufacture appointments when none are available – if only we could. We do know how important it is to you and we do all that we can to help.

When you telephone for an appointment and are told there are none available, please try to remember:

- |                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Don't shoot the messenger        | it's not the Receptionists' fault                       |
| This is not personal             | we'd love to offer everyone an appointment              |
| There may be other possibilities | the Receptionist may be able to offer you other options |

### THIS IS THE PROBLEM WE FACE:

- We have
- 11 Receptionists, mostly part time, all trying to help you.
  - 3 Full Time GP Partners
  - 2 part time GPs & 2 locum GPs who help out
  - Plus all of our Nurses, Paramedics, Phlebotomists etc.

### **BUT - WE NOW HAVE 11,500 PATIENTS – and this is increasing daily**

So maybe you can see the difficult position we face - and we ask for your help by understanding if we have to say 'sorry, no'. We only do so when we *really are* unable to help.

**STAFF PROFILE – JACKIE HANSON, RECEPTION MANAGER****HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WITH AVISFORD, AND WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO THE POSITION**

I joined the practice in August 2002, so I've just reached the 20-year mark! I applied for the job as it was local and the hours suited my working around my children, who attended the local school.

I have always liked to help people and used to help at the school doing extra reading with the children, helping out with the swimming classes, etc. I was also on the committee of the Yapton Playgroup.

**HOW MANY STAFF NOW COVER RECEPTION DUTIES**

We have 11 receptionists all of whom are part-time and work at both sites. Some do four days a week, some just two days a week. Ideally, we like to have four receptionists at each site in the morning and three in the afternoon, although with staff holidays and sickness we don't always achieve that.

**WHAT DOES YOUR JOB INVOLVE?**

As a Receptions Manager/Administrator my main focus is to help patients, to make sure they have the best of what is available and to ensure my reception team are professional, caring and empathetic. I also need to be available to deal with worries or concerns from both staff and patients.

**WHAT ARE THE BEST BITS**

I get the most satisfaction when I see the receptionists happy in their work and when they are able to provide a really good service to people who require their help and support.

**WHAT IS THE MOST CHALLENGING PART OF THE JOB**

The greatest constant challenge is ensuring we can provide enough appointments to meet the needs of the patients. Other challenges include finding replacements when receptionists leave or retire.



**THERE HAVE BEEN MANY CHANGES OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS, NOT JUST IN THE PHYSICAL LAYOUT OF THE SURGERY, BUT ALSO IN THE WAY PHONES ARE NOW ANSWERED. WHAT DO PATIENTS THINK OF THE CHANGES**

A number of patients have said how much better and more personal it is to be greeted by a friendly and helpful welcome, rather than some robotic response of a person simply 'doing the job'. Hopefully it also means patients will gain some rapport with the receptionists, which has to help everyone - particularly when we cannot provide what the patient wants.

**WHAT WOULD BE YOUR ULTIMATE GOAL (FOR THE JOB)**

My ultimate goal would be to have no complaints; to have sufficient appointments for patients' needs; to have the surgery run like clockwork and to see everyone happy in their job. If only!

**ARE YOU LOCAL?**

I have not always lived locally. I was born in Amesbury, Wiltshire, a mile from Stonehenge and lived there for 21 years, attending Stonehenge School. My husband and I moved to Bristol for 5 years, and then moved into the locality 33 years ago.

**HOW DO YOU COPE WHEN PATIENTS BECOME ABUSIVE**

On the – fortunately – fairly rare occasion when a patient becomes abusive, I listen to them and try to put myself in their shoes so that I fully understand the problem. I am polite but firm and then explain the reasons why things happen the way they do. The majority of the time this diffuses the situation.

**WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELAX**

Walking my two Labradors each day helps enormously. I also have two young grandchildren who, whilst not relaxing, keep me busy - which I love. I enjoy knitting and have made many a knitted animal for friends and family from octopus, dinosaurs, pigs, to bees.

## FLU CLINICS

Over 65's

Yapton Surgery                      Saturday 24th September

Middleton Surgery                Saturday 1st October

Under 65's at risk only

Yapton Surgery                      Wednesday 28th September      7.00am - 08.30 am

Middleton Surgery                Friday 7th October                      7.00 am - 08.30am

For anyone unable to attend those dates, nurses will also be holding various clinics from 26th September to 17th October for Over 65's and Under 65's (at risk only). Appointments must be pre-booked and patients late for their appointment will not be seen. Patients must arrive at their allocated time due to parking, etc.

## LIGHTING AT YAPTON

This has been significantly improved, at a cost to the surgery. Also, some of the bollards that were constantly being knocked over by patients and delivery drivers have been removed, both for health and safety reasons and also because the Practice cannot afford to keep paying to have them fixed.

## HEALTH TALKS

Up until the last couple of years and the pandemic, we hosted health talks on a regular basis. Obviously, this has not been possible for the past 2 years, but we are now hoping to recommence these talks either later this year or early next.

To help us decide subjects that would be of most interest to patients please email us at [avisford.friends@gmail.com](mailto:avisford.friends@gmail.com) to let us know what you think. We are also looking at other ways for you to let us know what is of interest and hope soon to have info slips in each surgery which can be completed and popped into the book box. Information on the University Hospital Trust series of talks will also be made available as soon as we have the full details.

We also now have the possibility of hosting these talks in person, or virtually, and again it would be useful to know which way would be preferred.

**AVISFORD FRIENDS FUNDRAISING INITIATIVE  
– 50:50 CLUB**

Would you like to support the vital fundraising of the Friends by joining the 50:50 club?

If so, there is a subscription of £5 a month per ticket (you can have more than one!) Payment can be made by Standing Order (preferred) or cheque with a minimum of 3 months.

Each month half the money goes to the Friends' funds to buy essential equipment and improve facilities for patients. The other 50% goes to one lucky winner - currently £110 (increases with each new member).

Forms can be downloaded from our website, [www.avisfordfriends.co.uk](http://www.avisfordfriends.co.uk) you can ring our Treasurer on 01243 555685 with your address details or you can email us [avisford.friends@gmail.com](mailto:avisford.friends@gmail.com)

## **BOOKS**

By the time this newsletter is circulated, we hope to have book sales again in the Yapton Surgery. We are running this as a trial before considering whether to extend it to Middleton Surgery as well.

We would ask for good quality paperback books **only**. This change is because patients do not often purchase hard back books, which then leaves us with a problem of disposal.

It is possible we may also start selling birthday cards at some point.

**AVISFORD MEDICAL GROUP:** <https://www.avisford.co.uk/>

**YAPTON SURGERY :** **01243 551321**

**MIDDLETON SURGERY:** **01243 583596**

**FRIENDS OF AVISFORD PPG:** **web: <https://avisfordfriends.co.uk/>**  
**Email: [avisford.friends@gmail.com](mailto:avisford.friends@gmail.com)**

Newsletters are available in each surgery and a copy is on the Friends' web-site ([www.avisfordfriends.co.uk](http://www.avisfordfriends.co.uk)). If you would prefer to receive a copy by post, please complete the details below.

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Address.....

Postcode.....