

A Message from The Grove Medical Centre

COVID-19

The past few months have forced significant change to services at the practice in order to reduce the risk of transmission of covid-19 for our patients and staff. Working with our colleagues in the Sherborne Area Primary Care Network from the Apples Medical Centre and Yetminster Health Centre, we literally created a service overnight to see patients with covid symptoms separate from our core work. Thankfully the need for this shared network service has massively reduced in the last few weeks and we have stepped it down to manage anyone with possible covid symptoms within our practices. At The Grove we have created a special room for only covid patients to ensure other areas of the practice are kept as clean as possible. Please be reassured that we are doing all we can to keep everyone safe.

Covid symptoms:

If you do have possible covid symptoms then it is still very important that you follow government guidance regarding [self-isolation](#) and get [tested](#) so we can prevent this awful disease spreading. If you have tested positive and are struggling with your symptoms then we are here to help.

The new 'normal':

As we come out of lockdown, our guidance is continuing to evolve and change and we are looking at a new 'normal' in our ways of working. Our telephone, online and video consultation services have worked extremely well with many patients grateful for getting the advice and support they need without having to come into the practice. These services will be continuing. Of course for some patients, we still need to see them in person and as such we have put precautions to reduce the risks as much as possible.

As per the guidance from NHS England, all patients requesting a GP appointment will first be contacted to discuss their issues via telephone and if the issue can be resolved without the need for the patient to visit the practice it will. This allows us to ensure those that need to come in to see a member of the nursing team or a GP can be seen safely. We have reduced the footfall in our waiting rooms, have longer times between appointments to allow for the previous patient to leave first, the additional cleaning, and the changing of PPE, and we also ask that the wearing of face coverings by everyone in clinical areas of the building is adhered to (with exceptions for certain medical conditions and children under 11).

We have taken measures to protect our staff with all our clinicians wearing full PPE to see all patients. We have erected screens at our reception and dispensary desks and put measures in place for appropriate social distancing with our back-office teams.

These have been challenging times and will continue to be for a while yet, we thank all our patients for their support, generosity and understanding. The sense of community in Sherborne has been amazing and we really hope that the good will and compassion we have seen over the few months continues.

Shielding Patients:

The guidance for shielding patients changes on July 6th. We are told all patients who are shielding will receive a letter from central government but the latest guidance for this cohort of patients can be found [here](#).

The Future of the Grove Medical Centre within the NHS

Perhaps the most important news stories we have to share with you is a progress report on the upgrading of the Grove Medical Centre building closely followed by an update on the merger one year on.

Alex Kimber, the Managing Partner presented her thoughts to The Grove Patient's Group;

"The new reception area and entrance have finally been completed. The last year has been a time of significant change here at the practice and I'd like to thank all patients for their understanding and patience during this time. The new front door is not just a completion of the merger phase but more importantly it is a visual reminder of how much we have achieved in such a short space of time.

The merger was not something we undertook lightly, due the changes and pressures within the NHS needed to ensure that we were resilient and robust enough to take on the future before we found ourselves in a position of difficulty.

There have been many media stories of GP practice closures and struggles by patients to get appointments. It was important to us that we weren't one of the headlines and we continued to serve the population of the Sherborne area well and were prepared for the future.

The benefits of the merger are already clear, with a larger and highly skilled clinical team to support patients, a more streamlined appointment system with more ways to contact us, and the introduction of new roles in both clinical and administrative teams. We can only build on this over time.

While there will always be challenges to work through (such as a global pandemic), this is the NHS after all, but the future for the practice is looking bright."

If you wish to comment (good or otherwise) or make a complaint regarding Medical Centre services, please ask for a form at reception, complete the online contact form or speak to Sarah Mackrell our Patient Services Manager. We aim to resolve any difficulty as soon as we can and would really like to know how we are doing.

A message from your Patient Participation Group

PATIENT VIEWS

While all of this was happening and as part of wider Patient Participation Groups across Dorset we were canvassed for our views on how we and our families have found accessing our primary care services so far during this Covid-19 pandemic.

It was only a snapshot which provided some interesting results and we are sure that further comments will evolve as time goes on.

The findings showed that in the main the services being used were

- GP appointments,
- repeat prescription requests and
- practice nurse appointments.

The way that these services were accessed was equally divided between telephone and *e-Consult* or through the GP practice websites. Just a small number of people dealt directly with their pharmacy.

Largely, people found the process either very easy or easy, with only a small number experiencing difficulty.

Amongst the many positive comments, were:

- being allowed enough time to talk,
- follow-up arrangements,
- reception courtesy,
- general good service. e.g. 5 responses which said 'Couldn't have been better'.
- praise for the speed of response,
- clinician professionalism and caring manner,
- ease of obtaining prescriptions and

When asked what could have been improved, some people remarked that they found the *e-Consult* questions process unnecessarily lengthy, irrelevant to them and cumbersome.

It was also commented that online consultations were not good for everyone, i.e. elderly people and those with multiple medical conditions. It was felt there would always be a place for face-to-face consultations, particularly if a patient was very worried about a specific condition. Some people said that face-to-face consultations were important in maintaining good doctor/patient relationships.

Of those people having a telephone consultation, 90% said they would do so again, and all had a good or very good experience of this. The small number of people who had video consultations, had good or very good experiences and were split 50/50 on whether they would like to do so again.

Patient Participation Group activities

Your Patient Participation Group has been helping the Practice by keeping you the patients informed through emails to your Parish Councils and also through the use of social media, not only in Sherborne, but to the surrounding rural areas from where so many of our patients reside.

As your Patient Participation Group we also have had to work differently and like many others we are resorting to the use of digital technology by having our first Zoom group meeting recently involving the Practice and our Link Worker.

An important and positive outcome from all of this chaos, is that Newland and Bute House are no longer, as Patients, GPs, Nurses, Pharmacy and administration staff are all members of the Grove Medical Practice



A View from the Waiting Room *'The Puzzle of Ageing'*



I have just been reading an interesting article in the paper. It said that a recent study has found that it's only at the ripe old age of 82 that we reach the happiest stage of our life despite infirmities. I knew that older people seem more relaxed, and can understand that perhaps when we reach our 70's we have shed many of our worries. But 82 ...??

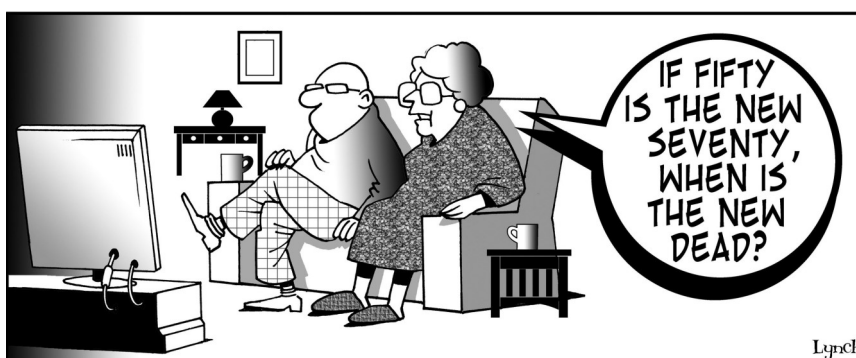
It has been mooted that life is not a long slow decline towards death but rather sort of u-shaped. As adults we seem to become happy enough in our twenties, which dwindles steadily in our thirties. Stress and worry rise as our children become teenagers and our parents age, and perhaps we didn't achieve that position in life we had been hoping for. At around the age of 46 we are right at the bottom of the doldrums before slowly climbing again; (interestingly anger apparently declines throughout life).

There are many tips for contented ageing, including all the obvious ones like healthy diet, daily exercise, enough sleep, but for me, (also quietly ageing) the most interesting and in my mind possibly the very best advice is to try to connect with others, to join a like minded group, to share both happiness and troubles. I have found many clubs and groups out there that I had no idea existed until I started writing this article knitting, flower arranging, gardening, woodwork, metalwork, more than 80 such clubs in Dorset.

One real gem is the Sherborne Senior Lunch Club which meets on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays at the Raleigh Hall in Digby Road, from 9.30 until 1.30 for coffee and a chat, and lunch is served at 12.30 pm. This has been so successful they have just extended the opening to include Sundays (lunch only) which has proven to be the busiest day of all. One of their helpers has just retired at the age of 93! Transport is available. You need only to ring Dru (the founder), Caroline or Jackie on 01935 814680 to find a warm welcome, and the chance of finding new friends, possibly even a kindred spirit!

We are human beings, we do better in company, it lifts our spirits and feeds our soul. A first step connect with others might just do us more good than all the pills in the medicine cupboard!

JOAN COOPER ~ Patient



Opening Times

Monday	08:00 - 18:30
Tuesday	08:00 - 18:30
Wednesday	08:00 - 18:30
Thursday	08:00 - 18:30
Friday	08:00 - 18:30
Weekend	closed

Ways to contact us:

You can book an appointment by:

Calling the practice to speak to a Patient Services Adviser between 08:00 and 18:30 Monday to Friday.

Online booking is available for routine appointments with your GP using the new NHSApp or your current online login. If you don't have a login or have forgotten your login details, then please speak to the patient services team.

Using the 'e-Consult' service for advice, administration queries or to have an online

If you need to contact a doctor outside these hours then you should ring the Out of Hours Service on 111, unless it is a medical emergency then dial 999.

Dispensary open for prescription collections between 08:30 - 18:30. If you want to order repeat medication by telephone please ONLY call between 08:30 - 12:00 daily.

The main telephone numbers are: 01935 810900 / 01935 813438

Clinical Pharmacist at the Grove Medical Centre

We welcome Lucy Powell to the team. Lucy will be working as a Clinical Pharmacist in our GP surgery alongside the clinical team to support and help resolve day-to-day medicine issues and consult with and treat patients directly. This includes providing help to manage long-term conditions, advising those taking multiple medicines (polypharmacy) and delivering clinical advice about treatments. She will also assist with communication across a patient's care pathway and manage medicine shortages by suggesting suitable alternatives where appropriate.

The Practice Team

Dr Aimee Barnes
Dr Sally Dangerfield
Dr Charlie Middle

Dr Nick Berry
Dr Ruth Lawes
Dr Matt Phelan
Mrs Alex Kimber

Dr Rob Childs (Senior Partner)
Dr Liz Long
Dr Katie Thomas

Know your General Practitioners



Dr Aimee Barnes

Dr Barnes joined the Practice in August 2016 as a Trainee GP. After fully qualifying as a GP in 2017, Aimee became a GP Partner in January 2019. Aimee has interests in Diabetes and training Medical Students. Away from work Aimee enjoys running and cycling, as well as exploring the Dorset Countryside with her husband and Labrador.

Dr Berry joined the Practice in September 2019 having previously worked in Blandford Forum. He has qualifications in sports and exercise medicine, and is a GP trainer. Away from work he likes to travel to rugged places and explore the great outdoors. Nick believes that when facing health challenges, there can be great power in keeping a positive attitude, and in eating, sleeping and exercising well.



Dr Nick Berry

Your Patient Participation Group (PPG)

Interested in finding out how your GP practice works and about the health services it delivers? Your practice Patient Participation Group (PPG) could be for you. See: <https://www.dorsetccg.nhs.uk/involve/ppg>