



**Welcome to our late Spring newsletter!** The sun's rays have at last abolished the grey and we can soak up some vitamin D, safely of course, with plenty of sunscreen. We have much to update you with—new staff, a whizzy cloud based phone system & more, all to help improve access to the most appropriate healthcare for your need. Most of our patients understand the enormous challenges facing their National Health Service & General Practice. The day to day kindnesses we receive from you all really make a difference & keep us smiling **#thankyouforyourkindness** 😊

**Staff news ....** Some of you will already have met Dr Stone; a fully qualified doctor, he is working with Dr McIntosh as his registrar. Dr Gabriella Gavins, registrar for sometime to Dr Katie Evans, has now finished her GP training and has happily decided to stay at the practice.

**HOORAY!**

We are also very pleased to report that in June we welcome back from maternity leave Dr Beth Law.

In a new move for the practice we have employed a Physician Associate, Sarah Cunningham. Physician Associates (PAs) are medically trained, generalist healthcare professionals, who work alongside doctors and provide medical care as an integral part of a multidisciplinary team, & can be found working throughout primary care. Sarah joins our Duty team and will also have routine appointments available for patients to book.

**#workinghardtoimproveaccess**

**Living with COVID** - It's no longer a requirement for patients to wear a mask at the surgery, unless they wish to do so. We do advise keeping lateral flow test kits at home as Covid is still in our community. As most people are now vaccinated symptoms should be manageable but if you are experiencing considerable difficulty, please phone us at 8.30am or 2.00pm to get advice.

**The current Covid Booster campaign** is being solely managed by Dorset Healthcare, we have no involvement. To book follow the instruction in the letter/text you've been sent. There are appointments at Wareham you just have to be persistent if they offer you somewhere else. A tip is to not choose parking as a requirement so that Wareham gets offered. We all know there is plenty of street parking around the hospital.

**Please don't ring the surgery, thank you!**

## A digital revolution in Primary Care



Digital services can empower patients to manage and improve their health at the touch of a button. New technologies and health innovations continue to reshape every aspect of our lives. In healthcare these advances can deliver efficiencies, improve experiences and help patients to lead healthier lives. Leading a healthier life helps patients & the NHS.

### What does it mean for patients at Swanage practice?

Having your up-to-date mobile telephone number & email address means we can send you personalised health advice from your GP, info about future appointments, links to apps & questionnaires related to chronic conditions, and so much more. Saving you time and effort.

### Online access to your medical record & how this can help you ...

It really is time that all patients capable, sign up with us for online access to their medical record.

This allows you to book appointments, request repeat medication, view test results and gain quick access to health advice.



### What If I can't keep up with modern communications?

Traditional methods of communication aren't being removed. The NHS is aware that there will always be a cohort who can't or won't engage digitally. However, we do hope that everyone capable, grasps the nettle & joins the healthcare digital revolution.



### It's simple to up-date your digital contact info:

(1) email your new contact details to [swanage.medical@nhs.net](mailto:swanage.medical@nhs.net) or even better

(2) pop into the surgery with some ID and a receptionist will give you a form to update your details & at the same time we can sign you up for online access.



### Our NEW phone system

In line with the new GP contract applied by Government we have installed a 'cloud' based system. This is an important step towards improving patient access. Coming at a time when demand for appointments shows no sign of abating, this new requirement is designed to provide patients with a more streamlined service. The morning scramble for appts is synonymous with patient frustration. As a practice we can now monitor demand, see how many patients are ringing in, & our patients will hear where they are in the queue. It's no magic bullet but the system can play a role improving patient experience & allow for appropriate signposting & clinical triage.

**#helpingyouhelpyourself**

**Staff Antics .....** With the blessing of our much loved friend & colleague Nicky Denison, we are undertaking a **fundraising walk in aid of the Motor Neurone Disease Association (MNDA)** on Saturday 17th June 2023. We'll be walking from Old Harry Rocks to Corfe Castle. Nicky has been diagnosed with MND. Many of you will have had appointments with her at the surgery & others will know her as one of the District Nurses who visited them at home. MND is life-shortening & there has no cure. Nicky's wish is that we raise funds for the MNDA who offer a range of services to support sufferers & their families. A Just Giving page has been set up that will be published on our Facebook Page. JustGiving is totally secure & sends your donation straight to the MNDA automatically, reclaiming Gift Aid if you are a UK Taxpayer, so your donation is worth even more. Any support for our endeavours is most welcome

**Thank you for your support!**

### A hard hitting but honest briefing on the state of the NHS....

You may be struggling to find a convenient and timely appointment with your practice, or your hospital appointment or planned operation may be considerably delayed, even if it would seem very urgent to you. This is because the NHS is in the deepest crisis I have experienced in working within the NHS in 40 years. Even before the problems of Covid-19 the situation was poor. Now the NHS has not recovered.

Unfortunately, successive governments, of all persuasions, have not had the courage to reform the NHS, for fear of a media and population backlash. As time has passed the necessary reforms become more difficult to implement. As a result, the service is slowly deteriorating despite gargantuan efforts of the people working within it to prop up a deficient system.

This has led to huge gaps in the NHS workforce which cannot be plugged, and the service is slowly dying whilst the politicians watch and prevaricate. It is not a matter of money; it is more about the pressure at work and the ability to maintain a balance and family life.

The shortages are most apparent in General Practice. The government and NHS England are not recognising the critical nature of the situation and continue to heap pressure on practices. The profession has made representations over many years but have been ignored. The erosion of our workforce; GPs, Nurses, Receptionists and Administrative staff continues and is unsustainable even in the short-term.

What this means for Purbeck patients is a slimmed down service that can only manage very urgent cases, and longer delays in being seen. In the longer term, if nothing changes, it means no GP service in parts of Purbeck and patients having to travel to other practices who will then be even more overloaded.

We need your help in changing the situation. If you wish to have a General Practice in your town or village next year, then we need to exert pressure on politicians and the senior civil servants in the NHS to change their demands on beleaguered practices and support us. You need to value what you have and make it clear to politicians and the media, who take any opportunity to undermine General Practice, that you will not forgive them if they allow the NHS to wither and die. Tell them you want positive action to save your surgery. Encourage them to listen to what doctors and nurses are telling them and tell them you want the NHS to continue. We are publishing below contact details for local MPs and papers but there are national papers and social media that you can engage with too. Write to the Prime Minister and Health Secretary if you feel so inclined.

There are other things you can do to make a difference. Everyone in General Practice is working extremely hard to provide as safe a service as can be delivered. They are exhausted and demoralised, and it is unhelpful when patients complain about not being able to get access to a GP or a Nurse. They are on the edge and a rude or aggressive act pushes people over that edge, and they leave, increasing pressure on the remaining team. So please be considerate with receptionists and all the staff in your practices. In my experience everyone is doing their best in very difficult circumstances, so, if you hear a fellow patient being less than polite, please point that out to them.

If your hospital appointment or surgery is delayed contact the hospital not your GP, please. And lastly please consider carefully if you need to have contact with the practice or can you get what you need from a pharmacy or a website. Please look at your practice website, there is a wealth of useful information there.

We need to work together to save your practice and change the attitude of the politicians to put the NHS and General Practice on a sounder footing.

Thank-you for your time, **David Haines, Purbeck Primary Care Network (PCN) Clinical Director**

**Have your say:** If you have any comments or feedback about our services, please use the 'Friends & Family Test' touch screen and we can respond to the queries raised via this newsletter. Your opinions are of great value to us & can sometimes lead to change within our practice. For major concerns & queries please contact Natasha Ritchie, Practice Manager or speak to your GP.

**Next Issue: Summer 2023**