

POTTERELLS PATIENT GROUP NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 2021



WELCOME

Welcome to all our patients. We are delighted to be sending you our patient newsletter which has been compiled by the Practice and the Patient Group Teams.

Our aim is to keep you informed of services at Potterells and give you important insights into getting the most out of the practice.

We hope that you find it full of useful information to help you access all you need to support your health and wellbeing in these difficult times.

Keep well and safe.

Tracey Mostyn (Practice Manager) and Martin Connolly (Chair of Potterells Patient Group- PPG)

Practice News

Firstly we would like to thank all our patients for adjusting to the many changes the practice has had to put in place in response to COVID-19. As services change daily, please head to our website home page www.potterells.net to view regular updates, or if you still can't find what you are looking for, give us a call.

Staff Changes

Following the retirement of Practice Manager Lilian Cross, who managed the practice for many years, we welcome Tracey Mostyn into that role and wish her every success during these trying times.



Clinical Staff: Sadly, two of our very popular GPs, Drs Matthew Malone-Lee and Ed Harvey, have now left the practice. We thank them both for their excellent patient care. Hopefully both may return from time to time as Locums.

The practice has long been involved in the training programme for qualified and well experienced doctors who wish to become GPs. We are therefore pleased to welcome to the staff Drs Magdalena Cybulska-Highcloud and Ananya Kaur who recently completed their training programme. Two more registrars Drs Hina Afghan and Darren Zurawel have also joined the practice.

Assisting the Clinical Staff: Nurse Vicky Leary has now left, and Nurse Beryl Appleby has joined as locum practice nurse.

Suzanne Brown has been appointed Care Co Ordinator and will work with our Carer Champion, Jan Allen, overseeing the care of vulnerable patients.

June Tucker and Gwen Down have now been appointed to join the team of receptionists.

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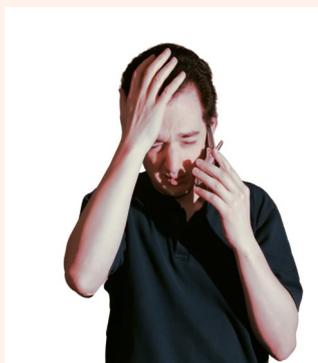
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Vacancies

There are currently vacancies at the surgery for administrative staff, so if you are interested and would like to find out more about these posts, please email the surgery at potterells.general@nhs.net

Telephone System *An Acknowledged ongoing problem!*



The practice is very aware of the difficulties that patients are experiencing with the telephone system, with long waiting queues and the problem of calls being 'dropped' part way through a call. This means that patients must join the phone queue again, which while is very annoying and frustrating for them, is also so for the staff, who are not aware that the call has been cut off. The existing phone system dates back to 2013 and is not able to cope with the volume of calls that are being received. As a matter of urgency, the practice is looking into a new phone system which can deal with a high volume of calls and provide a much more pleasant and efficient experience for patients and staff alike. Please bear with us, we have this at the top of a very long list!

Access to GP

The practice has been open throughout the pandemic offering patients telephone and online consultations with face to face consultations only with those that need them. At present you can make an appointment for an initial telephone consultation with a doctor via the practice receptionists or by filling out an 'eConsult' form, available on the practice website.

The practice is hoping to relax some of the restrictions by trying to reduce the need for a triage system, However, we are committed to keeping all our patients and staff safe. We realise that some concerns can only be addressed at a face to face consultation and trust that our patients will utilise this option only when they feel it is an absolute necessity. Where it is felt that a telephone appointment will suffice, then this will continue. It is understood that telephone consultations are the preferred option for some of our patients.

Extended hours and weekend appointments

The surgery continues to offer evening appointments on Mondays until 8pm and has weekend appointments on Saturday mornings. Further out-of-hours and weekend appointments are sometimes available at Spring House surgery and these can be booked via Potterells reception.

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Courtesy of NHS flu campaign

Flu Vaccinations

These clinics are progressing well and will continue until the end of October. Patients will be invited to attend by text, or phone call, according to their age and specific needs, so there is no need to call the surgery to book an appointment.

Covid Vaccinations

Covid Booster Jab

Covid vaccination booster clinics have started at the practice, and again you will be contacted by text or by phone call when your booster is due.

Patients will be called according to their age and the timing of their second vaccination as the booster must be given six months after the second vaccination. There is no need to contact the surgery but please ensure that your contact details are up to date (see page 7 to update).

NHS England are also sending out texts and letter invitations for booster vaccinations. These usually go to patients directly a week before their booster is due. If you receive a notification from NHS England you may find that the choice of sites they offer and timings of appointments, suits you better, in which case, book online through their website. Details of how to do this will be in the letter or text that has been sent to you. If you choose this option there is no need to contact the surgery.

Covid Pass

An NHS COVID Pass shows your coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccination details or test results. This is your COVID-19 status. You may be asked to show your pass to travel abroad, or at events and venues in England that ask for proof of your COVID-19 status.

You can download your digital NHS COVID Pass from the NHS App and print it. If you cannot apply digitally using the NHS App or online service, you can ask for an NHS COVID Pass letter to be sent to you in the post. **The surgery cannot issue these.**

Call 119 or follow this link for more detailed information. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-covid-pass>

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Potterells Patient Group (PPG)

What are we ?

The PPG is a group of patients interested in health and healthcare issues who want to get involved with the support and running of our practice at Potterells.

The group also includes the Practice Manager, and a Clinician. We meet every 6-8 weeks (Zoom or Face to Face), to decide ways and means of making a positive contribution to the services and facilities offered by the practice to its patients.

What we do?

Potterells Patient Group work with the Clinicians and the practice and aim to:-

- improve services and to promote health and improve quality of care
- improve communication by assisting in the production of newsletters and leaflets that provide patients with information about their health and how to access services
- together with members of the practice team and other NHS and Local Authority partners, participate in the organisation of health promotion events
- act as a 'critical friend' to the practice, by helping it appreciate and understand what patients are thinking and wanting from the practice.
- help to fill some of the gaps in services by signposting patients to available support or providing services such as patient libraries, volunteer transport, befriending and support groups
- Influence the services that are provided, and where they are provided, by taking part in NHS commissioning decisions—by giving a patient's view of services.
- undertake appropriate surveys or research to find out what matters to patients and discussing the findings with the practice.

If you wish to hear more about our PPG, please contact the Chair, Martin Connolly at enhertscg.potterells.patientgroup@nhs.net

NB: We should emphasise that the PPG is not a route for complaints about individual issues within the practice. Please take these up with the Practice Manager or your GP.

Social Media

The NHS uses social media extensively to communicate with the public. The practice is actively looking at Facebook and Twitter to develop its own options for communication and would welcome input from any patients who have experience of setting up profiles using these media.

Can You Help ?

Please email enhertscg.potterells.patientgroup@nhs.net with your details



Vitamin D

Vitamin D, 'the sunshine vitamin', is essential for healthy bones, teeth, and muscles, and it plays a part in maintaining the immune system. Lack of Vitamin D can lead to bone deformities, such as rickets in children, and bone pain in adults.



Vitamin D is found in oily fish, red meat, liver, egg yolks and some foods which are fortified, such as cereals. Milk in the UK is not a good source as it is not fortified. During spring and summer, most people can make enough vitamin D from direct sunlight on the skin when out of doors. However, during the winter

months, from October to March, we don't make enough from sunlight, and as dietary sources are limited, the NHS recommends that adults, and children over the age of four, take a daily supplement containing 10 micrograms. These may be obtained from supermarkets and pharmacies.

The information above has been taken from the NHS website, which has an excellent section on vitamin D including explanations of dosages, advice on supplements for babies, children, pregnant and breastfeeding women, and for those who are at higher risk of Vitamin D deficiency.

Go to www.nhs.uk and you will find all the information you need under *Health A-Z, Vitamins and Minerals*.

Health Walks

Brookmans Park Health Walks are free, led by a walk leader, local, and health focused. These walks help everyone get outdoors, get more active and reap the benefits:

- walking can help improve your mood and boost brain power
- increase cardiovascular and pulmonary (heart and lung) fitness
- reduce risk of heart disease and stroke
- improve management of conditions such as hypertension (high blood pressure), high cholesterol, joint and muscular pain or stiffness, and diabetes
- help to improve bone density and balance



The walks were started by the Patient Group at Potterells. We meet every Thursday at 'the Brookmans' in the village and leave promptly at 10.30am for about an hour's healthy walk.

We have trained leaders who take us on one of the seven or so walks that we have 'risk assessed'.

We are a friendly group, and we welcome all new members whatever your ability.

Just turn up with some appropriate footwear and suitable clothing, and off we go!

So come and join us.

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Carers

Carers play an important role in the provision of health and social care and we want to help you as much as possible to obtain the support you need. If you look after someone who couldn't manage their day to day life without you — then you are a **CARER**.

Please let the practice know about your caring role and ask for a Carers' Pack at Reception.

Potterells' Afternoon Teas for our Carer Heroes



Pre-Covid regular Carers' Afternoon Teas were held at the United Reform Church, Brookmans Park but due to the pandemic these events have had to be suspended.

Please see the website for updated information on when these will restart.

If you would like further information about Carers please contact the practice and ask to speak to the Carer Champion Telephone No: 01707 278883.

Welham Green Friendship Group

The Welham Green Friendship Group has now restarted.

Meetings are held monthly on Tuesday mornings at 11am at the Sibthorpe Arms, Station Road, Welham Green. Admission is free of charge but a voluntary contribution is requested to cover the cost of tea and coffee.



For further information contact: Helen Quenet helen@helenquenet.co.uk

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When we are closed:

In a general life-threatening emergency you should immediately call 999
If you require urgent medical advice Call 111

Booking vaccinations online

The practice would like to take the opportunity to apologise for the recent technical issues experienced with the URL link when trying to book vaccinations online. This has now been resolved and the Practice would like to thank all our patients for their understanding and patience.

In addition to the confusion regarding notifications when vaccinations are imminent, we continue to follow the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) guidelines which could change at a later date.

Are your Contact Details up to date?

Please make sure that the practice has your up to date details.

Text messaging is an effective communication tool between the practice and patients AND saves time.

To check that Potterells has your correct details:

go to www.potterells.net

- Click **eConsult**
- Click on the 3 stripes on the right hand margin
- On the drop-down menu, **click order your prescription**
- Enter your login details - go to **your account**
- Change the contact details
- Submit