



NewsWATCH—The Watlington & Chalgrove GP Practice Newsletter



Issue 020

Email us at: watchalppg@btconnect.com - Website www.watlington-surgeries.nhs.uk

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Members

Watlington

- Doreen Hobbs
- Jacky Wagstaff
- Roger Beattie
- Marion Davis
- Tony Williamson

Chalgrove

- Ann Reed
- Evelyn Chakera
- Gill Walker
- Helen Moss-Black
- Lynn Baker
- Neil Topping
- David Lee
- Peter Grout
- Ann McDevitt
- Ellen Collins

If you have any issue that you would like raised at a PPG Meeting, please contact any of the above or email us.

Special points of interest:

- ECG Success
- Holiday Issues
- DNA's Still Frustrate
- On Display
- PPG Changes
- What Does the Future Hold?!it

Contact Us By Email

watchalppg@btconnect.com

Target Reached!!!

Your PPG has now organised 2 fundraising events and to date has raised a total of £1829.48 which is a fantastic sum in such a short time. The success is mainly down to the enthusiasm and commitment of the Fundraising Team comprising Ann McDevitt, Peter Grout, Jacky Wagstaff, Ellen Collins, Maggie Lindley and Marion Davis.

£1482.48 was raised by stalls at the May Day Festival and some very generous donations; then £347 from the Strawberry Cream Tea held in Watlington.

The PPG would like to thank everyone who supported these 2 events - particularly the Fundraising Team - which has enabled a very grateful Practice to obtain the much needed new ECG machine - just as one of the old ones had failed and appointments had to be cancelled!

We intend to have a formal presentation to one of the senior partners soon which we hope will get some publicity from the local press in the area.

However, we are not resting on our laurels! The next item that we are aiming to purchase is higher backed waiting room chairs for the for patients with mobility problems.

The next fundraiser is a "Good Old-Fashioned Jumble and Bric-a-Brac Sale" which will be held in **The Watlington Club from 11:00 to 3:00 on 17th September.**

So we need everyone to turn out their cupboards for good quality clothes and bric-a-brac that can be sold at the event. Any donations of good clean items can be taken to Old School Place in Watlington or 14 Langley Road in Chalgrove before Tuesday 13th September.

Come along on 17th and grab yourself a bargain too.



The new ECG machine is now a reality!!

D^{rs} Need Holidays Too!!

We all like to see our regular GP but there are times when he or she does not have an appointment slot available when you would like one. This is particularly the case at this time of school holidays.

Why not try another Doctor? Any patient registered with the Practice can book an appointment with any of the Doctors in Chalgrove or Watlington.

There are 3 male and 4 female Doctors working permanently at the Practice and both male and female Nurses.

We are also pleased to announce that Dr Caroline Ward will be joining the Practice as a permanent member of staff from September and she will be doing 5 sessions a week. Dr Ward has been working as a locum in the Watlington surgery since April so some of you will already know her.

Finally, some of you may be surprised to learn that a few patients get very annoyed when they can't get the appointment they want. So much so that they take out their frustration on the Receptionists.

This frustration can take the form of verbal abuse either directly or on the phone. This type of behaviour cannot and will not be tolerated.

All the team work hard to give the best service they can to all patients so please treat them with the respect you would want yourself.

DNA's Still a Problem

The number of patients who **Did Not Attend (DNA)** for an appointment at the surgery was below 100 for the first time in June.

Unfortunately it was on the rise again in July so the initial encouraging trend did not last.

The figure represents a lot of wasted time for the medical staff and unused appointment slots that could have been offered to other patients. Each missed appointment can cost the NHS over £100.

If you need to cancel an appointment please let the surgery know as soon as possible.

Why not do it online and then there will be no need to wait for the telephone lines to be open?

You need to register for online access - just fill up the form available at the surgery. You will then not only be able to book, change or cancel an appointment at any time of day or night but you can request a repeat prescription and browse your own medical record too although we would stress that information like test results should always be discussed with a Doctor to determine what the results mean for you.

On Display

The recent addition of TV displays in the waiting rooms has two objectives. Firstly to inform patients when the GP/Nurse is ready to see them. This seems to be working well now and is appreciated by most patients rather than the old card system.

However, the second function is to have the ability to give patients information on a wide range of issues. This feature is not so straightforward and requires a lot of hard work behind the scenes.

We are gradually improving (we hope) the quality and relevance of the information that is displayed at both surgeries.

If you spot any anomalies or have any suggestions for information you would like to see whilst sitting there waiting for your appointment, please let us know via one of the Receptionists.

PPG Changes

At our last Full group meeting it was decided that the Core Group would be re-named. The Core Group consists of 4 members of the PPG who meet regularly with the Practice Manager in order to take forward issues that have been raised at our meetings and co-ordinate the various projects which the PPG undertakes such as fundraising, the school project and this Newsletter.

You may remember that we decided to adopt this arrangement last year as meeting only 4 times a year made it difficult to take things forward and it was not necessary for everyone to be involved with every project.

Members have decided that 'Steering Group' is a more appropriate name as it more accurately reflects this Group's role. You'll now see this new name in future references to the work of your PPG.

The Practice has also been busy collecting email addresses. Now whilst both we and the Practice realise that not everyone has access to electronic communications, an increasing number of patients will welcome this facility.

So if you would like to receive notifications from the Practice - and ourselves - via email, please give your details, along with your mobile phone number if you have one, to either surgery.

At present there are around 7000 registered patients but the Practice only has around 1300 email addresses, so there is plenty of scope for expansion of the database.

You will only receive emails or texts from the Practice advising you of medical issues such as Flu Days or reminding you of an appointment. The PPG will only send you electronic copies of our Newsletter via email so there are no other Data Protection issues.

Don't worry, patients who are not into these means of communication will not be forgotten or ignored!!

Check out the Practice website

www.watlington-surgeries.nhs.uk

for more information on our role and our activities.

The PPG email address has changed so if you have any comments or suggestions (not related to personal health issues) you can now contact us on

watchalppg@btconnect.com

We look forward to hearing from you.

The Future of Your GP Practice

At our last PPG meeting Dr Gregory gave the Group a very sobering talk on the future of General Practice. We all take it for granted that we will be able to go and see our GP when we need to. What many people don't realise is that GP Practices are not directly provided by the NHS.

In the case of Watlington and Chalgrove, 4 partners fund what is, in effect, the business and receive an income from the NHS dependant on how many patients they have and what services they provide. The income they generate has to pay for *all* Practice expenses. For example, a rolling 5-year programme of internal and external redecoration is to start very shortly at both surgeries which will have to be entirely funded by the Practice. Hence the decision of the PPG to help with fundraising for items that improve the service the Practice can provide to patients!

There is a concern about the long term future for many Practices - including ours - for a number of reasons.

1. It is extremely difficult to recruit "partners", i.e. GPs who are willing - or able to - invest their own money into a Practice.
2. It is extremely difficult to recruit and retain new salaried GPs, i.e. doctors who are employed by a Practice but who don't have a financial interest.
3. There are increasing demands on Doctors' time due to an ageing population and more patients with long-term more complex issues and this is only going to become a more serious problem.
4. The number of consultations carried out by GP surgeries represents 90% of all NHS clinical contacts with patients. Training places are unfilled and nationally 34% of GPs are planning to retire in the next 5 years; in our Practice it is possible that 50% will retire in this time period.
5. Funding for general practice has fallen from 10.4% of the total NHS budget in 2004/5 to only 7.29% and the NHS total funding has fallen to 7% of GDP - yet costs within the NHS continue to rise.

Depressing - and worrying - isn't it?! One possible solution that has been put forward is to increase funding for general practice by introducing new models of care which give patients better and more efficient access to care closer to home; put an emphasis on prevention and early detection; and take demand away from the hospitals.

This will involve greater integration of the different services which provide care, with the local GP Practices having a co-ordinating role. This does, of course, mean that GP Practices will need an increase in funding to fulfil this role.

Where the money will come from and whether it will come soon enough to address the current crisis in general practice remains to be seen.

In the meantime, don't take what we have for granted. We are still very lucky to receive such excellent service and hope that it will remain that way for many years.

Stop Press! Flu Vaccination Days are booked for Tuesday, 11 October at Chalgrove, Wednesday, 19 October at Watlington 9.00am to 3pm