



Frithwood Surgery

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Frithwood Surgery PPG Newsletter

Winter 2021

Face-to-face appointments – we're working on it



I'm not sure I've ever seen general practice under as much pressure as it is currently, *writes practice manager Clive Fenney.*

National shortages of GPs, huge increases in demand and, of course, COVID, have resulted in a huge strain on primary care.

Frithwood is lucky in many ways as, unlike practices in other counties, we are normally able to recruit the staff we need and have a team that's dedicated to ensuring the best and safest care for our patients. However, one question continues to vex us and our patients: the ready availability of face-to-face appointments.

In 2020, general practice and all areas of healthcare changed rapidly. The organisations that commission healthcare told us we must move to a digital/triage model to protect our vulnerable patients and protect our staff so we could all keep working.

As things 'opened up', we started offering more and more face-to-face appointments. Our GPs prefer this method of consultation when possible, but recognise that seeing everyone face to face is simply not the best way to work at the current time and would lead to increased waiting times.

Hence, we still look to utilise the advantages of the triage model in many cases: phoning patients to assess their ailment and bringing them into the surgery when it is medically necessary. Indeed, some patients like the triage model and the convenience of dealing with problems by phone or video initially. Others prefer the idea of seeing their doctor, no matter what their ailment is.

Our reception team have been trained as 'Care Navigators', helping to ensure patients receive the best care by assessing the patients' needs and potentially offering appointments with members of our team such as pharmacists, physiotherapists, social prescribers and nurses. They are NOT 'blocking' patients from seeing a GP – they are looking to ensure the pathway to care is the most suitable and appropriate. Continues page 2.

FEEDBACK - We would love to hear from you on any aspects of the Newsletters or the services you receive from the surgery. If you have questions or ideas that could benefit our readership, please use the 'Suggestion Box' at the surgery reception or 'e' mail frithwood.ppg@nhs.net or call 01453 882868.

Face to face...

In conclusion, we will continue to constantly monitor demand, offering as many face-to-face appointments as possible but always ensuring our patients receive the care they need in a timely manner. Between 50 and 100 patients have appointments in person with GPs each day, as I write this. We are working closely with our Patient Participation Group regarding the current situation and they are currently running a patient survey if you would like to air your thoughts.

To complete the survey, visit:

<https://bit.ly/3EjIOJi>

Join our group

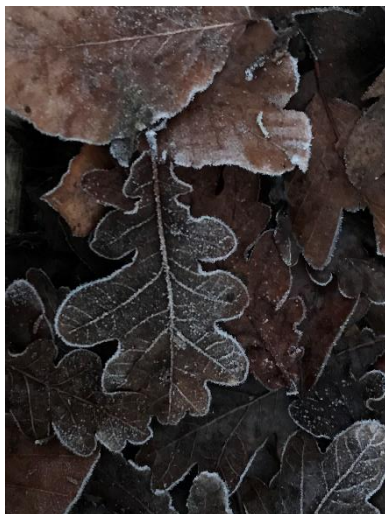
We have set up a Frithwood Surgery PPG Facebook group! This is to help us gather patient views and support the



development and improvement of services offered by the surgery. Please join here:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/frithwoodppg>

Merry Christmas to you from the Frithwood Patient Participation Group!



Volunteers provide boost

Efforts continue to ensure patients receive COVID booster jabs as quickly as possible. Since September, we have been proud to offer COVID vaccinations here at Frithwood Surgery, saving a trip to Stroud, or further afield if booked via the national booking centres. I hope those who have attended will agree that our clinics have run smoothly and efficiently. Following the government's announcement, we have increased the number of clinics available. We will contact our patients as soon as we are able to offer you a booster (or second vaccination).

With our priority still being the day-to-day care, the clinics are run with the help of an amazing team of part-time staff, including retired clinicians, who have returned to deliver COVID vaccinations. Our thanks to the vaccination team and also to the incredible volunteers who selflessly give of their time to help us.

Frithwood face

Name: Anna Brooker

Role: Frithwood PPG chair

What I do: Co-ordinate the PPG and represent it at regional meetings; help run our PPG Facebook group and help the PPG to raise funds to improve the health and wellbeing of our community.

Why my work is important: Because (in the words of George William Curtis) "Happiness lies, first of all, in health."

Top health advice: Never eat anything containing more than 1 tsp of refined sugar.

Most frequent thing you hear: 'You're on mute Anna'

Favourite way to exercise: Working out with weights in front of my TV, singing my heart out to favourite tunes.

When I'm not working: I enjoy gardening, cats and anything that makes me smile.

Most surprising fact about me: I play saxophone.

Favourite sport: Skiing

Favourite music: I like all sorts of music and couldn't pick an absolute favourite. Loving Tom Rosenthal at the moment.



Doctors' notes: Immunity

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought the question of immunity into sharp focus. The immune system is a network of processes that protects us from disease. It detects and responds to a wide variety of pathogens, such as viruses, bacteria and parasites, as well as cancer cells and objects such as splinters.

The main components of the immune system are the white blood cells, antibodies, lymphatic system and spleen. There is also a complicated network of proteins known as 'the complement system' that "complements" the immune system

As with all parts of our makeup, the immune system can go wrong. For example, it may recognise everyday things such as pollen and animal fur as harmful, causing allergy, asthma and hay fever. The immune system may even recognise our tissues as foreign, causing autoimmune disease. An example of this is rheumatoid arthritis, caused by the membranes lining joints. HIV, the human immunodeficiency virus, damages the immune system and thus increases susceptibility to infection and cancer.

Vaccines are a way to artificially produce antibodies to a pathogen. Mostly a vaccine is a weakened or inactive part of a pathogen that triggers antibody production. Newer vaccines contain the blueprint to produce the antigen rather than the antigen itself. The rapid development of Covid vaccines has been the success story of the pandemic, enabling millions to acquire immunity in this way and the importance of receiving the vaccine cannot be underestimated. If for any reason you have not been vaccinated, please just do it.

Herd immunity is something of which you will have heard - no pun intended! This is a form of indirect protection from infectious disease, which occurs when a sufficient percentage of a population has become immune to an infection, either through vaccination or exposure to the disease allowing naturally acquired antibodies to form, thereby reducing the likelihood of infection for individuals who lack immunity.

It is possible to boost your immune system to complement immunity that's acquired through vaccination, and it will come as no surprise to hear that it is all to do with healthy lifestyle. Sadly, the older we get, the less effective our immune system becomes. So although the following advice applies to all age groups, the over-fifties should pay particular attention. The usual mantra applies: exercise, lose weight, eat protein from whatever source you prefer, get outside to boost vitamin D production, get a good night's sleep and please, please cut the fags and booze. **Dr Tim Crouch.**

PPG survey

Frithwood Patient Participation Group is keen to collect patient views about the services provided by the surgery so that we can help identify ways to improve the outcomes and experiences of our community. We are currently planning how we may be able to improve services for patients suffering from a long term condition, but all views and experiences are invited and welcomed. Please access the survey at <https://bit.ly/3EjI0Ji> or ask for a paper copy at reception.

Fundraising 100 Club

Each year we run a monthly 100 Club draw that raises vital funds for surgery equipment AND gives you the real chance of a win, with odds much better than the National Lottery! In 2022 we hope to be able to kit out a new clinical room so that more patient appointments can be offered. The annual membership fee is £24, with 50% of all fees going into the prize fund! If a 100 Club isn't for you, Frithwood Surgery PPG is always delighted to accept donations. Please make cheques payable to: Frithwood Surgery Patients Participation Group. To join the 100 Club - visit: <https://sites.google.com/view/frithwood100club/home>. Cheques for the 100 Club should be made payable to: Frithwood Surgery PPG Lottery Account.