

Wargrave Patient Participation Group Newsletter

*The Patient Participation Group exists
to strengthen communications between patients and the surgery,
delivering positive health outcomes for the local community*

Welcome to the March 2021 newsletter from the Wargrave Surgery PPG. We're pleased to be able to bring you further updates on the Covid-19 vaccination program, news of our next on-line seminar and some upcoming changes within the practice team.

Focus on Dr. Aimee Stocks

Dr. Stocks joined Wargrave in 2016, became a partner in 2018 and can be found working at the practice three days a week. She also works within the GP community appraising other doctors.

However her decision to study medicine came after she had already completed a degree in American Studies at Birmingham University with a year abroad at Berkeley, California. Then, at Kings College in London, she considered specialising in paediatrics before opting for general practice. Aimee felt that general practice was very definitely for her as she considers herself a people person and because it provided the opportunity to acquire a breadth of knowledge about many aspects of medicine. As she says "It's a very holistic approach – you can get to know patients and their health concerns over the long term and also get to know whole families". These days women's health and mental health are particular areas of interest for Aimee.

In 2009 her medical studies took her to Guatemala for work experience, something Aimee relished, as she loves to travel. She is particularly fond of hot climates and has travelled in South Africa and Thailand. Her big trip last year should have been to Peru but, like many of us, she had to postpone her plans because of Covid.

Apart from travel, Aimee's interests including walking - on a regular basis this would be with her 2yr old cocker spaniel, Bella. But her walking boots have also been put to good use on more adventurous treks, such as the Camino de Santiago in Spain. And she has a long-term ambition to become fluent in Spanish, which she has been working on for some time but has been put on hold during Covid.

And she's a very keen baker – something her colleagues at Wargrave Surgery are only too aware of as her cakes quite often come to work with her! Apparently she is a firm believer that walking and cake (both baking and eating) are very therapeutic and relaxing! And who would disagree with that?

Covid Clinics

At time of writing (19 Feb) the surgery is vaccinating group 5 (65-69 yrs) and group 6 (underlying health conditions). "We have covered 90% of those in groups 1 – 4" says Stephen Collier, Practice Manager, "but we implore anybody over the age of 70 who hasn't been vaccinated to call us so that the team can book you in! We really want to get to 100%!"

At present the surgery have vaccinated 50% of groups 5 and 6 (520 vaccs) and will announce the next clinic as soon there is confirmation of a further delivery. If you are in either of these groups and haven't yet been vaccinated **there is no need to call – the surgery will contact you.**

And so by the end of March we expect that 90% of those in groups 1 – 6 will have been vaccinated.

Whilst the Pfizer vaccine has been administered at the surgery with a 15 min recovery period, AstraZeneca vaccinations are carried out in the fire station and recovery time is not necessary. We're lucky to have this facility and are very grateful to the fire service for making it available and ready for our needs.

Health Seminars

Covid 19

Our second on-line seminar this year took place on 20 January and was led by Dr. Jim Kennedy . It was well attended with 80 people joining us on the night and we have received very positive feedback from our patient communities. Dr. Jim's three key messages were:

- There is still some vaccine reluctance. Get the jab! It's the only way we will get out of this.
- Local uptake seems to be astronomically high – keep up the good work.
- Even when you have had the jab, use all other measures to protect yourself and others ... we are all in this together.

To receive a recording of this seminar please email lisah@pursuitnha.com

Diabetes for non-diabetics

On 10 March at 7pm our lead doctor, Mark Puddy and Senior Practice Nurse, Sharon Tanner explained exactly what diabetes is, how problematic it can be and how diet and lifestyle can help us avoid becoming diabetic. As usual this took the form of a 30 minute presentation followed by a question and answer session. To receive a recording of this seminar please email lisah@pursuitnha.com

And finally a message for all patients from Dr Mark Puddy

“At the end of March 2021, I will have reached a SIGNIFICANT birthday. Under NHS rules, oldies like me can then draw their pension and after a suitable rest can return to work. My wife Susan, a GP in Woodley, and I had been looking forward to taking April off work, gathering the family with fiancées, boyfriends etc., and heading to South Africa for sun and safari, before returning to Europe for some end of season skiing. There is a little something (very little, about the size of a virus) which has scuppered those plans. We don't have a plan B and may well be seen jogging around the well-worn trails of Wargrave.

The past year has seen the biggest upheaval in working practices in our time as GPs. A year ago, we were seeing nearly all patients face to face. To me this was a far easier and more enjoyable way of working. Over decades I had honed my doctor-patient consultation style, from a patient's appearance and body language, to work out their problem. It is much more enjoyable to speak to someone sitting in the consulting room than over the phone, and quicker as we still need to see a sizeable proportion face to face in the surgery after the initial telephone call.

Secondly, we have had to change our computer system at the surgery, which after 30 years isn't so easy and just takes longer. Computers and Coronavirus have combined to make me less time efficient this year than last.

Thirdly, we have had to be creative to devise new patterns of work to protect our patients and staff from Covid, including how to administer the Covid immunisation programme, in a year in which we have had a change of practice manager. All the surgery team, under both Josie Osborne, and now her replacement, Stephen Collier, have been impressive in adapting to these changes. Jim Kennedy has been masterminding the whole campaign across the area, and Aimée and Dan have enthusiastically supported Wargrave Surgery as a vaccine hub. Some day-to-day innovations such as video consultations and email communication via our website are proving more efficient for our patients and can simplify some tasks, so we may well continue with them post-pandemic.

It has been great to see the Patient Participation Group leading the effort to inspire the whole community to carry out the Covid Immunisation Programme. The huge number of volunteers in hi viz jackets, standing out in cold, wind and rain to give a warm welcome to patients coming to the surgery from across Wargrave, Twyford and Woodley, helping with the immunising and preparation of the vaccine has been the most wonderful thing I have seen in 30 years in the practice.

Clearly, what we envisaged 12 months ago as being an uneventful year leading up to April has gone off piste. We are both retiring from our partnerships, and will cease the work and responsibility of running a small business as well as being full time doctors. We will return to work a couple of days a week in our practices as salaried doctors, doing the part of the job which first inspired us to be GPs, helping our patients to be as healthy as possible for as long as possible, and we hope that we will be allowed to see, rather than just telephone, our patients in the months ahead.

I am delighted that the surgery continues to have such a strong team. When I joined, I felt happy that I could envisage working for my career with Sandra Swan and Julia Thurston, and with Joe Paton who was then succeeded by Mike Boyle, and Lucy Jones as the Practice Manager. I am equally happy that the practice is thriving under the dynamic and innovative leadership of Jim, Dan and Aimée, and am pleased that, at a time when many practices struggle to recruit doctors, they have attracted an excellent replacement for me, but I'll leave the introductions for Faye to a future PPG newsletter."

Best wishes

Mark Puddy

If you would like to comment on Dr. Puddy's work at the surgery please email contributions to drpuddy@pursuitnha.com by 16 March. We hope to publish some of these in forthcoming newsletters.