

# Old Bridge Surgery

In Looe, Pelynt and Polperro



## Practice Newsletter – Spring 2018

### Welcome to our Spring Newsletter.

We hope you find this interesting and informative. If there are topics you would like to see covered in future issues, please let us know.

### “Why can’t I get an appointment?”

As previously reported, we continue to operate with one of our GPs on extended leave. This continues to affect our ability to meet the needs of our patients and we acknowledge that, at times, we have been unable to offer the choice of appointments that we would like.

We have been trying to recruit a new doctor to join our team since last summer; we have advertised in a variety of ways and appointed a recruitment consultant but sadly have yet to meet with a credible candidate. You may have heard in the news of a national GP “recruitment crisis” and we are sorry to say it is having an impact here in South East Cornwall where a number of practices are hoping to recruit.

On a more positive note, we have recruited other clinical staff (see elsewhere in this newsletter) to support the GPs. We have also booked locum doctors to help meet demand and try to keep this to a small number of “regulars” to allow some continuity of care for our patients.

Despite our best efforts we know there are times when patients are unable to book an appointment at a time to suit them or with their usual doctor. Please accept our apologies for this. We have sought support from NHS England and Kernow Clinical Commissioning Group who are aware of the situation.

Our priority is to ensure that we can meet demand for clinically urgent matters on a day to day basis and to achieve this we aim always to have a certain number of appointments available to book on the day. Once this same day capacity is fully booked any further requests for appointments are dealt with by the duty doctor who will usually telephone the patient to assess the medical need and, if appropriate, ask the patient to come in for an appointment. We will always see patients who in the judgment of the duty doctor have a clinically urgent need to be seen on the same day. However, having allocated capacity to ensure we have sufficient appointments for urgent needs, we realise that there are fewer appointments available for forward booking and acknowledge that this is frustrating for our patients.

Please consider alternatives to a “traditional” appointment, if appropriate; we offer telephone appointments and our reception staff may be able to recommend others who can provide the service you need such as local pharmacies or other agencies. It helps us direct patients to the right source of help if you would please give a little information about your condition to our reception staff; they are bound by the same terms of confidentiality as all other members of staff.

If you have booked an appointment but are unable to attend, please contact the practice to let us know as it can then be made available to others.

The whole practice team is working hard to minimise disruption for our patients and we would appreciate your understanding, particularly for our reception staff who are in a difficult position – if you have particular frustrations please ask to speak to a senior member of staff.

## Staff news

There have been a few changes to our clinical staff recently. Nurse Practitioner, **Ruth Hughes** left the practice recently and she will be missed. We are currently recruiting to fill the vacancy for this position.

In February **Andrew Sutton** joined the practice in a new role as Practice Paramedic. After a number of years in the ambulance service, Andrew comes to us from a practice in Plymouth. It's a new role for us and he will work closely with the duty doctor in seeing patients with minor illness or injury and on home visits.

**Emma Wright**, one of our Health care Assistants, returns to the practice from maternity leave in April.

## Care Quality Commission

As you may have seen, the CQC inspected the practice in December, visiting all three sites. We are grateful to members of the Patient Participation Group who met with the inspector during the day to contribute to the inspection and to other patients who provided feedback in writing. Our staff worked hard in preparation and it's a busy day as the inspectors assess practices against five key questions and six specific patient population groups.

We were pleased to be judged "**Good**" across the board – there's a link to the full report on the home page of our website ([www.oldbridgesurgery.co.uk](http://www.oldbridgesurgery.co.uk)).

## Summer is coming!

After the snow and storms it's hard to imagine but summer will be here eventually! If you are planning a trip that might require travel vaccinations, please plan ahead. Make an appointment to see one of our nurses for travel advice in good time. Some conditions require a course of vaccinations which can take time; also note that not all travel services are funded by the NHS – charges may apply.

## Thank you

We were delighted to receive two much appreciated donations in recent months. First of all, the Lions Club of Looe made a generous donation, raised from their champagne dinner in November which has allowed us to purchase two new ECG machines. One of our older machines needed replacement and now we have not only a replacement but additional capacity too. Thank you, Lions!

We also received a gift to put towards another suitable equipment purchase from the Sea Angling Festival – we appreciate the generosity and expect to allocate these funds shortly.

## Keeping in touch and informed

We continue to develop our website ([www.oldbridgesurgery.co.uk](http://www.oldbridgesurgery.co.uk)) so please think of using this if you need healthcare advice. There are links here to other reputable websites which may be helpful to you too. We offer on-line prescription requests and, once availability has improved, appointment booking via the website; you need to register first to use these service – you can begin this process on the website. Separately, we offer text appointment reminders; please ask if you would like to use this service.

Finally, remember to let us know if you change your address, phone number or email address so that we can continue to keep in touch with you – we will only use your personal information in the course of providing your healthcare or in other ways as agreed with you.