



## What's Happening With Our Practice?



It's a fair question to ask, as a lot has been going on over the last six months.

Nobody can now be unaware of the desperate shortage of doctors and nurses in the NHS across the country and the consequent effects that this has on primary care. For some considerable time people have complained of long waits for appointments and the near impossibility of seeing 'their' doctor within a reasonable period.

Add to that the long delays holding on the phone, waiting for an answer, especially early in the morning (more about that later!) and it's not surprising that we, as a PPG, are getting increasing numbers of comments from patients about their frustrations.

But there is good news, too! Real steps are being taken to deal with the problems and improve the situation, and that is the purpose of this newsletter – not to dwell on what has gone before, but to tell you what is going to happen in the future.

We have had a number of staff changes that we would really have preferred not to happen. **Dr Charles Ristic**, a popular figure for the last couple of years, has retired. And **Dr Nur Hasan** will sadly also be leaving the practice shortly.

We have lost some other clinical staff during the last year too, including some of our familiar HCA and nursing staff, but some new faces are already being recruited and you will be meeting them soon.

**O**ther new arrivals will be **Andie Wooton**, an ex-paramedic, who will be joining in June as an Enhanced Care Practitioner and **Lisa Tabner** who will be supporting the surgery management team.

**B**ut just to add to our woes, there has recently been illness among our other GPs which has meant they have not been able to do their usual surgeries. It never rains...!

**F**ortunately, thanks to the support from SHS, cover was maintained for all the patient sessions, and there was no need to cancel appointments, as might have been the case otherwise. This help will continue for the time being with **Dr Berge Balian** providing support in South Petherton and **Dr Harvey Sampson** assisting Dr Bridge in Martock and South Petherton.

## Some Boosts for Martock

**A**nd there's more good news! As some of you will know, the PPG has been working towards the installation of electric doors at the Martock surgery for many months. A partial grant from NHS England and funding support from SHS has enabled the project to progress and the long-awaited doors are now in place - just one internal door to go, and that should be completed on 3<sup>rd</sup> April.

This improvement should be of huge benefit to mums with push-chairs, people in wheelchairs and those with limited mobility.



You may also have noticed a lot of work going on in the consulting room areas of Martock surgery. These works will bring the consulting rooms up to the latest standards and will include new flooring and fittings and more space to move around! These works should be completed by the end of April.

## Other Developments

**S**HS has also begun holding special Joint Patient Network groups in which interested patients can join in discussions on topics which will affect the development of patient services within the practice.

**A** recent meeting covered **online services**, which are going to be of great importance to primary care in the coming months and years. They are also topics that give rise to doubts and

concerns among patients and that is why we will be devoting a large part of our public meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> May to explaining what is involved.

This year we have arranged more suitable accommodation and should be able to satisfy all those who want to come along. The publicity for the meeting will be displayed very shortly, so keep an eye out for those posters and leaflets.

**PUBLIC MEETING**

**YOUR PRACTICE STILL NEEDS YOU!**

For patients of Martock and South Petherton Surgeries

**WHERE?** Martock Christian Fellowship Hall

**WHEN?** Wednesday, 15<sup>th</sup> May 2019 at 7.00pm

**WHAT?** An open meeting, incorporating the AGM of

**Martock & South Petherton Patient Participation Group (MSPPPG)**

- Hear about what has been happening with your Practice
- Learn about the new approaches to Primary Care in Somerset
- Raise questions about the services provided
- Make suggestions as to changes you would like to see

*Last year's meeting was a sell-out! Don't miss this opportunity!*

SPACE MAY BE LIMITED! If you would like to attend, please let us know:

- by e-mail at [info@mspppg.co.uk](mailto:info@mspppg.co.uk) or
- by leaving a telephone message on 0203 239 3028 or
- by handing in a registration slip at the Reception desk of either surgery (available at Reception)

and we will guarantee you a seat.

Note: You are welcome to attend without letting us know, but there may well be standing room only!

**Participate!**

**MSPPPG**

A steady trickle of patients continues to register with our **Virtual PPG**. This is a simple, free and effective way of keeping in touch with what is happening with regard to the practice and we strongly recommend signing up. Just go to: [mspppg.co.uk](http://mspppg.co.uk)

## Repeat Prescriptions

One of the topics that comes up at regular intervals is that of Repeat Prescriptions. We have a useful leaflet on this that is available in the surgeries

(and a video to watch while you are waiting!) But here are some of the key points:

Please order your prescription in good time. (Please note the new Prescription Line times.) Each prescription has to be signed off before it can be issued and you wouldn't believe the number they have to get through. This is why you are asked to allow **three days** for the prescription to reach the pharmacy and a further **two days** for it to be dispensed.

You can choose the pharmacy that you want to dispense your prescription, either a physical one or an online one, but please be sure to let the surgery know if you change your designated pharmacy.

## Appointments

Now a word about getting an appointment. One of the less welcome consequences of the shortage of GPs is that it has become much harder to arrange an appointment with 'your' GP. Of course, we all like the continuity of dealing with someone who knows us and our circumstances, but the sad fact is that, if you want to see a specific GP, you may have to wait quite a long time.

However, times have changed since your notes were written on paper and stored in huge filing cabinets in the bowels of the surgery. These days, whoever deals with you has instant, online access to your notes, your test results and your full history, and is thus well capable of giving you a first-class service.

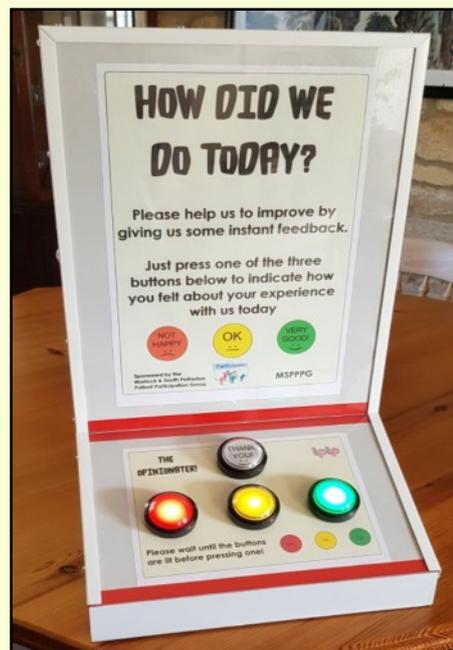
And you now have a much bigger range of people who are able to help you: healthcare assistants, nurse practitioners, practice pharmacists, health coaches, practice nurses and paramedics, as well as the GPs. So the chances are that you will be seen sooner, and get more timely treatment by seeing one of these professionals.

Which brings us onto the subject of receptionists. It's not easy to appreciate just how tough a job they have. Dealing with dozens of phone calls every morning, trying to sort out problems with appointments and prescriptions and often having to placate unhappy patients who have waited a long time for their call to be answered.

But they can be your passport to quicker and better help! By asking you a few basic questions about the reason for your call or visit (known as first-line triage), they can make sure you see the most appropriate person to deal with your problem. And remember, they are bound by the same patient confidentiality rules as all the other practice staff. So please, help them to help you!

Finally, let your opinions be known! We have long had patient survey slips available in the waiting rooms, and these are useful for addressing specific topics and allowing you to express your opinion in writing.

But sometimes maybe you just don't have time - or maybe you don't have a pen! Enter **The Opinionater!**



Some of you may already have come across this device which has been located near the exit doors to Martock surgery for a few weeks. It is instant, completely anonymous and gives us valuable feedback on your experience that particular day.

You just need to touch one of the three illuminated buttons - Very Good, OK or I'm Not Happy. Your 'vote' will be recorded on the system and reviewed by the PPG and surgery team so that we can assess where things are going right - and where they are not.

That's all for now. Remember to join the **vPPG** and to watch out for the posters and leaflets on our public meeting.

### **Martock and South Petherton Patient Participation Group.**

Find us at

[mspppg.co.uk](http://mspppg.co.uk)

Martock & South Petherton surgeries are part of **Symphony Healthcare Services (SHS)**, an NHS healthcare organisation