

## Surgery News

I understand that a few people have had problems recently ordering medication, making appointments etc using the EMIS Access system, and I have just learned that at least part of this is because the name and layout of the website have changed.

The site is still accessed via [www.patient.co.uk](http://www.patient.co.uk) but this particular function is now called "Patient Access". When you get to the first page of the website, the tag which you click to sign in is coloured bright orange and can be found about a third of the way down on the right hand side. Everything else works just the same.

I am sorry that you didn't get prior warning of this change, but we didn't know about it until after the event. Apologies to anyone who experienced difficulties, and thanks to Dr Steiner (he's still going strong) for telling me about the problem.

As you know, we are always looking for ways to make your visit to the surgery as pleasant and comfortable as possible. The water cooler was installed a couple of years ago and more recently we bought some new armchairs for the waiting room to make things a little easier for our less mobile patients. Both these improvements were suggested by patients responding to our regular surveys.

An interesting suggestion in the latest survey was that anyone coming for an appointment, especially around lunch time, should have somewhere to buy refreshments. This seems like a really sensible idea, especially for older patients and anyone bringing in young children, so from the beginning of the month there will be a burger van open in the surgery car park between 10.00am and 2.30pm on our busiest days – Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. It will normally serve burgers, hot-dogs and chips, with the option of fish and chips on Fridays. Tea and coffee will also be available, together with fizzy drinks for the kids.

The couple who own the burger van, Mr and Mrs Hale from Wivenhoe, have a really good reputation around the local car boot sales. I know from personal experience that they do brilliant doughnuts which are freshly cooked on demand. They are laying on this service for a trial period of six months and provided it doesn't lose them money, it will become a permanent feature – possibly every weekday – so please support them.

We need everyone to co-operate in making sure that litter from the new facility doesn't become a problem, so we are going to position four large litter bins on the Green around the surgery, and this is a plea for everyone to make sure that they use them properly. If the area becomes too messy, I'm sure that the Parish Council and our neighbours will be on our backs very quickly, not to mention the possibility of attracting rats and mice.

After a false start or two, the automatic blood pressure monitor and scales in the waiting room are now working. They give anyone who hasn't had their blood pressure and weight checked for a while an ideal do-it-yourself opportunity. The BP monitor produces a small printed report to hand to the clinician you are seeing and we have some slips at reception on which weight and a few other details can be written to bring your records up to date. Please make use of them, as the more information we have about you, the better we can look after you. (Perhaps it's better to weigh yourself before trying the burgers, chips and doughnuts.)

I have a new member of staff to introduce again this month. He (yes, we've balanced out the sexes a little) is Steve Osborne and he has joined us on a six month contract to provide cover for a long-term sickness absence. He will help out with reception and a variety of administrative tasks as well as strengthening the select band of us who do "man" things like clearing rubbish, changing light bulbs and washing up. He also gives us an extra person who can carry out basic maintenance on our computer systems as, before the recession, he had spent many years working with as a career.

When he has free time, Steve, who lives in Frinton with his partner Sue, is a keen follower of sport, especially football (his team is Brentford). Despite his advanced age, (I'm sure he's over forty) he is about to make a come-back, playing in local leagues. He hasn't got a team yet, so if you are looking for a (veteran) goal-keeper, why not give him a ring? Whether he bounces as well as he used to, I don't know. Meanwhile, he tells me, he keeps fit by working out at the gym and walking his dog on the beach.

Hugh Cronin

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