



Happy new year to all of our patients!

I hope everyone enjoyed the festive season and time with their families. I know I did! Of course at this time of the year when it can be really cold and adverse weather can significantly affect our elderly or infirm neighbours getting out and about as easily compared to the milder months of the year. Please take the time to check on your neighbours and make sure they have everything they need, even if it's just a cup of tea and chat. Many people get lonely this time of the year and a friendly face can make all the difference to many people.

For those of you who haven't yet got involved with the Patient Participation Group (PPG) yet, you missed a belter of a meeting in November. The PPG hosted one of the local MPs Bernard Jenkin and the meeting turned into a very lively debate on the future of the NHS. Bernard went away under no illusion that the patients' and doctors' of Great Bentley Surgery places huge value on their local services and want to protect them in their current form. For those who missed this meeting or those who attended and enjoyed it, **I'm pleased to announce that we have our other local MP Douglas Carswell attending the January PPG meeting being held on Thursday 15th at 6.30pm at the Great Bentley Village Hall.** Representing a very new and often controversial party, it will be very interesting meeting I'm sure! We are now in a general election year, so we have this opportunity to help shape policy on the NHS. I believe this will be a key election issue that affects us all so do come along and make your voice heard.

Richard P Miller, Practice Manager



Telephone Triage - We have introduced a new system to manage our ever increasing demand - telephone triage. Some of you will have encountered this already as we have been running a pilot for 3 months now. Where appointment requests are unable to be met by available appointments, requests are now triaged either by our Nurse Practitioner or the on call doctor. When talking to you we will decide with you the best way to deal with your problem.

Sometimes advice over the phone is appropriate or we may signpost you to another service instead of a GP in order to manage your complaint effectively. If we feel we do need to see you face to face, an appointment will always be found for you. As a direct result of the pilot we have found that there are more appointments available for those that need to be seen and examined by a GP. Any child under 5 will be offered an appointment without triage unless the parent is happy to take advice over the phone. We really believe this is working very well and together as doctors and patients, we can use our service more resourcefully to allow for a fairer delivery of primary care in our area.

Dr Freda Bhatti, Senior Partner