



This month newsletter has a very different flavour to normal. The election is looming and I'm sure none of you have failed to notice, the NHS is having its budget slashed and as a result, services are suffering. General Practice is struggling with an ever increasing burden of workload but the funding to pay for this is going down. Unfortunately the politicians (all of them!) have been using the NHS as a political 'football' with very short sighted and vote grabbing policies, ideas and changes. This election is no different so please think very carefully who you support if you value your NHS.

***Did you know?***

- **90% of all interactions** with the NHS are in general practice, but we receive **only 8.4% of the budget**.
- GPs provide **340 million consultations every year, up 20% in the last 5 years** alone and expected to rise a further 12% by 2016.
- GP practices are **funded for 2 consultations per patient** per year. The average patient now consults about **6 times a year**, twice as much as 10 years ago.
- 78% of consultations are for patients with 2 or more long-term illnesses and this is expected to **grow by another 50% by 2018**. This is worse for Great Bentley.
- Great Bentley Surgery has to issue **43% more prescriptions in 2015** compared to 5 years ago. We will be issuing just under a **quarter of a million** this year!
- **86% of GPs have reported low morale and 94% have said their workload has increased**. As a result 6 in every 10 are considering early retirement. 1 in 7 wants to leave the UK. We have been lucky but will we always be?
- There has been a **GP training crisis** happening for years. Newly qualified doctors are actively choosing NOT to go into general practice. The number of people applying for GP training has fallen by at least 15% in the last year.

**Headline grabbing sound bites like 7 day opening and appointments being guaranteed within 48 hours sound good, but are unworkable unless significant investment in general practice is made:**

- If general practice is struggling to provide services over 5 days, how on earth can it cope with 7 days with the same number of GPs and the same funding?
- If practices have to provide appointments within 48 hours with no extra doctors, they would have no choice but to stop appointments being booked ahead of this.
- It takes 10 years to train a GP, so where will a new government get extra GPs from?

Get involved with the Patient Participation Group and be part of a growing voice supporting **your** NHS. The next meeting is on **Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> May at 6.30pm** in the Great Bentley village hall. We hope to see you there.

***From all the doctors, nurses, healthcare assistants and staff.***