

Surgery News

The most important news this month is that our website is up and running at last. Richard Miller, our Assistant Manager, has been beavering away at it both here and at home for weeks, and it finally opened to the public on 1st April. (No – that isn't another joke.) It can be accessed at www.greatbentleysurgery.nhs.uk and is chock-a-block with useful and interesting information about the surgery – what we do, who does it and when. You can read up on things like treatments for common minor ailments and search for other health information. There is a patient survey that you can complete if you feel like it, and a separate section also for feedback and comments. You can even view some back-copies of the "Surgery News".

One very useful link is to the EMIS Access website, via which people who have registered to use it can order prescriptions and even make or cancel appointments. (If you haven't signed up and think that this sounds helpful, please ask at reception for details.) Other links take you to a variety of useful organisations, including Great Bentley Parish Council and a number of health related bodies such as The British Heart Foundation and Diabetes UK. If you come across a link which you think should be included, please let Richard know and we'll try to arrange it.

Perhaps the only bit of the website which ought to have a parental lock applied is the slideshow of clinicians and the management team, which has promptly been christened by the staff "The Rogues Gallery" or "The Rocky Horror Show". Take a look if you dare and wonder at how young and/or slim one or two people appear to be in their photos compared with real life. Surely they didn't sneak in old or air-brushed snaps? If there is popular demand, we could add pictures of the rest of the team here. Let Richard or me know what you think.

Anyway, comments on the website, good or bad provided they are constructive, will be very welcome. If you spot anything that is wrong or which doesn't seem to work, please also tell us.

The eagle-eyed amongst you visiting the surgery will spot that there is a huge new notice board in the porch. I chose the hottest day of the year to put it up which was a sweaty mistake, but never mind. This notice board is for some of the many announcements and flyers that we receive for events or services that are not actually related to the surgery. I'm thinking of things like adverts for the pantomime, meetings of clubs and societies, notices about child-minding services, slimming clubs etc.

If you have something that you would like to display, please hand it in at reception. We do reserve the right to refuse to put things up which are in bad taste or blatantly commercial, and there will be a small donation to our hospice collection box levied for each item that makes it to the notice board. As it will say on the board, the surgery takes no responsibility for the honesty or accuracy of anything displayed and in no way does putting something up imply a recommendation or guarantee by the practice.

Thank you very much to those of you who were patient enough to complete one of our surveys over the last few months. We don't like imposing upon your goodwill, but the surveys are something that we are required to do by the Primary Care Trust. As it turns out, some of the feedback is really useful to us anyway, and I'll use a bit of space to answer a couple of points raised.

Firstly, someone grumbled that the telephone seemed to take priority over people queuing at the desk. I'm afraid that is true, but for the very good reason that if you are queuing at the desk we can see that you are reasonably well and breathing. We just don't know what a 'phone call is going to bring. Yes, it could just be a request for an appointment, but equally it could be someone desperate for help because their spouse or child has collapsed and isn't breathing. We'll always try to deal quickly and efficiently with people at the counter, but we do have to prioritise I'm afraid. Don't forget that you can usually book in for your appointment using

our touch-screen in the waiting room, and that appointments can be made or medication ordered via EMIS Access (see above), which might occasionally save you a wait.

Secondly, someone commented on difficulties experienced in getting through on the telephone in the morning. Very sensibly, he or she had switched to ringing in during the afternoon and that had completely solved the problem. That is definitely worth trying for non-urgent issues.

Finally; to those of you who praised us – thank you. It's lovely to hear now and then that we have got things right. To those of you who weren't so positive – thank you for being honest and telling me that something isn't perfect. Now I know, I can try to do something about it and, hopefully, we'll do better in the future.

Hugh Cronin
Practice Manager