

## *A Message from The Grove Medical Centre* ***“BATTLING THROUGH COVID”***

*An overview by Dr Charles Middle – The Grove Medical Practice – Sherborne Dorset,*

As we cautiously edge away from the pandemic and towards whatever normal will look like, does that mean the NHS is also in good health? Sadly not – there is a huge catch-up to undertake and national statistics show that GP Consultation rates are higher than ever before, all at a time when we also staff the Local Vaccination Centre at The Digby Hall, along with our colleagues at Apples and Yetminster Surgeries and Volunteer force.

The last year has been the most demanding and exhausting of my career, and like my colleagues I am exhausted, with little left ‘in the tank’. Recruit more staff? We are constantly trying, but a national shortage of Nurses and GPs has made this hard, even in such an attractive area.

Whilst tales abound of practice closure, GP retirement and burn-out, patients only being able to communicate with their Doctors on line, The Grove Medical Centre are proud to provide a high quality service from our committed and skilled staff. Can this continue? Not necessarily, and not in its present form.

So, to prevent our services slipping into an adversarial system, where we are all dissatisfied, one in which those with the sharpest elbows receive the best attention and the more vulnerable are left behind, we must work together to safeguard the very future of a viable primary care service in Sherborne.

For our part we will work hard to optimise appropriate access to our services, which will be dynamic and responsive to the needs of our population. We are working hard to increase face to face access, the gold standard of our care, whilst continuing to integrate remote consultations when appropriate.

### **For our patients, we ask you to consider;**

- ◆ Do you really need to see a Doctor for your problem straight away? Time is a great healer for many issues and there are many resources providing guidance on health issues e.g.  
Our website ; <https://www.thegrovemedcentre.co.uk/self-help-centre>  
For under 18's ; <https://what0-18.nhs.uk/>  
And <https://www.nhs.uk/>
- ◆ Can I take my issue elsewhere for appropriate care?  
<https://www.thegrovemedcentre.co.uk/choose-well>  
Local pharmacies for minor complaints.  
Muscle and joint aches and pains ; <https://www.msksdorset.nhs.uk/>  
Mental Health and referral to Counselling ; <https://www.steps2wellbeing.co.uk/>  
Child and Adolescent Mental health care; <https://camhsdorset.org/>  
<https://www.thegrovemedcentre.co.uk/choose-well>
- ◆ Can I help myself and take greater responsibility for my health and prevention of disease? Whilst illness can be just bad-luck, we know that regular exercise and a healthy diet do wonders for good Physical and Mental Health. Live Well Dorset <https://www.livewelldorset.co.uk/> can help you access weight management, smoking cessation and exercise opportunities.
- ◆ Try to download NHS app onto phone or tablet, to access your records, prescriptions and appointments, as well as healthcare and vaccination updates. We appreciate that not everybody is computer literate, so you can appoint a Proxy to do this.

We are fortunate to serve a community that is so appreciative and supportive – lets continue to work together for our mutual benefit, and for the future of health care services in our community.

My best wishes for your good health and happiness.

**Dr Charles Middle**

## ***“BATTLING THROUGH COVID”***

### **Grove PPG Chairman - making your voice heard at Sherborne Town**

PPG Chairman, Roger Marsh, has made our voices heard at recent Sherborne Town Council meetings.

In addition to providing the monthly Town Council meetings with reports on PPG activities, he has attended the council meetings in March and April to brief Council Members of a range of health related issues and subjects including the lack of additional healthcare facilities in the Sherborne Local Plan and the latest figures of COVID vaccinations..

Roger commented;

“With the support of all Sherborne PPGs, volunteers and Council staff it is true to say, Sherborne is one of the leading primary care network areas in Dorset where the delivery of COVID vaccinations into patient arms has exceeded both planning and expectations. Well over 23,000 vaccinations have taken place with many patients now having received their second vaccination.”

From the beginning of the Covid-19 lock-down restrictions the Grove has used email and different social media platforms in order to publish health related news to patients. In addition, messages have been distributed through parish councils in order to reach patients living in the surrounding villages.

At the full Council meeting in April Roger briefed the Council on the Government’s White Paper “Integration and innovation – working together to improve health and social care for all” presenting details of the proposed Government Bill on the Integrated Care System of health and social care to be introduced later this year.

Finally, at the Annual Parish Meeting he presented the Council with a report of the PPG activities over the last year.

Closer to home, local issues which are being reviewed by the Grove PPG include;

eConsult (Online patient consultation system) – does it work for patients?

Cancer Awareness course (Organised by ‘Communities Against Cancer’)

Mental Health Integrated Community Care workshop (Organised by NHS Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group)

### **Our Covid Clinic Volunteers continue to help patients**



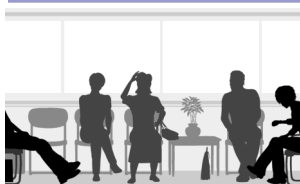
Volunteers from the local community and our Patient Participation Groups continue to help patients attending the Digby Hall for their vaccinations. To date they have helped at more than 20 clinics

They’ve stood in all winds and weathers welcoming patients as they arrive for their vaccinations and they will continue to do so for several weeks yet.

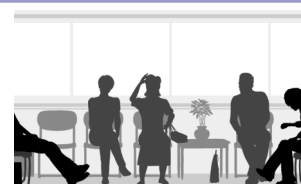
### **Patient Participation Group members working with local Health Champions**

Members of both The Grove and Apples Patient Participation Groups joined the local volunteer Health Champions to brave the rain and meet the public at the recent Sherborne Market to explain how they work for you the patients.





## *A View from the Waiting Room*



### **How will our surgery look after Covid?**

The waiting room appears a little empty these days so the 'View' may not be quite as clear as it has been in the past ...

We knew that digital technology was developing, but slowly, which was comforting, especially to older patients and to those like me who dislike changes.

Then the pandemic happened.

No one was quite prepared for the necessary rapid advance of this vital technology, essential to keep the surgery running.

There are a considerable number of elderly patients for whom this presents new challenges. Many live independent lives, but do not use computers, and need to be able to book an appointment as they used to. Fortunately for those who need it the telephone will always be there.

The fundamental purpose of the GP surgery is, and always will be the well being of the patients, and the doctor/patient relationship. This will always take precedence in any changes that may come.

The surgery doctors and staff must also cope with the ever increasing workload brought on by a population that is both growing and ageing.

There are now almost 13,000 patients on the register. If the average patient visit is four times a year that is 52,000 visits. That would be, by my reckoning, 221 visits a day by patients, not including those who come in for prescriptions, blood tests, regular health checks and dressings. Food for thought!

So, yes the waiting room seems a little empty, and yes we sometimes have trouble getting through on the phone, and yes the present eConsult form is annoying, but the fact is that the surgery now is incredibly busy! It still has the monumental task of delivering Covid vaccines, but also now an increase of patients with stored-up concerns. (I think of the graceful swan image, gliding on the surface of the water but paddling furiously underneath. )



The good news is that the latest statistics show that more than 70% of patients are happy with the additional digital appointment system. We can see that there are many benefits ... it saves time trying to get through to the surgery on the telephone, it guarantees call back so we can be seen (or heard) more quickly, and it saves travelling. It certainly saves catching any bugs that might be lurking in a crowded waiting room. The eConsult works quite well for the time being but it can be a bit cumbersome. It may be eventually be replaced by an easier and more user friendly app.

The surgery's remarkably successful Covid vaccination program has been an eye opener for many of us. They have kept us in touch on a weekly basis. We are truly seeing how fortunate we are to have such a cheerful team helping us at The Grove Medical Practice.

Joan Cooper Patient, The Grove Medical Centre

## **Students review online services**

Even before the impact of the COVID-19 lockdown, GP surgeries across the UK were moving towards remote-online patient treatment programmes – COVID simply fast-forwarded the process.

Sixth form Sherborne Girls school and Grove PPG members Arabella and Emily are undertaking a review of eConsult and NHS-Online to interrogate the systems to determine efficacy and patient benefits. The outcome of their work will be submitted to NHS Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group as part of their countywide review of patient online services.



Opening Times

Monday	08:00 - 18:30
Tuesday	08:00 - 18:30
Wednesday	08:00 - 18:30
Thursday	08:00 - 18:30
Friday	08:00 - 18:30
Weekend	closed

**Ways to contact us:**

You can book an appointment by:

Calling the practice to speak to a Patient Services Adviser between 08:00 and 18:30 Monday to Friday.

Online booking is available for routine appointments with your GP using the new NHS App or your current online login. If you don't have a login or have forgotten your login details, then please speak to the patient services team.

Using the 'e-Consult' service for advice, administration queries or to have an online conversation with your GP.

**If you need to contact a doctor outside these hours then you should ring the Out of Hours Service on 111, unless it is a medical emergency then dial 999.**

Dispensary open for prescription collections between 08:30 - 18:30. If you want to order repeat medication by telephone please ONLY call between 08:30 - 12:00 daily.

## *The Practice Team*

Dr Aimee Barnes

Dr Sally Dangerfield

Dr Charlie Middle

Dr Nick Berry

Dr Ruth Lawes

Dr Matt Phelan

Dr Rob Childs (Senior Partner)

Dr Liz Long

Dr Katie Thomas

Mrs Alex Kimber (Managing Partner)

## *Know your General Practitioners*



**Dr Liz Long**

**Dr Long** has been a GP since 1995, and a Partner since 2006. Her specialist areas are Contraception, Womens Health, Orthopaedics and Cardiology.

**Dr Thomas** is an experienced GP who has been a partner since October 2016.

Her medical interests include in particular chronic disease management and paediatrics. She is the Senior Medical Officer for Sherborne Girls School.



**Dr Katie Thomas**

## *“And now for some good news.....Dr Aimee Barnes.”*

The Coronavirus pandemic has brought a lot of sadness, but for my husband and I it also brought the joy of the arrival of our son, Arthur.

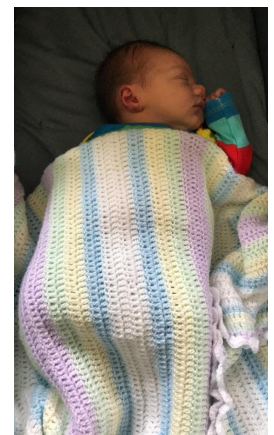
Having a baby amidst the pandemic has been quite a unique experience. Although sadly missing out on face to face interactions that a new baby would usually bring, technology has filled some of this gap.

Video calls have played a big part - Arthur's first time meeting the family was via video call, and the subsequent months of video calls have provided endless hours of entertainment.

Baby groups all too went virtual. Although perhaps not quite as fun as in person, these have enabled Arthur to meet and interact with other babies.

Masks are now something of the norm for babies born in the pandemic to see - although if anything like Arthur they are an object of fascination ripe for pulling at!

Now back at work at The Grove it is lovely to be back as part of this great team consulting patients again. Arthur is excited to meet all at The Grove as well as his extended family in person once rules allow.



## *Your Patient Participation Group (PPG)*

Interested in finding out how your GP practice works and about the health services it delivers? Your practice Patient Participation Group (PPG) could be for you. See: <https://www.dorsetccg.nhs.uk/involve/ppg>