



January, February & March Edition



**Newbury Street Practice
Patient Participation
Group**

JOINT NEWSLETTER Number 1 2026

**Church Street Practice
Patient Participation
Group**



Dear All,
Belated New Year greetings to all of you after, what we hope was, an enjoyable festive season. If, like many families, you had a surfeit of edible Christmas treats, Mandie Mitchell, our PCN Social Prescriber, would be delighted to receive donations to the Food Bank Boxes located in front of both Church Street's and Newbury Street's Reception areas.

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Andrew Lewcock
Newbury Street PPG

Best wishes,

Annie Dee
Church Street PPG

In our last newsletter we asked you to let us know what you would like us to cover and one of the recurring themes is the time taken getting an appointment to see the doctor and the process involved so we hope the following information will help. Whilst this attempts to provide an overview please speak to your practice for specific queries.

IT'S YOUR PRACTICE – A PATIENT'S GUIDE

Step 1 – Requesting an appointment by phone, online or in person:

- When you phone, if your call is not answered immediately, you will be told where you are in the queue and given the option for a call back. If you choose this option, your place in the queue is held and when it is reached the surgery will automatically call you ***(that's why it is so important to make sure your contact details are up to date and you have your phone near you!)***
- When you get in touch, a Patient Advisor will ask what you need help with. ***(Please be assured all information is treated in confidence and is necessary to inform the correct course of action.)***
- The information you provide will enable the advisor to direct you to most suitable doctor, nurse or health professional to help you.

Step 2 – Accurx Total Triage. You will need to complete the Total Triage Form detailing your request. This can be done via the website link, the NHS App, over the phone or in person. If you need help Patient Advisors will be more than happy to complete the form for you - either over the phone or in person at the surgery.

Your request will be read by a member of the team within 1-2 working days (08:00 - 18:30.) A GP works alongside the reception teams to ensure all requests are triaged appropriately and passed to the correct team. Whichever way you choose to contact the surgeries you may be offered a consultation: by phone / face to face at the surgery / on a video call / by text or email

Appointments by phone, video call or by text or email can be more flexible and often means you get help sooner.

You can attach a photo of a spot, skin marks or similar to your medical request in Total Triage. Under the Medical request, if you select the 'Attach a file' option, you will need to accept the terms by selecting 'Continue' to be able to attach a photo or file.

If you need more urgent help, call your GP practice.

**If the surgery is closed, visit NHS 111 online or call 111
In an emergency call 999**

The NHS 111 service offers an out of hours GP service (including weekends), to help if you feel ill at a time you cannot contact the GP surgeries. You can either phone 111 or fill in a 111 online form, both of which get you into the 111 system, and they will respond with a call back (*this may take a few hours, so it is not the service to use if you need an ambulance*)

During the 111 phone call you will be asked for identity details and then your symptoms. The call handler can then arrange further medical treatment for you at facilities which are open; such as local hospitals (e.g. Abingdon out-patients) or from the Central Oxford Hospitals. If the call handler believes your symptoms to be serious they can also call an ambulance.

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**Did you know** .... our GPs' work in caring for us, as their patients, includes a lot more than 'Face to Face' or Telephone/Video appointments - much of which is 'behind the scenes'. Whilst you may wonder why our GPs are not immediately available it's not because they're not working in their professional capacity.

In addition to patient appointments, GPs have to undertake administrative work for preparing prescriptions, reviewing patients' test results, undertaking medication reviews for those patients on long term medication as well as completing hospital referral forms – all of this takes a considerable amount of time.



Undertaking Care Home visits, other home visits when required and ongoing professional training also takes a significant amount of time away from the surgery. Several of our GPs also have clinics at some of the Oxfordshire hospitals. Practice monitoring by CCG, PCN and the CQC takes up time, as well as just the basic task of running the

practice, with staff recruitment, supervision, vaccine clinics .... to name but a few.

It is important for you to be assured that, as part of the 'continuity of care' in place, just because your GP may not be available a 'buddy' cover system operates so another doctor from the practice, will oversee your medical needs so no one's health care needs are compromised.

**AI Scribing Tool** - When you do get to see or speak to your GP both Practices use an advanced digital scribing tool designed to support GPs during consultations. This offers several key benefits .... namely;

### **Accurate and Reliable Documentation**

- It captures all discussions during the consultation with a high level of accuracy, ensuring nothing important is missed. This helps GPs focus on patient care rather than note-taking.

### **Supports Diverse Patients**

- The scribing tool can recognise and interpret most accents and works effectively with patients whose first language is not English. This makes it inclusive and adaptable for a wide range of patient demographics.

### **Transparency for Patients**

- Patients will see the notes documented from their consultation. These notes are always reviewed and checked by the GP before being finalised, ensuring accuracy and clinical safety.

As of October 1st 2025, GP practices are contractually required to keep their online systems open during core hours (8:00 am to 6:30 pm, Monday to Friday) for non-urgent appointment requests, medication queries, and administrative requests. However, please note that, in the interests of safety, a daily cap will be imposed once a safe working capacity has been reached.

**Missed appointments.** Whilst we understand it can be frustrating having to wait for appointments - with over 36,000 patients currently registered at the Health Centre it is not really surprising that demand is high. However; what is surprising and even more frustrating, is the number of patients who miss appointments with no notification – they just don't turn up! The number of 'Did Not Attends' (DNAs) as these are known, results in wasted time for GPs and staff who prepare for each appointment in advance and the end result of not attending is longer waits for other patients.

There may be a genuine reason for non-attendance but if you can't attend;

- Please let the surgery know as soon as possible — even short notice helps.
- Cancel online via the website or the NHS App — it's fast and easy.
- Set reminders on your phone or calendar so you don't forget.

Much has been made of the NHS's ten-year plan and both practices are proactively implementing many of the proposals such as Digital Transformation, Shifting Care to the Community and Prioritising Prevention. While the national picture is challenging, both practices and the PCN are committed to innovation and collaboration to provide a sustainable, high-quality service for the Wantage and District community. A strong theme of the UK Government's recently published 10-year plan is Neighbourhood working including integrated neighbourhood teams - INTs. It's very early days yet but the initial plans are for Dr Mackenzie (CS) and Dr Ladd (NS) to lead into the new INT.

Since the spring, both practices have been working together to host a weekly meeting with our Integrated Neighbourhood Team (INT).

These meetings focus on delivering an individual, patient-centred approach across health and social care services.

The **Integrated Neighbourhood Team** brings together a wide range of expertise, including:

- A geriatrician (specialist in older age care)
- Local social services (social worker and Wantage area lead)
- Practice-based staff such as Frailty Practitioners, Care Coordinators, and GPs

So far, more than 120 patients with complex medical needs or frailty concerns have been discussed, with tailored actions agreed to support their health and wellbeing. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive — both from professionals attending the meetings as well as from patients who have experienced improved care as a result.

Both practices are committed to continuing this collaborative approach into 2026, ensuring that those in our community with the greatest needs receive the best possible support.

### **Flu and Covid Vaccination**

While national uptake has been declining in recent years, we're proud of the strong results achieved locally. There has been some confusion with regard to who can receive the vaccinations. This is decided by the government – not the practice. If you are eligible you will be contacted. Please could we encourage you if you are in the 18-65 age group with clinical vulnerabilities to get vaccines when invited to do so. Your vulnerability could spread infection to close family/elderly relatives.

*(If you are not eligible private Flu vaccinations are available from local pharmacies at a cost.)* Looking ahead, we expect to run a Spring Covid Vaccine Campaign in March/April 2026. **Details will be shared through the practices' usual channels closer to the time.**

**Are you a Carer?** Carers Oxfordshire is a free service that offers information, advice and support to **unpaid adult carers** of someone living in Oxfordshire. All adult unpaid carers aged 18 years and above, whose “cared for” lives in Oxfordshire, are able to request a Carer Assessment in order to determine eligible needs and gain an understanding about the best ways to support those needs. This may include a Direct Payment outcome of up to £300 but this is not guaranteed.

A tangible benefit is a **Carers ID** issued by Carers Oxfordshire. A Carers ID card is a photo ID card which has a unique QR code which provides emergency contact information, support information and your GP surgery number in case of an emergency, so the person you are caring for can be supported, if you, yourself are indisposed.

Email: [carersinfo@carersoxfordshire.org.uk](mailto:carersinfo@carersoxfordshire.org.uk)

CarersLine: 01235 424715 10 am–4 pm Monday to Friday. A voicemail operates outside these hours. You can also apply on line via the web site <https://www.carersoxfordshire.org.uk/carers-assessments/>

## **Driving Assessments**

There has been much media coverage with regard to ‘older’ drivers. One of our PPG members has had personal experience of this organisation and shared this with us – we felt it may be of benefit to others.

*‘A few years ago, when my husband was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s he wanted to continue driving, but I was concerned as he was no longer good at reading the road. Luckily his consultant recommended a driving assessment at the Regional Driving Assessment Centre in Witney Home - RDAC. A driving assessment is different from a driving test which determines if someone can obtain a driver’s license, an assessment provides an honest opinion on a person’s driving ability, often focusing on those who may have health concerns or who have not driven for some time. The RDAC is a charity providing assessments and advice for people with medical conditions or disabilities to help them regain or maintain their independence. They were most kind and helpful to both my husband and me, but he was not able to continue driving and I think this helped him to understand why.*

***(It is important to realise that if someone is incapable of driving safely their insurance would be invalid.)’***

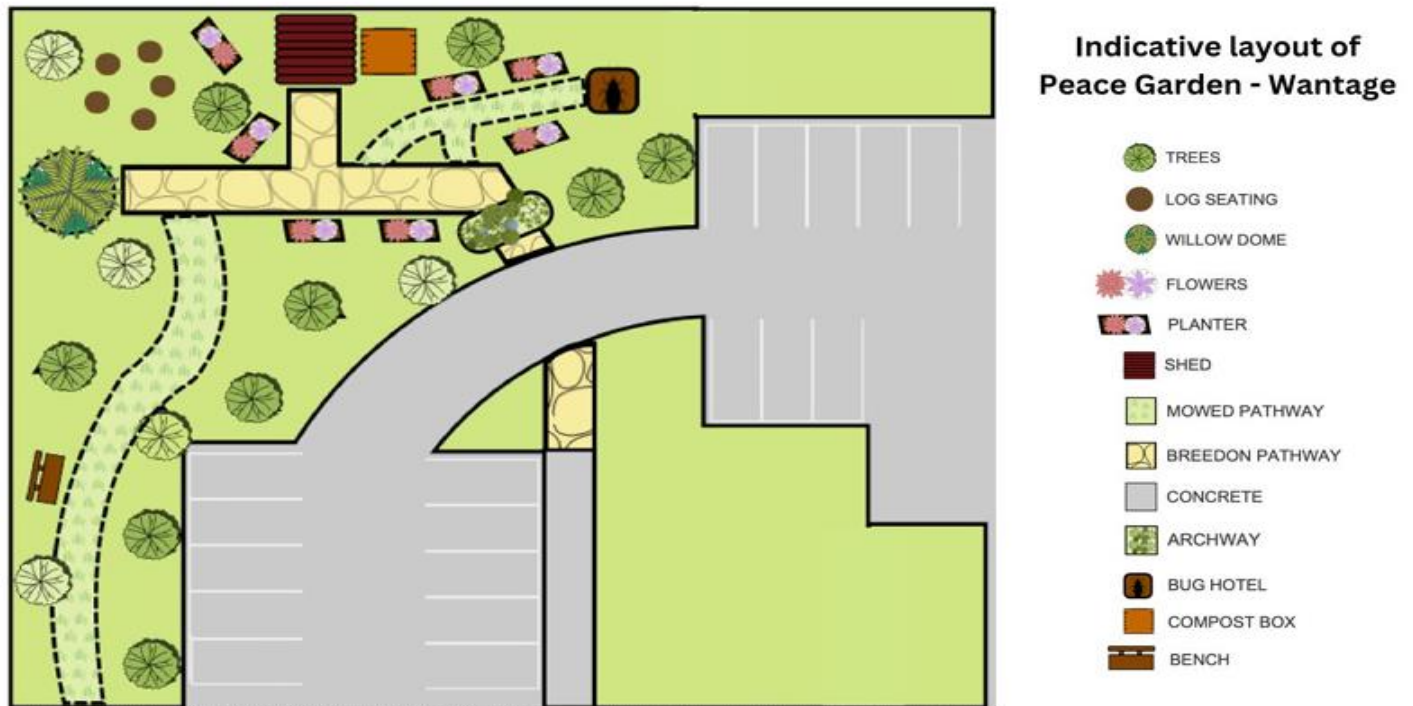
(Name provided). For further details contact [www.rdac.co.uk](http://www.rdac.co.uk)



## Health Centre Site Update.

Hopefully by the time you read this newsletter the improved lighting at the front of the Health Centre will have been completed. We are also hoping that work will have been started on the 'Peace Garden' that has been designed with Assura who are sponsoring it. It will be in the corner behind the surgery and will provide a quiet contemplative space for patients and staff.

We would also like to take this opportunity to welcome Paul Miles as the newly appointed Newbury Street practice manager.



## Newbury Street Sad News

It is with deep sadness that we share the news of the premature passing of Julie Mabberly who, until her recent illness, was the Chair of our Patient Participation Group at Newbury Street Practice. Julie was a much-valued member of our PPG, whose dedication and organisation helped run a smooth and efficient PPG for several years. Her pragmatic common-sense approach was very welcome by the Practice and helped the team understand what really mattered to our patients and how to address any concerns raised. Our thoughts are with her husband, Geoff, at this sad time. We are grateful for the rest of the PPG for continuing Julie's work with the Practice, and especially to Sandie Helm for taking over the role as Chair.

Church Street PPG would like to add our condolences – Julie was the guiding light and inspiration for the joint Health and Well Being event held at The Beacon – she will be sadly missed.

## Useful Contacts

**Oxfordshire Advice Navigator** This is a free online tool helping you access information and local support about debts, benefits and entitlements <https://oxfordshireadvisenavigator.org.uk/>

**Power Cuts.** Although we have covered this topic before, we felt with the sometimes extreme winter weather we have been experiencing a reminder might be timely. Regardless of which company you buy your electricity from, Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks run the local electricity distribution network.

A “priority service” may be available for those customers on their Register for Priority Service. Customers are eligible for SSEN's FREE Priority Services Registration if they are:

*Deaf or hard of hearing*

*Have a disability*

*Live with children under five*

*Are blind or partially sighted*

*Have a chronic illness*

*Use medical equipment/aid reliant on electricity*

*Are over 60*

*Are categorised at 'high risk' of severe illness.*

You can phone the emergency number 105 to report a specific power outage, and the operator can add you to the register there and then.

For registration under normal circumstances call 0800 294 3259

<https://www.ssen.co.uk/power-cuts-emergencies/priority-services/>

**Vale Community Impact** 01235 765 348 [www.vci.org.uk](http://www.vci.org.uk)

16 Market Place, Wantage OX12 8AE VCI offers a variety of essential services such as lifts, companionship, etc.

### Local Pharmacies

Boots 50-51 Market Pl, Wantage OX12 8AW .

Tel: 01235 765227

Bretts Pharmacy 11-12 Millbrook Square Grove  
OX12 7JZ Tel: 01235 763941

Cleggs Pharmacy 3, Kings Walk, Wantage,  
OX12 9AJ, Tel: 01235 763046

Allied Pharmacy New Health Centre Mably Way.  
OX12 9BN. Tel: 01235 763028

