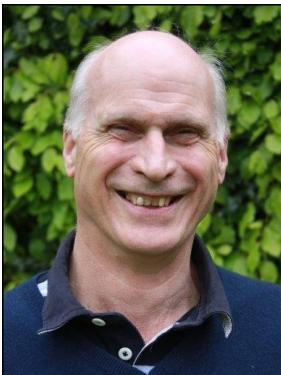


PARTNERSHIP FOR HEALTH



FRIENDS OF DAVENPORT HOUSE

BULLETIN NO 20 – DECEMBER 2021



We are all aware of how challenging it has been to meet the needs of patients during the pandemic. This has not been helped by the continuing uncertainty over when the pandemic will end and not knowing exactly what the phrase 'learning to live with the virus' means for each of us.

Over recent months, the trustees have discussed with the Practice the impact of the pandemic on the functioning of the Surgery, specifically the matter of face-to-face consultations (see below). More generally, we agreed that the most useful role the Trust can play in present circumstances is to improve communication in all its forms between the Practice, its patients and the Trust, and this is where the Trust will concentrate its efforts over the winter period.

A key aspect of this will be to use the Bulletin to its fullest extent in keeping everyone up to date with short pieces of news, beginning here. We also agreed to help both Practice and patients by contributing £8,000 from our funds to assist with the upgrading of the Surgery telephone system (see below) as we knew this would be appreciated by everyone.

Richard Munton—Chairman of the Friends of Davenport House

Face to Face Appointments

I know many of you may have concerns around getting face to face appointments, which has been highlighted in the media and by the Health Secretary over a number of months. Here at Davenport House, we have strived to ensure that we see as many of our patients face to face as we safely can, and this has been the same throughout the pandemic.

Since the pandemic started, we have asked all patients to make a telephone appointment first so that the clinician can assess the problem. If a face to face appointment is needed, one is then made accordingly. An open door policy cannot be put in place for now, as we must continue to protect our vulnerable patients while rates of Covid are still high in the area. The emergence of the new variant, Omicron, further supports the need to be cautious.



In an average week, around 42% of our GP and nurse appointments are done face to face. As many of you will know, a variety of nurse appointments are longer than the standard 10 minute time slot, so the amount of time spent on face to face appointments is far higher than just the number of appointments.

In October, we offered 690 GP and minor illness nurse face to face appointments at Davenport House Surgery. This does not include any face to face appointments done by our other nurses or other staff such as the Physician's Associate and the physiotherapists, any home visits, care home visits, and flu or Covid vaccinations. Of those, 6% of patients did not turn up to their appointment. That equates to around 2 appointments each working day that could have gone to another patient, but end up being wasted.

We continue to review our policies and procedures in line with Government guidance and the changing face of the pandemic and we will keep you updated as best we can when we are able to change things.

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Immunisations

As part of the Harpenden health PCN, we have now run 6 flu clinics at the Harpenden Halls, and alongside our colleagues in the pharmacies we have vaccinated over 90% of our Davenport patients who are over 65 and more than 70% of our vulnerable 18-64 year olds. Thank you to all those of you who turned out at the Halls and kept the GPs and nurses busy.

Phones

We thank the Friends for their recent significant financial contribution that has allowed us to improve our phone lines.

After much back and forth with our telephone provider it was determined that our main issue with the quality of the telephone calls, (causing patients to hear us like we were under water and the lines to abruptly cut out at times) was due to there being such a high volume of calls such that our system was unable to cope. The money has been spent on upgrading the phone lines so that this doesn't happen anymore. There have been a few teething issues, but, on the whole the quality of the phone lines has massively improved.

A portion of the money was also used to increase the number of phone lines that we can use at any one time, as now most clinicians are at least part-telephone based each day. As a result we did not have enough lines and this was putting more strain on the system causing the call quality to reduce further. The 5 extra lines have made it much easier, particularly on Monday mornings which is by far our busiest time.

Lindsey Wright- Operations Practice Manager

STOP PRESS

John Harris—Editor

Richard Munton our Chairman will be standing down at the AGM in March 2022 after completing 6 years of a 3 year term according to the constitution. At that time he will be succeeded by Simon Speirs, a current trustee, who is bringing a lot of experience to the Friends particularly of modern communications channels. A full profile of Simon will be provided in a subsequent bulletin.

Telephone Calls to the Surgery

My recent experience of telephoning the Surgery was very much improved. There were just two calls in front of me and I was connected to a very helpful receptionist fairly quickly. She provided me with a facility to send photographs of the condition by text and a GP telephoned me for a consultation within an hour. A prescription was provided there and then, which was delivered by Springfield Pharmacy later that day. So in my case the current system worked very efficiently for a non threatening health condition.

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