

Thaxted Surgery – Patient Newsletter

Spring 2018

Planning Permission Granted for new extension

We are thrilled that planning permission has now been granted for our new extension. We really feel that this will secure the future of GP services in the heart of Thaxted for the next generation at least. Thank you to our Patient Participation Group (PPG) and other patients whose comments and input were material in helping us achieve a design that works within a constrained situation, and whose support through the planning process was invaluable.

We remain sensitive to the impact on our neighbours and parking. In particular, we would like to reassure Thaxted residents that the extension is first and foremost to accommodate the patients and services we already offer, with only relatively modest growth predicted in patient numbers and staff numbers, in line with the growth of Thaxted itself.

We plan that building work will commence this summer, with completion next spring.

We are currently developing phasing plans so that we can continue to see our patients safely while the work is in progress. These will be displayed in the surgery as they develop, so please let us have your thoughts and ideas.

Easter Fund Raiser – Guess the number of Eggs in the jar

Although NHS England is providing a grant for the building work in the new extension, the practice has to fund furnishings and medical equipment using the funding streams that provide for day to day services. In order to help us minimise any potential impact on those day to day services, our PPG is ramping up its fund raising activities.

The PPG has set up a formal fund raising committee, with a chair, treasurer and secretary, and a separate bank account for donations and proceeds from fund raising. If you would like to make a donation, or perhaps sponsor a piece of equipment in memory, you can contact the PPG fund raising group via the practice manager.

Our Christmas raffle raised just over £1000 which will go towards equipping the extension. Our thanks to our fund raisers, to patients who kindly donated prizes and bought tickets and to the local businesses who supported us this year, including Priors Hall Farm, White Hart Wimbish, MannaVida, Helen Jastrow (reflexologist), the Great and Little Sampford WI, and Thaxted Flower Club.

For Easter, the PPG are organising “Guess the number of Eggs.” The jar will be in the surgery from March 19th onwards with £1 per guess.

Visiting Paramedic

Starting in February 2018, Thaxted surgery teamed with the Saffron Walden surgeries, Newport and Steeple Bumpstead to employ a visiting paramedic, Vicky, for a one year pilot project. Vicky can visit patients who are acutely unwell across the North Uttlesford area and often gets there earlier in the day than a GP could. Housebound patients with an acute issue should continue to call the surgery to request a visit. The GPs will then brief Vicky if it is appropriate for her to go. Vicky will report back to your GP, who remains fully in the loop.

This is a pilot project that will be extended if we can demonstrate that it is successful, so please let us have your feedback.

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In order to make it work effectively, we do ask that patients who think they might need a visit call us as early as possible in the day – and certainly before 10am.

Physiotherapy Assessments within the Practice

The practice has been piloting physiotherapist assessments in the surgery since December 2017. Early indications are extremely positive. There are 20 minute appointments for assessment (not treatment) with our physiotherapist, Amanda Adams. Amanda can provide advice and exercises, prescribe pain killers if appropriate, and refer for investigations (X-ray/ultrasound/ blood tests/MRI/Nerve conduction), for physio treatment or to an orthopaedic consultant if appropriate. Appointments can be booked directly through reception at the surgery – but please book see a doctor first if there are any possible underlying medical issues such as rheumatoid arthritis.

Frailty prevention extended reviews

For patients over 75 who may be beginning to experience the first signs of frailty, the practice now offers extended review appointments with Health Care Assistant followed by GP. The appointments are an opportunity to review a range of factors including:

- Mobility
- Vision and hearing
- Memory and mood
- History of falls and bone health
- Life style (smoking, alcohol, exercise)
- Social factors and Support network
- Medication

The aim is to be more proactive, anticipate issues and hold frailty at bay for longer. Please call the surgery if you would like a review.

Over the Counter Medication

West Essex NHS is introducing a new policy to limit prescribing of medicines which are available over-the-counter for patients with minor and/or self-limiting conditions.

This does not include patients with diagnosed long-term conditions, where a treatment is needed on a long-term basis e.g. paracetamol for osteoarthritis. Similarly, clinicians will also prescribe where there are licensing restrictions on the over-the counter sale of a medicine, such as limitations on use in pregnancy or the use of steroid creams on the face.

We are preparing to implement this policy in Thaxted surgery over the next few months. Further details can be found on the West Essex Website, <https://westessexccg.nhs.uk/your-health/medicines-optimisation/general-prescribing-guidance/over-the-counter-medication-otc>

Feedback, Issues and Views

Thaxted Surgery always welcomes your feedback and views. You can do this via a Friends and Family form at reception, contacting the practice manager or a member of the Patient Participation Group – details on the PPG noticeboard in the waiting room.