

## Thaxted Surgery – Patient Newsletter

Spring 2017

### ***Farewell to Dr Howlett,***

Dr Howlett retired at the end of April 2017, after nearly 30 years of service at Thaxted surgery. There is a tribute book for him at reception. Please pop in and write a few words before his leaving party in early June.

Dr Howlett's regular patients will be assigned to a new GP. If you have a particular preference please let us know.

### ***... and welcome to Drs Reid and Aylett***

Dr Laura Reid has joined the team in May, and Dr Lizzie Aylett is joining in June. Both Drs Reid and Aylett are very experienced GPs. Dr Reid has an interest in family planning, contraceptive implants, osteoporosis, epilepsy, mental health and teaching. Dr Aylett does minor surgery, UDIs, contraceptive implants and has a particular interest in mental health and research.

### ***Fund Raising and Summer Raffle***

Our Patient Participation Group actively raises money for innovative and state of the art medical equipment and facilities that are not normally provided within a GP service. Following on from the success of their Christmas raffle, they will be holding a summer raffle to raise funds for an electric medical couch. Donations of prizes would be very much appreciated.

Our thanks to fund raisers, patients who kindly donated prizes or cash, and to those who bought tickets. Thank you also to the local businesses who supported us, including Thaxted Pharmacy, Parrishes, Lowes, Ambers Home Boarding, Ladles and Jellyspoons, Saracens Garage, Guildhall Stalls, Wayletts, The Green Man, Thaxted B&B, Priors Hall, Yardley's Charity, and the Bridgefoot Trust.

### ***Usual GP***

All patients at Thaxted Surgery has a named GP as "usual GP". Your "usual GP" has overall oversight of your care, and though you may see other doctors for urgent needs, you should aim to see your usual doctor when pre-booking appointments. Please ask who your "usual GP" is, and let us know if you want to change.

### ***Saturday and Evening Appointments at Saffron Walden Community Hospital***

After a successful pilot, Saturday and Weekend GP and Nurse appointments continue to be available at Saffron Walden Community Hospital and Dunmow Clinic. These are routine appointments booked through reception at Thaxted Surgery.

The doctor will have access to your medical records (with your consent), and will inform Thaxted surgery of the outcome of the appointment.

### ***National Patient Survey Results***

In the 2016 National Patient Survey, Thaxted Surgery was rated 1<sup>st</sup> in West Essex for patient satisfaction, and in the top 5% of surgeries nationally. We are proud of this record, and always looking for improvement. Please give us feedback.

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### ***Charged Work***

Thaxted Surgery provides a number of services that are not covered by our NHS contract. For example:

- sickness certificates and “to whom it may concern” letters for insurance, schools, and other agencies
- reports for health clubs to certify that patients are fit to exercise, and to police verifying suitability for gun licences
- medicals for insurance, HGV licences, adoption or fostering
- Some travel vaccinations
- Access to medical records

Patients are sometimes surprised to find that we charge for these services. However, because they are not covered by the NHS, we need to cover staff costs, medical consumables, office expenses and overheads. If we do not charge fees, we are effectively putting more pressure on our day to day NHS practice.

Our fees are aligned with BMA guidance. <http://bma.org.uk/practical-support-at-work/pay-fees-allowances/fees>. Current charge sheet can be found on our website and in the surgery.

### ***Minor Injury Walk-ins***

Several patients have asked for clarification about our service for walk-in minor injuries.

GP surgeries are not generally required to offer a walk-in service for minor injuries. However, Thaxted is rural and isolated, so Thaxted Surgery has always provided at least a limited service.

We will get a clinician to see and triage a walk-in minor injury. However, that clinician may advise the patient to either attend A&E, go to the Herts and Essex minor injury unit, or come back to be seen at the surgery at a later time. This decision is made by the clinician (not by reception staff), based on a combination of medical factors, including safety, urgency, complexity, and equipment needed, but also on impact on other patients who may be waiting for their booked appointment.

Herts & Essex hospital, Bishop Stortford, run a walk-in minor injuries clinic with Xray facilities, 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday. A good alternative to A&E. 01279 655191.

### ***At risk of diabetes***

We are currently running a new pilot programme to identify and call in patients who may be at risk of developing diabetes. This will involve a blood sugar test, identification of risk factors, and advice on risk reduction.

There is some evidence that this sort of approach can reduce the numbers of people who progress to have diabetes. If you are involved in this, we welcome your feedback.