



# Newsletter Autumn 2021

## ARE WE BACK?? - WE HAVE NEVER BEEN AWAY!

Firstly, and foremost, the Patient Participation Group, on behalf of all patients, must express grateful thanks and admiration to all NHS workers who have worked so hard and for so many long hours during the 2020/21 Covid pandemic. We salute you!



Now, on behalf of the Practice, the PPG are delighted to be back to update you on all the happenings, coming and goings and changes that have taken place over the past eighteen months. We have also included articles which were prepared for the Spring 2020 edition which we hope you will still find useful and informative.

So much has happened during the past year and we will cover these in the following pages but to summarise:

- We have a new website called "Footfall"
- We have a new, updated and very efficient telephone system
- We have a number of new staff at both surgeries
- We have new rooms at both Gilbert House and Linden House

But, more importantly, we have a dedicated team of Practitioners who are working to provide the best and most efficient GP service for all 20,000 plus patients.

Keep reading.....

## PRACTICE COMINGS AND GOINGS

Over the past year, the Practice has seen a number of staff changes. There have been many reasons for this of course but, without doubt, sadly the effects of Covid-19 on everyone has much to blame. We are now able to bring you up-to-date information (at the time of writing) as to staff waiting to welcome you to the surgeries:

### GP Staff At Linden House

Dr Lynne Davies      Dr Alison MacLeod      Dr James Steinhardt

Dr Mark Jones      Dr Martina Hagley      Dr Pippa Williams

Dr Puja Chudasama      Dr Sharon Williams      Dr Aalia Khan

Dr Faiza Latif is a visiting Registrar

Dr Claire Richards is a visiting Registrar

Tristan Pearce is a Paramedic Practitioner

Magda Reyska - Operational Manager joining the team in November

Alex Davis - Patient Services Manager

### GP Staff At Gilbert House

Dr Alison Anderson is taking a sabbatical and will return in the New Year

Dr Joanna Sutherby is no longer working at Gilbert House

Dr Alison Anderson      Dr Alex Watson      Dr Dalia Yacob

Dr Diana Spirache      Dr Honeysha Patel      Dr Roma Patel

Dr Kalpana Navaratnasah

Dr Lakshmi Rajah      Dr Nash Chitambara      Dr Natalie Whitehead

Dr Amel Imam, Dr Saleh Jawad and Dr Andrew Shafik are visiting Registrars

On the clerical side, Elaine Smith has replaced Justine Wakeford as Patient Services Manager

Annemarie Gerstenberger is the new Operational Manager

## PRIMARY CARE NETWORK - GOOD NEWS FOR ALL PATIENTS

**Leatherhead Primary Care Network (PCN)** is a collaboration of six local GP Practices representing 64,000 patients in and around the Leatherhead area

Ashlea Medical Practice (Gilbert House and LindenHouse),  
The Molebridge Practice,  
Eastwick Park Medical Practice,  
Fairfield Medical Centre,  
Oxshott Medical Practice  
Cobham Health Centre

Our Clinical Director is Dr Mark Jones who works at Linden House Surgery. The PCN collaborates with other partners in health and social care to design and deliver improved services for patients. It is not a new NHS structure but a delivery vehicle for the NHS Long Term Plan to boost out-of-hospital care and focus on the local population and its needs, with digital enablement.

Being part of a PCN means that our patients are already benefitting from our highly successful COVID-19 vaccination programme and the evening and weekend GP Hub and nurse appointment services. We hope to further improve our patients' care in the future by focusing on early cancer diagnoses and structured medication reviews to ensure that patient safety remains a priority.

Physiotherapy and clinical pharmacists in GP Practices are additional roles which we have started to roll out in Practices locally. Social prescribing and the GP integrated mental health service are also new initiatives that have started in the last year for patients and we have received positive feedback about these. The PCN will seek to work in partnership with our PPGs so watch this space for further events which are being planned to ensure that patients continue to receive high quality care.'

Report by Dr Aalia Khan Linden House

## THE COVID PANDEMIC AND BEYOND

We are all too familiar with the effects of the Covid pandemic and it will be a talking point for some time to come. No-one was immune - the Practice staff included which meant not only a severe reduction in numbers but many, although isolated were working from home. Things have been learned and we must now concentrate on looking forward to provide the best possible care we can to our patients at the same time adapting to the new rules and regulations which seem to be introduced at regular - and short - notice. Going forward, we have taken and are taking, continual steps to improve our service and general communication to all patients and one first step is via our Practice Newsletter! The Practice now also have a Facebook page, as does the AMP Patient Participation Group.

### The New Website - Footfall

The website was planned for introduction in late 2020 but due to the pandemic, the system was brought forward some months earlier. This meant learning curves for everyone - GP's, administrative staff and importantly, patients! It was not without hiccups and frustration but hopefully, now patients will appreciate the difference it has made to updated information on Covid and general health enquiries, prescription requests, email enquiries, appointments and much more.

The Practice's new website, Footfall, is an NHS programme launched across the country to all GP Practices and is, as such, not specific to the AshLea Medical Practice.

This has opened up a new way of making appointments and contacting the surgery and is proving both popular and helpful. We do know, however, that some still find it difficult to make contact via this system and for those with internet facilities, here is an easy explanation as to how it works!

1. Log into : [www.ashlea.nhs.uk](http://www.ashlea.nhs.uk)
2. Click: Gilbert House or Linden House (depending on your surgery)
3. Click: Reception and Enquiries
4. You will find many forms in this section to manage your enquiry
5. The Practice will contact you, usually within four hours.

For those patients without internet facilities, please contact your surgery by telephone and hold until a receptionist answers your call or request a call back.

### New Telephone System

Like the new website, our new telephone system has been purchased by our

PCN (Primary Care Network) and went "live" in early August. Again, there were the initial teething problems and staff had to completely master a new way of working. One of the main points, as far as patients are concerned, is that you no longer have to keep ringing/re-dial/ringing at the busiest times of the morning. There is a call-back facility and if you do not want to wait for an answer, press the button and your call will be returned - without losing your place in the queue - when staff are able to answer. The majority of benefits are for staff use but this translates into an improvement in service for you, the patient, without actually being aware of how it happened!

### Additional Space

The pandemic highlighted the need for extra space - not only to see patients but to cater for the increase in administrative roles. In the past few weeks, we have not only created an extra room at Linden House but those visiting Gilbert House will notice that the waiting room is now half its size! Two new rooms have been created, one of which will be used for Health Care Assessments and the other for Management use.

### Face to Face appointments

Contrary to reports seen in the press, throughout the pandemic we did conduct face-to-face appointments albeit at a reduced level. Your request to see your doctor will firstly be triaged by a GP and based on clinical information, the patient will be given a date/time to attend the surgery or appropriate advice, or action, without the need for a face-to-face appointment.

### Covid Vaccinations and Boosters

No-one can deny that the NHS conducted a first-class vaccination programme to ensure that we are given the best possible protection against serious ill-health, or death, as a result of Covid-19 and by the NHS and GP HUB taking overall control, the GP's were able to concentrate on their day-to-day operation. The Covid booster vaccination is now also being organised by the NHS and the GP HUB and those eligible will be invited to have a third vaccination six months after their second one. Please await your invitation - it will be coming your way at the right time.

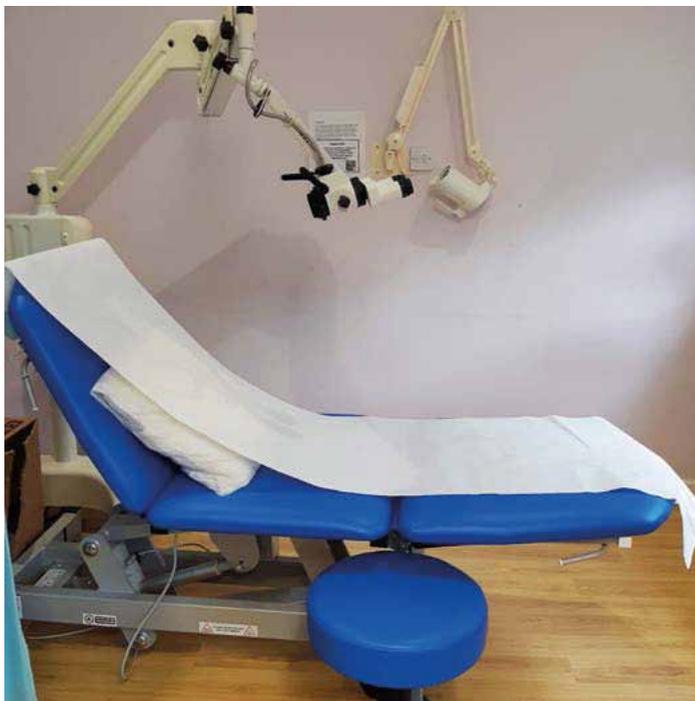
### Annual Flu Vaccinations

At the time of writing, the Practice has held successful flu vaccination clinics at both surgeries and after just two Saturday sessions, over 1500 patients have received protection for the coming flu season. Thank you to all staff who worked so hard on the two Saturdays to make it happen! At the time of writing, two more are scheduled during October.

## FRIENDS OF THE ASHLEA MEDICAL PRACTICE

### WHAT AN ACHIEVEMENT!!

Due to the Covid pandemic, our Spring 2020 newsletter was unable to go ahead and hence our delay in telling you all of the improvements achieved thanks to our patients and the Thomas Flack Grant.



The Trustees of the Friends of the AshLea Medical Practice wish to sincerely thank patients and the Thomas Flack Grant, managed by Mole Valley District Council, for enabling us to reach our target to fully equip a second clinic for vital ENT treatment within the community.

WHAT AN ACHIEVEMENT - THANK YOU SO MUCH!



Registered Charity 1178

When we launched the Charity back in May 2018, we didn't for one minute think we could achieve as much as we have and it is with sincere and grateful thanks to our patients and the Thomas Flack Trust Fund (of which MVDC is Trustee) that we have been able to fully furnish a second room for ENT treatment within the local community. This has resulted in reduced waiting times, convenient appointments, easy one level access and parking at Gilbert House Surgery.

Prior to Covid-19, in addition to the above new micro-suction microscope, a hydraulic couch and adjustable stool, we have provided, for the benefit of our patients, the following equipment:

- 4 padded taller waiting rooms chairs - for patients who find it difficult to bend/sit.

- Blood pressure machine for the GH waiting room.

- A Dermatoscope - a hand-held polarised magnifying light to check skin lesions to assist with possible diagnosis of skin cancers.

- A additional 24-hour blood pressure monitor to reduce waiting lists.

- A second hydraulic couch for use in minor surgery

- Help towards building two new Practice rooms at Gilbert House. You will notice that the waiting room is somewhat smaller now!

We will continue to raise money for additional equipment and services which will be to the benefit of all patients - suggestions are always welcome!

Looking to the future, do you have fund-raising skills or just happy to help us out to raise funds to make as many improvements as we can? If so, please contact the Trustees via Elaine Smith at Gilbert House (01372 276 385) We would love to hear from you!

FRIENDS OF



Registered Charity 1178653

Charity Gift Aid Declaration – single donation

Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate

Gift Aid is reclaimed by the Charity from the tax you pay for the current tax year.  
Your address is needed to identify you as a current UK taxpayer.

In order to Gift Aid your donation, you must tick the box below:

I want to Gift Aid my donation of £\_\_\_\_\_ to:

Friends of Ashlea Medical Practice 1178653

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax in the current tax year than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

My Details

Title \_\_\_\_\_ First name or initial(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Surname \_\_\_\_\_

Home address \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please notify the charity if you:

- want to cancel this declaration
- change your name or home address
- no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains

If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HMRC to adjust your tax code.

Bank details should you prefer direct payment:

Nat West Bank: Sort Code: 60 12 36 Account No. 33206287

This has been a strange and difficult time for all of us, not least for the Doctors and Staff at both Linden House and Gilbert House. I think sometimes we have not always appreciated the difficulties our Doctors faced, and not understood that they were equally frustrated and concerned they could not provide the same service as before the coronavirus struck. Infection from Covid 19 did not bypass Practice Staff and Doctors or their families - this impacted significantly on staff availability meaning many routine needs, for example blood tests, were subject to last minute changes or even cancellations. Health and Safety instructions imposed by NHS England severely restricted the range of services the Practice could offer, particularly regarding face-to-face consultations. On some days individual Doctors conducted over 100 telephone consultations with patients so if you were one of the unlucky ones who had to wait, perhaps you can understand why.

It is not appropriate for me to get involved with any of the political arguments other than to say I cannot see there is any value to be gained by looking for someone to blame. A more positive approach would be to work together and look for ways we can help the Practice. Patients also need to feel that their concerns and worries are understood and they are being listened to.

Your PPG believes that if the communications from the Practice had been more forthcoming, explaining in more detail the issues and problems the Practice was facing, it would have helped everybody and made life easier for the Practice. Recently we have had two helpful meetings with the Practice where we have aired Patients concerns and have looked at ways in which, through your PPG, we can improve the communications between the Practice and Patients to the benefit of everybody.

Richard Garrard

If you would like to be part of helping to make a difference, please email [ashlea.ppg@talktalk.net](mailto:ashlea.ppg@talktalk.net) - we would like to hear from you!

To receive regular updates from your PPG, join our list of supportive patients by completing the form on the Practice website - [www.ashlea.nhs.uk](http://www.ashlea.nhs.uk) or email [ashlea.ppg@gmail.com](mailto:ashlea.ppg@gmail.com) and follow us on Facebook- AshLea Participation Group @ashleappg.

## PPG UPDATE

Over two years ago, the PPG asked Surrey County Council for a parking review of the bays outside the surgery at Linden House. We are pleased that there is finally a bay for blue badge holders, right outside the surgery. The adjoining three bays have been turned into restricted parking bays. On Mondays–Saturdays, between the hours of 8am–6pm, there is a 2-hour time limit. Please do make good use of the bays now we have access to them.



## ASHTEAD GOOD NEIGHBOURS

Despite a rise in the Covid infections rate during October, life is returning to some form of normality and face-to-face medical appointments of all sorts are gradually increasing. However, Ashtead residents may be struggling to find convenient transport to GP's, Hospitals etc. If you are one such person, or know of someone who is, Ashtead Good Neighbours may well be able to help. Details can be found on their website - [www.agn.uk.net](http://www.agn.uk.net) or email: [ashteadgn@gmail.com](mailto:ashteadgn@gmail.com) or call the enquiry line: 07752 665 066.

Would you be happy to join our team of volunteers? Please contact AGN to find out more. Even a few hours per month to suit you will be of great help. You can, and will, make a difference to those in need of a helping hand.

**LEATHERHEAD VOLUNTARY CAR SERVICE** - a similar scheme operates in Leatherhead but needs to be booked via your GP surgery.



We are pleased to advise that AshLea Medical Practice is now an **Armed Forces veteran friendly accredited GP practice**. This is good news for all the veterans amongst us – it means we have a dedicated clinician who has a specialist knowledge of military related health conditions and veteran specific health services. Dr Chitambar will be the clinical lead for veterans and will ensure the Practice meets the health commitments of the Armed Forces Covenant.

Not only should veterans face no disadvantage in accessing the health services that all patients are entitled to, but you can also receive priority care for conditions related to your time in military service, AND be eligible for referral to specifically dedicated NHS services such as those for mental health, hearing loss and trauma.

What the Practice needs you to do is to make yourself known to them and the fact you are a veteran\* will be noted on your records. That's all you need do! Immediate family members also stand to benefit (in different ways) once you have registered.

\* A veteran is anyone who has served in the British Armed Forces for at least ONE day in the regular or reservist forces

**Mole Valley Veterans' Hub** is a voluntary, community organisation aimed at preventing social isolation amongst Veterans and signposting to other services, such as financial advice and mental health support.

The Hub offers a friendly welcome to all Veterans and their families living or working in Mole Valley.

Hub Meetings will be held on **the last Friday of every month**

Meeting in the back room of the **Leg of Mutton and Cauliflower Pub in Ashtead** 1230hrs – 1430hrs.

[www.molevalleyveteranshub.co.uk](http://www.molevalleyveteranshub.co.uk)

## MMR The Importance of the MMR Vaccinations which should not be ignored

### What is measles?

Measles is a very infectious viral illness that is spread by coughs and sneezes. If you are not protected and have even passing contact with someone who has measles, the chances are that you will be infected too. If you catch measles, you will probably feel very poorly and be off school or work for around 10 days. There is no treatment or cure for measles.

**Symptoms** of measles include fever, sore red eyes and rash. It can be a very serious infection for some people.

**Complications** are more likely to occur in certain groups including people with weakened immune systems, babies under one year old and pregnant women. Complications can include chest and ear infections, fits, diarrhoea, encephalitis (infection of the brain) and brain damage. Those who develop complications may need to be admitted to hospital for treatment. **Is it serious?** Yes around one in 5,000 individuals with measles is likely to die and since 2006, there have been 3 deaths from measles in England and Wales.

### What is mumps?

Mumps is a viral illness that is spread by coughs and sneezes or close contact with someone who already has the infection.

**Symptoms** of mumps usually last around two weeks and can include headache and fever but the most common symptom is swelling of the glands at the side of the face. This can give the appearance of having a 'hamster face' and can cause pain and difficulty in swallowing.

**Complications** of mumps can be very painful and can include inflammation of the ovaries or testicles, and in rarer cases, the pancreas. Mumps can also cause viral meningitis and encephalitis (infection of the brain). Although permanent hearing loss after mumps is rare, around one in 20 people infected may have temporary hearing loss.

There is currently no medication to cure mumps so treatment is focused on relieving symptoms. If you develop mumps, you will probably need some bed rest and painkillers during this time. You may also need to eat soft foods that do not require a lot of chewing. Most cases of mumps now occur in young adults who haven't had two doses of the MMR Vaccine.

### What is rubella?

Rubella is a viral illness, often called German measles, that is now rare in the UK thanks to the success of the MMR vaccine. It is spread in a similar way to mumps and measles. For most people, it is usually a mild condition that gets better in 7 to 10 days without treatment. However, if pregnant women develop rubella it can be very serious for their unborn baby.

**Symptoms** of rubella include a rash, cold-like symptoms, and aching joints.

**Complications** of rubella are rare but if a pregnant woman catches rubella during pregnancy, there can be devastating consequences for her unborn baby which could lead to the baby being born with cataracts (eye problems), deafness heart problems or brain damage.

**One vaccine** - The MMR vaccine is a single injection that is administered into the thigh of young children or the upper arm of older children or adults. It is a live vaccine which means that it contains weakened versions of measles, mumps and rubella viruses. These have been weakened enough to produce immunity without causing disease.

**Two doses** - The MMR vaccine gives long lasting protection with just two doses of the vaccine. The first dose is given at the age of 12 months and the second dose is given at around three years and four months, before starting school. Having both doses gives long lasting protection against measles, mumps and rubella. In adults and older children, the two doses can be given with a one-month gap between them.

**Three infections** - The MMR vaccine protects against three infections - measles, mumps and rubella. These are viral infections that can quickly spread to unprotected children and adults – they spread more easily than flu or the common cold.

**Long-lasting protection** - The MMR vaccine is the safest and most effective way to protect yourself against measles, mumps and rubella. Since the vaccine was introduced in 1988, these conditions have become rare in the UK. However, outbreaks of disease, especially measles, have occurred when the number of people having the vaccine has dropped. If you are unsure whether you have previously had the vaccine or not, you can check with your GP, having further doses will not cause any harm.

**How safe is the vaccine?** - The combined MMR vaccine has been safely protecting children for many years - in the UK, millions of doses have been given since it was introduced in 1988. Before vaccines can be used, they have to be thoroughly tested for safety. Although there may be some side effects from vaccination, they are usually mild and much less severe than the disease itself. Serious reactions following vaccination are rare. After many studies it is evident that there is no link between MMR vaccine and autism.

## STAYING INDEPENDENT



Staying independent is something we all value and strive to achieve but that is not always possible. Many of us with elderly parents or relatives worry about how to ensure they stay well and safe, particularly evident through the Coronavirus pandemic.

Mole Valley Life Independent provides help at the touch of a button 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The trusted, local and reliable service provides independence, security and peace of mind at home. Many will know that “alarm buzzers” are available should help be required but sometimes, and particularly where Alzheimer’s is concerned, the client forgets to use it or remember what it is for!

It was with interest and personal relief to find out that a dual sensor/alarm is also available (Falls Sensor) and this will automatically alert the centre that the client has fallen and may well need help. So, no more concern that they may not press the alarm themselves!

During the pandemic, we also learned of a piece of valuable equipment aimed specifically for people with Alzheimer’s or dementia. This “pendant” now has a GPS system attached to it and should your loved one wander off to an area not normally used, the tracker will find exactly where they are to within a few metres.

During the Coronavirus pandemic, Mole Valley Life adapted the way they were working to ensure the continuity of their invaluable services, with many call handlers working remotely at home.

The service is managed by Mole Valley District Council and is accredited to the Telecare Services Association Code of Practice. Find out more about how Mole Valley Life help individuals feel confident and safe in their own home and continue to live independently through their extensive range of products and services:

Web: [www.molevalleylife.co.uk](http://www.molevalleylife.co.uk)

Tel: 01372 204500

Email: [mvlife@molevalley.gov.uk](mailto:mvlife@molevalley.gov.uk)

## Rewarding Volunteering Opportunities at Healthwatch Surrey

Healthwatch Surrey:

- Provide information and advice on health and social care services and how to access them.
- Enable people to share their views and concerns about local health and social care services and provide evidence-based feedback to influence the way services are designed and delivered.

To find out more about being a volunteer for Healthwatch Surrey, we caught up with Kate to hear about her experiences.

Why did you join Healthwatch Surrey as a Volunteer? Having left a busy corporate job to be around more for my family, I wanted to find some volunteering that blended my interest in healthcare and social inequalities but could flex around my availability.

I’ve visited GP Practices and hospitals to listen to patients’ experiences. In addition, I’ve helped at a focus group for care of people with ADHD, co-ordinated questionnaires at a group supporting people with substance misuse and heard directly from people who are homeless or living in poverty.

**healthwatch Surrey**

Have you, or someone you know, recently used an NHS or social care service in Surrey?

Healthwatch Surrey is an independent organisation which gives people in Surrey the voice to help improve, shape and get the best from local health and social care services.

Share your feedback/experience with us, good or bad.

**It starts with you!**

**Your feedback can help change local services for everyone**

**Contact us:**  
[www.healthwatchsurrey.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchsurrey.co.uk)  
 Telephone: 0303 303 0023  
 SMS: 07592 787533

More importantly, I like the fact that we record experiences in people's own words - we are not putting our own interpretation on them. If we hear of a serious issue, this is prioritised for discussion at a special escalation panel and I was invited to join one such meeting.

What have you found most rewarding? I am trusted to get on with the job in hand. Whilst guidance is always available, I am given independence and autonomy to come up with ideas and suggest different ways on doing things.

What have you found challenging? It can be upsetting to hear of someone's bad experience and frustrating when "the system" has let them down. Health-watch Surrey can listen and take appropriate action.

What advice would you give to a "would-be" volunteer? If you have a passion for improving health and social care and a desire to meet and listen to people, you'll enjoy it. You will be well supported throughout and your expenses are covered.



Practice Facebook Page  
@ashleamedicalpractice  
AshLea Patient Participation group Facebook  
@ashlesappg

Follow the AshLea Medical Practice Facebook page for up to date information about the Practice, health information and COVID-19 updates

The Patient Participation Group produce this Newsletter on behalf of AshLea Medical Practice

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