**December, 2019** 

**CHRISTMAS**

**NEWSLETTER of the**

**BERKHAMSTED GROUP PRACTICE PATIENTS.**

**Welcome and Seasons’ Greetings**



**MORE BIG CHANGES FOR BERKHAMSTED GROUP PRACTICE.**

**MOVE TO GOSSOM’S END AGREED**

**On 26/9/19 NHS England approved the Final Business Plan for Berkhamsted Group Practice (BGP) to move to Gossoms End. The move to Gossoms End is planned for Dec. 2020 at the latest.** A Surveyor has been appointed building tenders invited & the fire officer will be consulted. The PPG have asked to see the finalised plans when they are available. There will be 14 consulting rooms. This is 2 fewer than Milton House and Boxwell Road combined but they will be on a more modern and flexible site with lift access.

**DATE FOR FINAL MERGER WITH ROTHSCHILD AGREED**

Thankfully, this approval means that the merger with the Rothschild House Group can go ahead as planned with a few date changes. **The hard merger when the agreement is completed and Rothschild and Berkhamsted Group Practice become one and also go onto the same computer system will now be in January, 2020. The soft merger is already happening. After the merger the practice would be called Rothschild House Surgery, Berkhamsted Branch**

**BOXWELL ROAD SURGERY CLOSED AFTER CONSULTATIONS**

**As part of their joint plan Boxwell Road surgery closed for good on November 27th and all its activities are being moved to Milton House. It is promised that the services patients receive from Milton House will be as good for patients using both surgeries before the Boxwell Road premises closed.**

As legally required the HVCCG (Herts Valleys Clinical Commissioning Group) arranged some **Consultation Meetings** to inform patients of the plans and to answer questions, especially about the closure of Boxwell Road Surgery and how it would affect the services available for patients. The HVCCG must be satisfied that access, quality and capacity can be maintained. These consultations formed part of this process.

Three consultation meetings were advertised and held. About 110 patients attended overall. The panels were made up of officials from Herts Valley Clinical Commissioning Group, with GP’s from Berkhamsted Group Practice and Rothschild House and Rothschild House’s Practice Manager. Several members of the PPG were among patients who were asking questions at each meeting. Many points were common to all the meetings.

**WHY CLOSE BOXWELL ROAD?**

Patients were told that since the merger of Boxwell Road and Milton House in July 2018 to become the BGP there have been difficulties working and administrating from two sites. That is why it has been decided to sell the Boxwell Road site and use Milton House until the move to Gossoms End takes place. It appears that this efficiency measure has been wanted since the merger but couldn't be carried out until the merger was secured. Gossoms End will be a rented property.

**HOW CAN THE SAME LEVEL OF SERVICE BE MAINTAINED?**

Katherine Magson (then CEO,HVCCG), and others spoke about some of the management plans for running BGP from Milton House without diminishing the service.

The working day will be extended, to maximise the use of space at Milton House. Some GPs will start later and will work across the lunch time and there will be some evening sessions and clinics to avoid congestion in the waiting room. They don't think there will be a problem when everyone is at Milton House though the administrative staff may be a bit squashed. There have been no complaints from staff. The PPG understand that BGP patients will be seen at Milton House, but patients will be able to book appointments at Rothschild Tring if they need to.

The Practice does not expect to run any less sessions but it is clear that some locums will have to be used at least until the hard merger happens. Providers agreed that there had been a shortfall during the summer. PPG members expressed gratitude and concern for the present doctors and other staff who have been having to work such long hours.

Dr.Sacca is now full time at Milton House and Dr. Thomson, and Dr. Joynson have been working part-time since November in addition to the long-standing part-time doctors currently employed at Milton

House. Some new doctors are also being recruited by Rothschild.

Extended hours appointments will also continue to be available at Tring and elsewhere under the HVCCG’s **extended hours** initiative



**WHY IS THE TELEPHONE SERVICE SO SLOW?**

The most questions at the consultations were about the inadequate telephone system where patients still find themselves frustrated and in a long queue and often give up. This was again put down to insufficient appointments being available during the summer. It is hoped that as the number of appointments available improves with longer surgery hours, the phone wait will become shorter because the appointment can just be booked rather than the receptionists having to spend time explaining there are no appointments for some weeks and dealing with the response of patients to this. The intention is to make extensive use of the telephone technology available and the best use of reception staff involved as the merger proceeds and new systems are put in place.

It was also pointed out that patients **can now book 2 weeks ahead on-line for all routine appointments. Patients suggested that the surgery publicise that all routine appointments are now available to be booked online**





**HERTFORDSHIRE HEALTH WALKS**

**In Berkhamsted there is a range of walks to suit all abilities. The Level 3-4 walks still meet at Berkhamsted Bowls Club for a 10.00 a.m. start. The First Steps and Level 1 Walks meet for an 11.15 a.m. start and have a new meeting point which is the Sacred Heart Church car park on Park Street.**

**First Steps Walk is our shortest walk 20-30 minutes, on flat and even ground (with the exception of the inevitable bridges over the canal) at a gentle pace with no stiles and where possible regular stopping places. They are perfect for people who have been referred by their GP or for whatever reason have got out of the habit of regular walking and who might enjoy some company.**

**Level 1 Walks are just a little more challenging with one or two gentle hills and a more brisk pace and last approximately 30mins.**

**Most walkers enjoy the social aspect after both walks at Open Door Community Space 360-364 High Street, where refreshments including tea, coffee, cakes or a light lunch of toasted sandwiches or soup are available. Open Door is a charity run initiative and donations are welcome for these refreshments.**

***Why not have that much needed walk on Boxing Day? Meet 11.15a.m. at the Sacred Heart Church, or alternate Thursdays, same time, same venue, starting 9th January-First Steps or Grade One***

**Details of all walks that are available in Berkhamsted and across Hertfordshire can be found by following this link, or**

**by picking up a flyer from your GP Surgery.**

**https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/recycling-waste-andenvironment/countryside-management/hertfordshire-healthwalks/hertfordshirehealth-walks.aspx**



**PRIMARY CARE**

NHS England has recognised the importance of Primary Care & the role of GPs.

The National Association of Patient Participation (NAPP of which the BGP is a member) are helping with some Research Trials into the role of GPs & their Patients. GPs & Patients are being invited to submit a video of how they see their roles. These trials are being set up through the Royal College of GPs & Birmingham University.

Additionally NAPP reports on Group Consultations. This is where a Group of 10-12 Patients with similar conditions are put together with a clinician & a facilitator to discuss their condition & Problems. This system is already running in some parts of the Country of which some conditions such as Diabetes, Arthritis & Post Natal depression have been trialled. Whilst there are initial costs in setting this system up; once it is up & running there are major cost savings, particularly of GPs time. Most importantly patients & staff seem to be very satisfied at the chance to discuss their condition & worries within a group setting. Many of the participants in the Diabetic Groups have been shown to reduce their sugar levels.

It is hoped that these initiatives will be introduced by the Primary Care Networks in the not too distant future When discussing the Plans for the Adaptation of Gossoms End the BGP PPG asked for thought to be given to providing a suitable room for Group Consultations & other Meetings to take place. A possible Room was identified but sadly there is no money to allow for this.

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Look out for news about the new Primary Care Network -Alpha, and about a personalised doctors list, in the first PPG Newsletter of the new year and some ideas about how you can help to improve parking for the new Gossoms end surgery.



**Improving Hospital Services in West Herts**

You may be aware that £400 Million has been allocated by NHS England & the Government to provide a better hospital for West Herts area. To date this is still to be sited on the Watford site.  The proposals can be seen here:-

<https://hertsvalleysccg.nhs.uk/future-plans/your-care-your-future/developing-hospital-services>

Three Campaign Groups in the area have been lobbying to build a Brand New Hospital on a Greenfield Site. A High Court Judge agreed that the Dacorum Campaign Group could mount a Challenge through the Courts, as to whether a proper Consultation process was followed. The Dacorum Group have raised £20,000 & will shortly be starting a Judicial Review.

There is a meeting at Watford on 8th Jan. to discuss a 5 year plan for the area. A few of our members will be attending & we hope to be able to pass on to the PPG some information on what is discussed.



This Newsletter is available at http://www.miltonhousesurgery.co.uk/

and in print at the surgery; or you can get hard copies of them by emailing us at bgp.ppg@gmail.com

If you would like more information about the Group please contact the email address above or view our Bare Bones Guide which can be found here

<http://www.miltonhousesurgery.co.uk/ppg.aspx?t=1>

**Wishing you a Happy and Healthy New Year**

