



# Wallingford Medical Practice Patient Group

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Phase 2  
Issue 1

## Changes at Wallingford Medical Practice

*Val Wolsey. PiP Chair*

With our Senior Partner about to retire and our Practice Manager already moved to Dorset at Easter, Dr Hughes reports on the changes that are taking place at Wallingford Medical Practice. Do read Dr Vernon's fascinating story about his time in the practice, too.

PiP Core Group, acting for the Wallingford Patient Group, continues to work behind the scenes, keeping an eye on the many aspects of the services provided by the surgery for patients. We attend meetings to lend our voice at workshops and take part in consultations on NHS initiatives; meet with members of Patient Participation Groups from other surgeries in South Oxfordshire to share our views and ideas - these are useful and valuable opportunities.

If there is a topic which you would like us to address for the benefit of patients in general (*not personal problems please!*), do contact us by email: [info@pipwallingford.org](mailto:info@pipwallingford.org) T: 01491 836820. [NB. See phone number changes in CONTACTS page 3]



### News from Dr Hughes

I am delighted to be able to tell all our patients that Dr Jo Arnold has accepted our invitation to join us as a full-time Partner here at Wallingford. This does mean that Dr Grant will not be joining us as previously suggested. Jo will be joining the partnership as Tony Vernon leaves at the end of April. Obviously she still has her own patients and will be taking on some of Dr Vernon's list as well, as she increases her working time.



To replace Dr Arnold's hours as an associate GP we have Dr Sara McKelvie joining us in the middle of June. She and Dr Jacque Cornell will share a list comprising some of Dr Vernon's patients and of course Dr Cornell's current patients.

We were very sad to see our long-serving Practice Manager, Mrs Janet Newman, leave us after 16 years just before Easter. We wish her well! We have appointed a new Practice Manager, Mrs Debra Perry, who will be joining us at the beginning of June. She brings with her a wealth of experience, having worked in general practice for a long while and held the position of Practice Manager at two practices in the past.

I shall be taking over as Senior Partner from Tony and very much look forward to the challenges ahead.

**They know where to go, do you?**

|                                |                       |                                    |                                 |                                |                               |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Bruised finger</b><br>      | <b>Flu</b><br>        | <b>Emergency contraception</b><br> | <b>High temperature</b><br>     | <b>Minor sports injury</b><br> | <b>Severe chest pains</b><br> |
| Self care or minor injury unit | Self care or Pharmacy | Pharmacy or GP                     | GP or call NHS 111 Out of Hours | Minor Injury Unit              | A&E Call 999                  |

## Dr Tony Vernon retires after 29 years with Wallingford Medical Practice

*He writes...*



In December 1985 my wife, Hilary, and I were interviewed for the partnership for Dr Money-Kyle and Partners, which became Wallingford Medical Practice in 1995. I realise now that we were interviewed as a couple in order to provide 24 hour care within the team of doctors in the practice. When I started on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1986, the surgery closed at 6pm and an answerphone informed patients that I was on call for the night and to ring my home number if they needed a doctor.

We had a one-year-old son and my daughter was born in May, six weeks later. Hilary would need to be home and available to take calls from patients at 6pm in case I was delayed returning home; that was the role of the doctor's wife. She might be feeding or getting the children ready for bed but still had to be available to answer calls. This was long before we had mobile phones so I had to let her know where I was so she could contact me in an emergency. At night we might be disturbed by our young children but also be called to visit patients. Partners at the Wallingford practice also attended births for their patients on St Georges Ward in Wallingford Community Hospital, often at night so we didn't get much sleep. I would be on duty one night every six days, more if one or two doctors were on holiday. Then we would be back in surgery the following morning at 7.30am.

Things improved when we signed up to a 'call handling service' overnight. Patients would call the service which would then send a message via a bleep to which I would respond. Most of the time it worked well but there were some areas it didn't reach due to poor signal. If the patient didn't receive a response they would have to call again.

In 2000 the practices in South Oxfordshire formed an Out of Hours consortium. Doctors from 7 practices joined together to cover nights and weekends; patients had contact with a fresh doctor every 6 hours in a designated car to provide a better service. Doctors across practices worked together harmoniously, looking after each other's patients, and it was an enjoyable time to meet colleagues and share care and experiences.

In 2004 the responsibility for patient care between 6.30 pm and 8 am was taken away from practices and the present system of a county-wide Out of Hours service was started. I believe that had this not happened then young GPs would not have joined practices and the whole system would have collapsed. New GPs would have found it difficult to commit to providing 24 hour care. We recognise now that it was dangerous to work all day, then be on call all night and then work all the following day. Patient safety was probably at risk from these working hours.

Caring for patients during the evening, overnight and at weekends has been the biggest change in my 29 years as a GP in Wallingford. Change was necessary as lives changed. More mothers work now, the opportunity to access the GP during working hours has diminished and we live in a 24 hour society. I'm sure some patients and some GPs would like to return to 1986 but we have both changed. Patient requests are different and GPs now are happier working 11 hour days rather than through the night and again the next day. GPs are being asked to provide more care in the community and have the skills to do this. They concentrate on care during the day but it has become a specialist job in itself to provide night and weekend care without knowing the patient. Night doctors have their own skills and do a good job but we hope patients will turn to their own GP during the day to provide continuity.

As I retire I shall miss that continuity, looking after patients for many years. Getting to know them and their families and circumstances has been a privilege.

*Ed: When asked about the 'shades' in the photograph - he replied "I look suitably glum at leaving!"*



## FIRST AID COURSE

Everyone is invited to come along to a one-hour course in St Mary's Church, Wallingford at 2.30pm on Tuesday 19th May.

This is your chance to brush up on your First Aid skills.

Entry is FREE - You will be invited to donate to the cost of the afternoon and to support British Red Cross as you leave.

Tea and biscuits will be served after the course.

There will also be the opportunity to learn from Julia Stackhouse (NHS Central Southern Commissioning Support Unit) about a consultation regarding Townlands Hospital, Henley.

PLEASE NOTE THE DATE IN YOUR DIARY AND COME ALONG

ENQUIRIES: 01491 836820



You are invited to an Open Day at Sue Ryder Nettlebed Hospice on Thursday May 21 from 10.30am to 2.30pm.

The Open Day will be an opportunity to talk about all issues relating to hospice care, including planning for the future and what that involves. There will be short presentations on the specialist services and a chance to chat to staff and service users about their experience of the care we provide both in the hospice and in the community. More people go home from the hospice after treatment, than those ending their life there.

By raising public awareness of the services offered, it is hoped to dispel some of the fears around end of life care and make it easier for people to feel comfortable thinking about and discussing their wishes for future care. We do hope you are able to join us for this important event.

**Where:** Sue Ryder Nettlebed Hospice, Joyce Grove, Nettlebed, Henley-on-Thames, Oxon RG9 5DF

**Contact:** Lisa Tylee at [lisa.tylee@suerydercare.org](mailto:lisa.tylee@suerydercare.org)

### HOW TO CONTACT

**PIp (Wallingford Patient Group):** Email: [info@pipwallingford.org](mailto:info@pipwallingford.org) Chair: Val Wolsey 01491 836820

**Wallingford Medical Practice :** Website: [www.wallingfordmedicalpractice.co.uk](http://www.wallingfordmedicalpractice.co.uk)  
Email: [wallingford.practice@nhs.net](mailto:wallingford.practice@nhs.net) Tel: 01491 835577  
(Appointment cancellation line: 01491 821780)

**GP Out-of-hours service:** 111

**Health Visitors:** 01865 904438 **District Nurses:** 01865 904032

**First Aid Unit:** 01865 425200 No appt necessary 8.30 - 18.30 Mon - Fri ex. Bank Hols  
(Main reception)

**Wallingford Community Hospital:** 01865 904488 Weekdays 9.30 - 11.30

**Wallingford Volunteer Centre:** 01491 836345 Mon, Wed & Fri 4.00 - 6.00

**Cholsey Community Car Scheme:** 01491 651768

## CARING FOR DEMENTIA—can be stressful, lonely and exhausting ...

**Patience Thomson** - PiP Core Group member

*Speaking from experience, Patience tells her story as a carer for her husband, David, who suffers from dementia.*

The responsibility of looking after someone with mental problems full time is recognised as stressful, lonely and exhausting. There has been a successful drive in hospitals and GP surgeries to increase awareness of the problems dementia causes. Among the general public there is still a lack of knowledge. Many carers are still unaware of what is on offer.

A good place to start is with  
Tel: 0845 0507666



Website: [www.Carersoxfordshire.org.uk](http://www.Carersoxfordshire.org.uk)  
Email: [Carersoxfordshire@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Carersoxfordshire@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

They have information about the Emergency Carers Support Service and about the training available for carers (excellent courses are free) also benefits and grants, including money to put towards respite opportunities. Respite time for carers is not a luxury; it is essential to maintaining health and a positive attitude.

It used to be 'cancer' that was a word people shunned. Now it is dementia. Each case is different. It is not all doom and gloom. Now a huge effort is being made to redress the balance. Dementia is a major topic; the spotlight is on how to recognise the symptoms and how people with this condition and their carer can be supported, not just by professionals, but the public at large.

**How can carers be relieved?** One answer is by people with different skills who can give time and respite, even if only for an hour or two. Those who visit people with dementia in their own houses are a blessing. Dementia can be very boring! Outsiders can contribute in so many ways. They may need a steer to evaluate the various activities and modify them if necessary.

Visitors, who give the dementia individual one to one support, may read and discuss an article from the daily newspaper, drive to the bluebell woods or walk in the Castle grounds by the river. Some look at old photos. Some play frisbee, and learn to impress the grandchildren. There is joint tidying of the garden. Ruthless pruning is popular. Painting is much enjoyed and requires no memory skills- it can be totally absorbing.

The duo can wander into town and go round the antiques centre in Wallingford or shop in Waitrose but only for very few pleasurable items, such as ice-cream, chocolate and wine.

They sit on the bench in the square and reminisce about childhood. They sip Waitrose coffee. They browse in the bookshop. Best of all the visitor listens! No bustle, no hurry, no call on memory skills. This can trigger an immediate positive reaction that has hints of mindfulness.

Meanwhile carers can put their feet up with a book, visit a friend, have their hair done or simply enjoy a snooze. Bliss!

Another solution for a welcome break can be to spend time in a Day Centre. These provide professional care on a flexible basis. To find out more I visited the local Adult Day Care Centre at Westgate House in Wallingford. I wanted to see what a typical day there was all about. Carers are naturally anxious that if they delegate their duties, the individuals they care for may be anxious amongst strangers in an unfamiliar setting. However they are soon made to feel at home and there are strategies to overcome this and there is great benefit to the carer, having a few hours to themselves, knowing their 'caree' is properly looked after.

On the day of my visit physical and mental activities were the order of the day. Armchair curling (yes you read that right!) was popular. Gentle exercise was supervised and to stimulate the mind there were crosswords, quizzes, board games, and art and music therapy. The activities focussed on individual ability. The lunch was traditional and delicious; my neighbours' plates were scraped clean.

Professionals and their assistants orchestrated and joined in the activities. The atmosphere was one of warmth and encouragement, with some gentle banter, but with respect for all. I was impressed. Still more so when they enquired what I would like to do. Twenty minutes later, with massaged hands and newly filed and painted nails, I felt myself relax. The pleasure for a carer of being cared for is very special.

Day Centres—Health and Wellbeing Centres—are not free but may be subsidised by Oxfordshire County Council.

PiP has its own separate register of home carers and monthly meetings are held in St Mary's Church, Wallingford on the second Tuesday each month at 2pm. There are professionals there to advise. If you want to be kept in touch let PiP have your email address. See Page 3. Also ask for 'a Carer's pack' in the surgery.

*Ed: Our thanks to Patience for sharing her experiences and feelings for the benefit of other patients.*