

# Balmoral Surgery Newsletter

## Winter 2021

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### A fond farewell

In May 2022, after 32 years, Dr Ian Sparrow will be retiring from General Practice. Dr Sparrow joined Balmoral as a Partner in June 1990. Over the years as well as providing care for his registered patients, he has been very involved in ensuring Balmoral has been actively involved in the wider local healthcare community whilst taking the lead for medicines management and finance for the Practice. He became a GP Trainer and has played a huge part in the successful training of many GP Registrars, several of whom have gone on to become salaried GPs or Partners at Balmoral. Assuming the role of Senior Partner when Dr John Sharvill retired in 2016, Dr Sparrow also then took the lead for overseeing the investigation of any clinical complaints received. He has taken part in representing Primary Care views on committees with the Primary Care Organisations such as the Primary Care Operations Group for South Kent Coast Clinical Commissioning Group and more recently he became the Clinical Director of the Deal and Sandwich Primary Care Network. This is a new organisation and he has worked hard to build a competent and caring PCN team to support the local Practices to provide appropriate care to our patients. The Balmoral team would like to thank him for his hard work and will miss his experience and support. We are sure our patients will join with us in wishing him a very long and happy retirement.

### New Staff

We are pleased to welcome a several new members of staff to our team. We have two new secretaries called Natalie and Joanne and a new receptionist called Kim. We also have three Registrars with us at the moment. Dr Hoscan and Dr Ogunleye are in their final training year and will be with us until August, and Dr Osondu will be here until April and then returning for one year in August. On Thursdays we have a Paramedic Practitioner student working at the practice called Ryan.

### Appointment Numbers

There is a misconception that doctor surgeries have been closed during the pandemic or that practices are making it as difficult as possible to arrange face to face appointments with a doctor. Such comments can be no farther from the truth. General practice has been open throughout this pandemic. We have worked through the challenge of protecting our patients and staff whilst still providing a service to our patient population.

In December 2021 we saw **3711** patients face to face and did **931** telephone consultations! This is a total of **4,642** patient appointments.

We also had **16,446** incoming calls during the month of December 2021 alone.

Please bear with us if you are trying to make an appointment. Our clinicians and staff are working extremely hard and unfortunately demand often exceeds capacity. We have had more contacts with patients throughout the last year than ever before, despite enormous challenges including national shortages of essential supplies like blood bottles, COVID vaccination enquiries, and prolonged delays for hospital appointments. It remains really helpful to us when you are able to use self-care when appropriate if you do become unwell and utilise pharmacies, opticians and NHS online information. If you do need to see a GP, we have a variety of appointment options available, and patients can now choose whether they wish to have a face to face appointment or a telephone appointment, but there may be a longer wait for some appointments due to continued requirement on healthcare premises to maintain social distancing.

### **Medicine Cabinet**

We recommend that all patients have a home thermometer and if you have an ongoing chronic condition it is also very useful to have a home BP machine and a pulse oximeter.

### **Extended Hours**

The practice offers pre bookable extended hours appointments on:

- **Wednesday and Friday mornings from 7.15am**
- **Monday evenings until 7.30pm**

### **Planned Closures**

Please note that Balmoral Surgery is closed from 1pm on some days once a month to allow the doctors and staff to have protected learning time. These sessions are arranged by the Kent & Medway Clinical Commissioning Group and offer the opportunity for the Surgery teams in our locality to get together for training purposes. These sessions are usually on a Thursday afternoon once a month and at present are scheduled to take place as follows:

**25<sup>th</sup> May & 23<sup>rd</sup> June**

### **Silverline**

The Silver Line operates the only confidential, free helpline for older people across the UK that's open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days of the year.

They offer telephone friendship where they match volunteers with older people based on their interests, facilitated group calls, and help to connect people with local services in their area.

The Silver Line is the only confidential, free helpline for older people across the UK open every day and night of the year. Their specially trained helpline team can:

- offer immediate friendship and comfort to lonely and isolated older callers
- help with information on all issues faced by older people
- refer older callers to other sources of support, such as regular weekly calls with a trained volunteer
- signpost callers to appropriate support services they may find helpful in their area
- support older callers who may be suffering from abuse or neglect.

To find out more give them a call on 0800 4 70 80 90 or visit their website (<https://www.thesilverline.org.uk>)

### **Deal and Sandwich Primary Care Network (PCN)**

PCNs are groups of GP practices working closely together along with other healthcare staff and organisations providing integrated services to the local population.

Deal & Sandwich PCN is made up of the 4 GP practices in Deal:

Balmoral Surgery, The Cedars Surgery, St Richard's Road Surgery and Manor Road Surgery

as well as Sandwich Medical Practice in Sandwich.

Across our PCN we employ shared Clinical Pharmacists, Social Prescribing Link Workers, Care Coordinators, an Advanced Nurse Practitioner, a Paramedic and a Pharmacy Technician who work collaboratively with each other and with each of the 5 practices. The PCN also has a Clinical Director, a Business Manager and an Administrator.

Our mission is to deliver first class care and support to local residents through new and innovative ways, enabling our patients to live healthy fulfilling lives in the community.

### **Betteshanger Junior Parkruns**

#### **What is Betteshanger junior parkrun?**

A free, fun, and friendly weekly 2k event for juniors (4 to 14 year olds).

#### **When is it?**

It is held every Sunday at 9:00am.

## **Where is it?**

The event takes place at Betteshanger Country Park, A258, Deal, Kent CT14 0BF.

Visit this website for more details <https://www.parkrun.org.uk/betteshanger-juniors/>

## **Pre Diabetes**

Have you been told that you have pre diabetes?

If you have, you can self-refer to the Healthier You programme (Also known as the National Diabetic Prevention Programme) for information on preventing diabetes. To do this, either visit this website, email or ring this number;

Website – [preventing-diabetes.co.uk](http://preventing-diabetes.co.uk)

Email – [info@preventing-diabetes.co.uk](mailto:info@preventing-diabetes.co.uk)

Telephone – 03335773010

## **Shingles**

If you are aged between 70 and 79 years old, you are eligible for a free Shingles vaccination. To book this, please speak to one of our receptionists.

## **Living with Dementia**

There is a new toolkit to help people with dementia to live as well as possible. It can be accessed here:

<https://livingwithdementiatoolkit.org.uk/>

It looks at:

- staying safe and well
- staying connected
- keeping a sense of purpose
- staying active and staying positive.

## **Patient Forum Group**

Balmoral Surgery has a patient forum which always welcomes new members. The Forum usually meets three times a year and aims to give our patients the opportunity to have their say about the services the surgery provides and to keep members up-to-date with new developments etc. The minutes of the forum meetings are available on our website and if you are interested in joining, please contact the Assistant Practice Manager. This group has been paused due to the pandemic, although we have had one virtual meeting. The group is about to resume with the next meeting on 14.3.22.

## **Balmoral Surgery Website**

Our website address has recently changed it is now;

<https://www.balmoralsurgery.co.uk/>

## **Comments, complaints and suggestions**

If you have concerns, complaints or wish to make a suggestion please put this in writing addressed to the Practice Manager. Complaints are taken extremely seriously, therefore your formal, written account will ensure we have the full facts to conduct an investigation in to your complaint. For this reason, we do not discuss in the first instance in person or by telephone. We aim to acknowledge receipt of your written complaint within 3 working days and where necessary, will respond again after we have investigated further. Please ensure you provide your full name and contact details.

## **Out of Hours Help**

NHS 111 can help if you have an urgent medical problem and you're not sure what to do. Get help online or on the phone

Online: 111.nhs.uk (for people aged 5 and over only)  
Telephone: 111

NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. For medical advice when the surgery is closed. The staff on 111 are able to refer you on to the Out of Hours team if they decide that is required.

**For Life-threatening Emergencies DIAL 999**