

# Balmoral Surgery Newsletter

## Autumn 23

---

### **Have you booked your 'flu vaccine yet?**

We still have appointments available. If you would like to book into a 'flu clinic please support your GP Practice and call the surgery on 01304 373444 to book an appointment.

### **Partnership Changes**

We are delighted to have appointed a new salaried GP, Dr Camm, who is due to start at Balmoral on the 1<sup>st</sup> December. Dr Camm will be working Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

### **Dr Viney - retirement**

As many of you know, Dr Viney has been on sickness leave since December 2022. After many years as a partner at Balmoral, Dr Viney will be taking medical retirement and will be leaving the practice on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023. In addition to being a GP Partner, Dr Viney was also a GP Trainer and has trained numerous Registrars over the years. All the staff at Balmoral Surgery thank him for his commitment to his patients and to the future generation of GPs.

Dr Viney will be missed by his colleagues and his patients and we wish him all the best for his retirement.

### **Telephones**

After receiving the results from the National Survey we did our own practice survey. Most of the results from both of the surveys are good. One area where we scored low on the national Survey was regarding how easy it is to get through to the practice on the phone. We have previously needed to move from analogue to internet lines as this allowed remote working during COVID. The government have pushed all practices to internet lines. We had a lot of issues with the telephones in the summer and were constantly contacting the company only to be told that they could not see any issues. Things do now seemed to have settled down. In the local survey conducted in August/September we asked the same telephone questions hoping that the results would be better but they were not.

We have taken some actions following these results: We have more staff answering the telephones between 8 and 830am. We put a poll on our website asking patients if they would prefer to hear the engaged tone or be held in a queue. 93.5% of patients said that they would prefer to be in a queue. Prior to the poll we had 3 people on a call and 5 in the queue, we now have 3 people on a call and 10 in the queue. We will monitor this. If you are number 11 or above in the queue you will get the engaged tone. Our telephone company do not supply the call back feature but this may change in the future.

## **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. Our next meeting is on **05/02/24**

## **Ordering Prescriptions**

Please note we do not have the capacity to take prescriptions over the telephone. Patients can either drop in their repeat prescription slip, order via the NHS App or Patient Access, or order through their usual chemist. Please note that from 1<sup>st</sup> November, Paydens will no longer order prescriptions for patients. As far as we know, the other local chemists are continuing to offer this service.

## **Payden's Pharmacy, Canada Road**

We have recently seen an increase in enquiries regarding Paydens Pharmacy on Canada Road, particularly relating to their opening times.

We would like to reiterate to all of our patients that the pharmacy is a separate business to Balmoral Surgery and therefore all queries relating to the pharmacy need to be directed to Paydens Pharmacy.

## **DNAs (did not attend appointment)**

We are having a significant amount of patients not attend their booked appointments.

There is always considerable pressure on our nurses and doctors for appointments and missed appointments mean that time is wasted and not available to other patients who may need it. We would be grateful if you could make every effort to attend or let the practice know in advance if you cannot come to your appointments.

**DNAs for September 2023 = 134**

## 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 on a Wednesday or Thursday afternoon once a month and at present are scheduled to take place as follows:

- **18/10/2023**
- **23/11/2023**

## Prospective/future record access

You may have read in the media about Prospective/future record access. This refers to a plan to provide patients with online accounts, who do not already have access, with digital access to their medical records. The access is to all areas of your medical record, including documents and test results (once they have been assessed and filed by your practice). This change should be taking place for our patients on the 1<sup>st</sup> November.

This applies to Patient Access, as well as the NHS App and the other online service providers.

The reason for the change is that evidence has demonstrated that better access to health information enables patients to become partners in managing their health and long-term conditions.

This is an NHS England programme supported by NHS Digital.

The change, when enabled, will *not* affect:

- Those under the age of 16
- Proxy accounts

Some information may be restricted from a minority of patients due to safeguarding concerns.

More information is available from NHS Digital.