

We want to keep
in touch with you!
...so we're asking
you to update your
contact details

You may have seen our poster in the surgery asking you to let us know your latest landline and mobile telephone number and e-mail address and whether we have permission to leave messages. A doctor may wish to speak to you or ask you to come to surgery for an appointment. We may also have test results to pass to you or we may need to amend an appointment. With our new texting service we can also remind you of upcoming appointments. Whatever it is, we want to be able to keep in touch and it is quicker and saves money if we are able to contact you by phone, text or e-mail rather than write to you. Just complete a form in Reception for each family member.

Doing our bit for St Barnabas



The Victoria Road girls: Belinda (phlebotomist), Jane (receptionist), Sheila (lead nurse), Denise (phlebotomist), Caroline (secretary) and Sue (nurse)

It began with a sea of excitable pinkly-clad ladies and ended with a total of £167,000.

The annual St Barnabas Midnight Walk has become an institution and runs (some do!) very smoothly. In roughly 4 hours, 1200 local ladies cover 13 miles through the streets of Worthing and along the seafront. A hundred and fifty volunteers help to make this happen. It's fun, it's poignant, it's tiring - and it makes a difference.

Last year, a little team from VR got together, trained a couple of times to the pub and back, raised over £1300 with generous support from VR colleagues, patients, friends and family, and had a ball!

Sheila's daughter, Nicola, joined them, helping considerably to lower the average age, and off they plodded. Caroline was gripped with a passion to go at top speed, Denise supported Sue while she grappled with a tummy bug, and all completed the route spurred on by the knowledge that the best bacon butty in the world awaited them at the end!

If you fancy a bit of a challenge this summer, this one comes highly recommended. Check out the website www.stbarnabas-hospice.org.uk.

Over £400 raised by surgery for new St Barnabas House

Once again this Christmas some of the Doctors and staff at the surgery raised an impressive £123 for St Barnabas Hospice by donating rather than sending Christmas Cards. This is the third year we have collected and we've raised over £400 so far.

STOP PRESS - we have just heard that St Barnabas House will move into their new premises at Titnore Lane on Tuesday 8 March to provide state of the art accommodation & facilities. *Good luck St Barnabas in your new home!*

Booking an appointment at the Surgery

High on the list of frustrations, whichever surgery you attend, is getting an appointment to see a GP. We thought it would be a good opportunity to explain how our booking system works.

- Our telephone lines open at 8am each weekday both at Victoria Road and our branch surgery in Durrington Health Centre and we have at least 4 members of staff taking calls at this time.

The phone numbers are 01903 230656 for VR or 01903 843855 for DHC.

(If you are requesting a home visit please phone 230656 by 10.30am)

- Each doctor's surgery comprises approx 17 appointments - about 40%

of these are pre-bookable up to a month ahead - the rest are made available on the day. The earlier you phone the more chance you stand of seeing a GP. *(We may need to ask you if you could attend either site).* Once appointments are filled you will be added to the duty doctor list if you feel the problem needs to be dealt with that day. The doctor 'trages' ie. phones you sometime during the day (any time up to 6.30pm) to discuss your problem and then takes appropriate action either with a telephone consultation, offering a prescription if necessary or asking you to come to Victoria Road to see the GP.

At 8am you will be aware that our lines are very busy and we want to deal with your call as quickly and efficiently as we can so that as many patients can be accommodated in the shortest time. To help us achieve this we do ask for your co-operation.

- If you are calling us on a mobile please try and find a quiet location.
- Give us your first name then surname. Spell any unusual name or provide your date of birth if necessary.
- If you are phoning for someone else try and have them close at hand - we have instances where the caller leaves the phone to have a discussion with the patient. The appointment could be lost while this happens. *Thank you for your co-operation.*



Jane de Jong Practice Manager

Please can I begin by welcoming everyone to our first edition of *VR*. It was suggested I write a *Diary of a Practice Manager*, but I think you would all fall asleep reading it because I could write and write like I can talk and talk! So I thought I would just pen a few things that are important to both you the patients and us the Practice.

Well, January 2011 began with a lot of reported flu symptoms from patients. It was nationally reported and the public were advised to get themselves **flu vaccinations** if they were eligible. During October every year we receive our flu vaccinations and try very hard to encourage patients to take up the offer of the free vaccine if they are eligible. We always used to send invitations but the uptake remained very low, so now we rely on advertising in the surgery and attach reminders to your prescriptions. Each year the demand for the vaccine has declined and we have struggled to use the vaccines that we have purchased. But when the media gets behind a flu outbreak the realisation that it could potentially be very serious becomes evident. It is only this that encourages patients to come forward for the vaccine.

I always feel that this last minute panic is such a shame. If all patients that are at risk were to accept the offer of the annual seasonal vaccine in October there would be no need for any last minute panics or worse still potential fatalities. As a consequence of the media campaign, this year things were turned on their head and we actually ran out of vaccines. This left me phoning around to try and lay my hands on additional stocks and it

all became quite messy and complicated. If only the uptake was good in the beginning we would increase our order for vaccine and know that it will be used by our patients. Please try and think about this next year if you are eligible for a vaccine.

Now on a different note - **January Diets**. Well, for us here these went out of the window due to the always fabulous generosity of our lovely patients! We have all been tucking into the chocolates and biscuits that you kindly sent to us at Christmas. Aside from this, we also have several patients who regularly make us the most beautiful cakes and to resist these is almost impossible if not foolish! Thank you.

There are huge changes ahead for **Primary Care** this 2011. Most of you will probably have heard something in the news about GPs being made responsible for commissioning services for patients. Well it is true and it is happening. Victoria Road is working with all the other surgeries in Worthing. We have formed a Consortium called **Cissbury Commissioning Consortium**. Actually, we were well ahead of the game here in Worthing and we formed this Consortium some 2 years ago now in readiness for the impending possibility. I will keep you posted in future editions of *VR* as to what is happening and how it may affect you.

We do try to provide the best possible service to our patients and are always reviewing our policies and procedures. I am always very happy to hear from any patients who have constructive ideas or suggestions or even complaints that may improve the service we provide for all. Just ask to speak to me or drop me a line.

In the meantime, I don't know about you but I am so looking forward to spring? The thought of it keeps me going through the winter months. **Keep Well.**

Victoria Road Surgery Patient Participation Group

This is a friendly group where patients and GPs meet to discuss ideas and concerns so that our patient services can be improved. It aims to meet for an hour every 3 - 4 months.

If you are interested in joining us or would like more information, please call me on 01903 230656 or leave your details at the VR or DHC desk. Alternatively you can e-mail me on trevor.wimble@nhs.net and I'll get back to you.



Please remember if you need a GP to undertake private work, such as complete an insurance form or write a letter, unfortunately we cannot accept it without a deposit of £15 (cash or cheque with guarantee card) being paid at the time of the request. We regret we do not sign passports.

Calling all Victoria Road patients

Do you have use of a computer? Then why not go on-line & make appointments (and save the cost of phone calls!) or order repeat prescriptions. Bring i/d into either surgery and we can sign you up. For more details visit: www.victoriaroadsurgery.co.uk

Public and patient involvement in the NHS

by Richard Norton

VR Patient Participation Group

The Department of Health instructed most branches of the NHS, including GPs, that they wished them to start involving patients on a voluntary basis in the operation of the service. In Worthing, the first meeting was called at Field Place on 20th June 2000 under the chairmanship of Dr. Hopkins. Known as a User/Carer Group participants were invited from a broad range of bodies in the area. I was invited by the Carers' Liaison Service as I had been a carer for my now late wife.

About 30 people were present and the plan was to form groups of 6 attendees and each discuss a nominated topic and then report back to the whole meeting. A report went to the then area Authority, the predecessor to the PCT.

This arrangement continued for several years but the numbers who stayed the course dwindled rapidly. A member of the group was then in the Chair with a full-time member of staff present who posed the questions we were asked to review.

Victoria Road Surgery then set-up a similar group involving patient participation as did almost all the practices in Worthing. I joined and over time, probably because I took the scheme seriously, I was invited on quite a number of NHS committees sometimes being the only lay-person in the group. I am still on one - Coastal West Sussex Commissioning Consortium Patients Reference Panel. It has a number of patient members and is directly concerned with the current reorganisation of the NHS.

In retrospect, it is quite difficult to judge whether or not the Patient Groups have really influenced the operation of the NHS. The one area where I strongly believe there has been an influence is by putting forward the view of older people. However much they try, younger people can never see the world through the eyes of someone perhaps more than twice their age, a large proportion of NHS customers.

I have greatly enjoyed my participation in all of this and our PPG at Victoria Road is rather short of members so why not join us to put forward your views?



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Member of National Association for Patient Participation