



## Welcome.....

Welcome to the Spring edition of our patient newsletter “Willow News”. With this newsletter, we will continue to keep you up to date with the latest health issues, and also developments occurring within the practice.

## Georgette Houlbrook, Chair of The Willow Group PPG

It is with great sadness that I open this season’s newsletter with the very sad news that the Chair of our Patient Group, Georgette Houlbrook has passed away.

Georgette has been a great advocate for The Willow Group since we formed. She was previously the chair of the Brune PPG, and came with great experience and knowledge, being on various NHS committees within the Trust and CCG.

Georgette led her patient group in supporting us through difficult times, including relocating the GPs from Forton Medical Centre and also moving SDAS from Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

She never shied away from questioning the management team (and rightly so!) on any planned changes to our service. Once she was satisfied with our answers, she became our biggest champion in liaising with and supporting our patients.

More recently, Georgette was on our interview panel for prospective new GPs, and asked them very challenging questions - we would expect nothing less from Georgette!

Georgette will be sorely missed by us all.

*Georgette Houlbrook, 2<sup>nd</sup> from right.*



## What’s in the newsletter this season?

Page 1: Georgette Houlbrook

Page 2: COVID-19 Update

Page 3: COVID-19 Update

Page 4: The Willow Group “Thank you”



## COVID 19 - UPDATE

### RESTRICTED SERVICE STILL IN PLACE

Despite some easing of lockdown restrictions and the seeming appearance of returning to normality, the national emergency is ongoing. This means:

- Social distancing
- Staying at home
- Working from home (where possible)
- Self-isolation (when needed)
- 

Like many other businesses or NHS organisations, although we are open, we are still only able to provide a reduced service, in order to keep patients and staff safe.



### FACE COVERINGS

We now ask for all patients attending our surgeries to provide and wear their own face coverings, as well as maintaining hand hygiene and social distancing measures. In 2020, it was made compulsory to wear face coverings on public transport and in hospitals in England.

### CORONAVIRUS SCREENING AND TESTING

We continue to screen all callers for symptoms of suspected coronavirus, which now include loss of sense of smell and/or taste as a feature. If you develop fever, new cough or loss of smell or taste, or are requested to by the Test and Trace service, you must self-isolate. Thank you for your continued support.

## PROMOTING SELF-CARE

Before coronavirus, The Willow Group has always had a strong philosophy of encouraging self-care and self-help amongst our patients, and never before has this been more important, given the current difficulties.

This is not about putting people off from seeing us, it is about encouraging people to find out more about managing and improving their own condition, to learn about self-care techniques, to promote resilience and reduce dependence on already stretched health services. Self-care also means that you may be able to access the help that you need quicker and more conveniently without waiting for a callback from the doctor. We would encourage you to use 111.nhs.uk or the e-consult facility via our website [www.thewillowgroup.nhs](http://www.thewillowgroup.nhs).

*Please send your feedback to our Patient Experience Team at [fgccq.mywillowexperience@nhs.net](mailto:fgccq.mywillowexperience@nhs.net) or make a suggestion in our Patient Feedback box on each of our sites.*



## Usual Rules Still Apply

Things remain difficult for every NHS organisation, but this does not mean things will default to your GP automatically. All other NHS organisations are still providing some form of service, but making their own individual arrangements, as we are, to keep people safe. Therefore active signposting, that is, directing you to the most appropriate health professional, still applies.

For instance, in emergency situations, such as a suspected heart attack or stroke, gasping for air, changing colour, unconscious, you still need to ring 999.

If you have worrying symptoms that could be cancer-related, such as coughing up, passing or peeing blood, altered bowel habit, unexpected weight loss, a worrying lump, a nasty-looking mole or not being able to swallow, then don't delay, please contact us for advice.

### GET KITTED OUT WITH TECH

In this new age of remote consulting, which is not going away any time soon, being internet connected and familiar with your smartphone helps. Your GP might ask you to take a photo of a rash or skin lesion, or ask you to send some photos into the practice via email. Or they might want to video chat with you. All these new initiatives help us to keep you safe by reducing the need to come into the surgery building and by helping the doctor make a safe diagnosis.

We are finding that many patients are finding such a service not only safe, but also convenient, so perhaps now is the time to try some new technology or get an interested relative or friend involved in helping you get online or mobile (with social distancing of course).





## Thank you from The Willow Group



We're grateful to all our staff and NHS friends and colleagues during this difficult time and want to say a huge thank you to colleagues at every level for the work they're doing collectively to manage this period on behalf of our communities and working tirelessly to help those affected by COVID-19.

We have also been overwhelmed by the support of our patients and our local community during this current time. We have recently filmed our "Willow Group BIG Thank you", which you can find on our Facebook page.

### FINALLY...

Please bear with us whilst we continue to work to maintain essential services for you all during these extraordinary and very difficult times.



For more information on our services, please visit our website

[www.thewillowgroup.nhs.uk](http://www.thewillowgroup.nhs.uk)

Or join our Facebook page

[www.facebook.com/thewillowgroupnhs/](https://www.facebook.com/thewillowgroupnhs/)

