**Kingstone surgery newsletter October 2024**

**NEW WEBSITE!** Can you tell I am excited? Our new site is up. The Integrated Care Board (ICB) encouraged us to change to a universal website template which frustrated our urge to remain individual…. However we have strived to make it as recognizably ‘Kingstone’ as possible. Spot the staff who picked the short straw to have their photos on the homepage, taken by our talented dispenser Anne Parker.

Photos aside, the site is full of useful features, including an excellent urgent communications banner we can update easily when emergencies strike. Having had a few IT disasters recently, this is an excellent first post of call if you find you cannot get through- it may well explain the reason.

The new site also has a **self referrals page** with details on how to self refer for hearing tests in the >50s, health visitor and District nursing contact numbers and much (much) more….

**Blood pressures:** Mine goes up just thinking about the number of machines we have lent out but not had returned. Please don’t sit on them (metaphorically OR literally) but return them as soon as you have finished your monitoring. Sonia has put in a particular please for me to ask you ‘to check their house/ cupboards /cars / sheds/ greenhouses for any BP machines that they have that belong to the surgery’…

**Covid -19 winter treatment update:** Remember although COVID is much milder at the moment, From now until 1st June 2025, an additional cohort of patients are eligible for Paxlovid® treatment, if they test positive for COVID‑19. This includes people:

1. Aged 85 years and over
2. With end-stage heart failure who have a long-term ventricular assistance device
3. On the organ transplant waiting list
4. Resident in a care home or hospitalised and: Aged 70 years and over or BMI ≥ 35 or Diabetes or Heart Failure

Please source COVID-19 tests from a pharmacy (sadly NHSE in their infinite wisdom has not made the tests available to dispensaries) and let us know if you are in this category and test positive.

**Medication Shortages- interesting update and data**: The Darzi report highlighted what many of you will have suspected, and an issue which puts a severe strain on our dispensing service: Medication supply shortages. Those of you on medications for diabetes or ADHD will have been affected by this in the past year- but you are not alone. In a publication alongside the [Darzi review](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-investigation-of-the-nhs-in-england" \t "_blank), the Department of Health and Social Care’s list shows that around 1,600 notifications were logged in both 2022 and 2023. A total of 1,013 issues have been flagged in the first six months of this year alone, with the most notifications received in February – 283. Every time this affects one of you, our GPs or pharmacists have to sit down and work out what substitute equivalent can be used- if any. This worsening situation has a significant impact on efficiency the ground, which is why I thought it worth mentioning here. Knowledge is power. (Or in this case, exasperation).

And finally- **Flu clinic update:** Thank you those who made it to our flu clinic weekend in October- we saw about 1,100 patients over the weekend! One of you made us delicious gluten-free almond cupcakes which got us through Sunday- so very appreciated.

Finally it was **wonderful** to see so many of you at the Kingstone Surgery Charitable Trust quiz night in the Clehonger Village Hall. The indefatigable KSCT team have been raising money for a dispensing machine, so that some of you can collect your medications 24/7. I am still frustrated I had forgotten Toby Jones’ name….