

Happy Easter

Springtime has arrived and I hope everybody is starting to enjoy the better weather and the longer evenings. Time to catch up on all those outside jobs in the garden or just getting out more and working out how to learn to live with Covid-19.

Whilst restrictions were lifted on the 1<sup>st</sup> April Covid-19, in particular the Omicron-BA-2 variant, has not gone away. The infection rate for the East Ashton Ward, as in other parts of Tameside, skyrocketed during March from 181 cases per 100,000 on the 2<sup>nd</sup> to 584 per 100,000 on the 30<sup>th</sup>! One consequence was that our Surgery had 7 members of staff, including 2 GPs, were off sick.

To ensure the wellbeing both of patients and staff alike in healthcare settings greater precautions have to be in place including the wearing of face masks in public areas. So if you are asked by a member of the reception team to wear a mask whilst sitting in the confined space that is our waiting room, think of others so please do. Remember that by wearing masks they are also helping to protect you!

I have been discussing with Lesley Holt, our Practice Manager, on plans to start introducing some on-line appointment bookings and other measures to improve services to patients in the post-covid world. To this end both Lesley and myself are keen to reactivate the role of the Practice Patient Group to provide better feedback on how the changes that have had to be introduced because of Covid and to make suggestions on how they can be improved to better meet patient needs.

A key part of this is how to make better use social media and other channels to communicate with patients. As a first stage I am arranging with Lesley to set up a virtual Zoom meeting of the Patient Group during May. This will allow her to provide an update to members on all the changes that have been made and future plans to restore services for patients. This will be followed by a discussion on how the Patient Group can support the Practice with better feedback and our ideas on where further improvements could be made. Watch out for an e-mail with details of when and how to attend.

I hope you all enjoy your Easter break and keep safe.

Ken Morris,

Chair of the Albion Patient Group