

Nuffield Practice Patient Participation Group

Spotlight

The Nuffield Practice Patient Participation Group (PPG) works with the practice to ensure that through excellent communication, practice decision-making is informed by the best possible understanding of patients' needs and concerns

September 2022

Chair's report

At a time when there is awareness of all the pressures on the NHS we are particularly grateful as a patients' group for all that the Nuffield staff are doing to contribute to our wellbeing. As a group we are keen to support the Practice values - especially of the respect which is due to all staff throughout the Practice. Thanks are also due to everyone who is volunteering to help with the autumn Covid and flu vaccine clinics. It is not too late to add your name to the list if you have any availability!

This bulletin highlights the considerable work undertaken in establishing the Practice garden with our thanks to all those involved. The fascinating account provided by the Gardening Group reminds us of the health benefits of interacting with the natural landscape, something also recognised by Elizabeth Knowles in her paragraph on how she 'got moving'.

We look forward in our next edition to celebrating the 75th anniversary of the NHS! What an achievement!

A year in the Practice garden



It was only 18 months ago in April 2021 that the Nuffield PPG Gardening Group was formed. The aim was to gather a group of willing volunteers who would transform the scrubby patch of grass outside the front of the Practice – albeit containing a handsome birch tree – to an attractive, bee-friendly garden. The group got off to a flying start because Dr Anna Morrish had secured funding from the [Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment](#) (TOE) for pollinator plants around the surgery. The Trust was keen to ensure their funding was used to enable maximum public visibility and some opportunity for people to interact with the planting.

The first task was to plan an outline of the shape of the beds. We decided to create a pathway from the entrance to the tree that would be wide enough for pushchairs and wheelchairs to enable as many people as possible to interact with the plants. There are also a couple of narrower pathways that weave through the beds. We retained existing grass on pathways, and created beds for the pollinator plants. A number of days of digging, turning over the grass and covering it with polythene, helped to suppress

the weeds. It has been a joy watching the new, and admittedly, rather small, plants bloom over recent months. Who would not be cheered up by the brightly coloured tulips, the beautiful cowslips, and the striking alliums? There is a wide selection of traditional (bee-friendly) herbs such as lavender and rosemary, as well as cottage garden favourites including Sweet William (see picture), golden rod and spikey echinops. The garden has benefited from a new olive tree that provides a lovely focus for one of the beds.

The aim of creating the garden was not only to attract happy bees and other pollinators. It is hoped that the garden will provide health benefits for people too: local residents, passers-by, and of course patients and staff at the Nuffield Practice. There is growing evidence that interacting with the natural landscape has a positive effect on health. You may be interested to read this [article](#) about gardens and their possible effect for reducing stress (Chalmin-Pui, L.S. *Green front gardens reduce physiological and psychological stress*. *The Conversation*, 25 Nov 2020). We very much hope that everyone who passes by can benefit in some way from the garden, even simply enjoying seeing some brightly coloured flowers in a somewhat heavily concreted corner of Witney.

This summer has been a challenge for most gardens and gardeners in the area because of the intense heat and the lack of rainfall. Unfortunately the grass and plants have suffered, but we are hopeful that, once there is some decent rain, normal greenery will be restored.

We'd love to hear stories of how people have enjoyed the new garden. Comments marked 'Garden feedback' can be submitted to nuffield.practice@nhs.net. —*The Gardening Group, Nuffield Practice Patient Participation Group*

Getting moving

In the spirit of self-help for wellbeing, may I share how I got myself on the move? Walking is my preferred exercise, but (like, I suspect, quite a number of us) I needed a bit more motivation to get moving—something I found when I linked it to another interest, fundraising for Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust by taking part in their sponsored 'Ride and Stride'. That's a one-day event, but now I plan and carry out walks through the year, either completely on foot, or by catching a bus to or from start or finish. Even after transport cuts, our Witney bus services open up a whole range of routes leading to accessible footpaths. With an Ordnance Survey map, and my treasured bus pass, I've covered a healthy number of miles over the last year, enjoyed some wonderful countryside as well as buildings, and had a lot of fun in the planning too.—*Elizabeth Knowles*.

Watch this space!

Bookings for flu vaccination and COVID booster for specific groups now available.

To contact the Patient Participation Group, and find out more about its activities, consult the [website](#) or email the practice at nuffield.practice@nhs.net