



Frithwood Surgery

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FRITHWOOD SURGERY PPG NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2018

WHAT A PARTY!



Frithwood's over 75s banished the winter chills with a fantastic Christmas party, organised by the surgery's patient participation group.

Around 40 people came along to enjoy festive food and drink, be entertained by festive songs from the locally-based acapella barbershop harmony group 'The Lynchpins' and enjoy each other's company.

The Lynchpins, set up two years ago, now has members from Bussage, Chalford, France Lynch and Stroud. They said they were delighted to sing for Frithwood's senior citizens and would be using their fee to buy a hand-held microphone. See page four or log onto the Frithwood PPG Facebook page for more photos:
<https://en-gb.facebook.com/FrithwoodPPG/>

FEEDBACK - We would love to hear from you on any aspects of the Newsletters or the services you receive from the surgery. If you have questions or ideas that could benefit our readership, please use the 'Suggestion Box' at the surgery reception or 'e' mail frithwood.enquiries@nhs.net or call 01453 882868.

DRUG WATCH: CANNABIS

Since time began, man has used drugs in a recreational way, whether it's been alcohol, tobacco, the coca leaf or marijuana.

Cannabis is currently in the news, having recently been legalised for recreational use in Uruguay and Canada. In the Netherlands it can be smoked in licensed premises and in many countries it is licensed for medicinal use. Rules in the UK have recently changed in this regard, partly as a result of the publicity given to epileptic children for whom standard treatments had not proved effective.

In the UK, cannabis-derived drugs can be prescribed by a specialist only. A GP cannot prescribe these drugs and a GP may not issue a private prescription.

These drugs are mainly used for forms of epilepsy that are resistant to standard therapies and nausea and vomiting induced by chemotherapy, where other forms of treatment have failed.

It does have a licence for the muscle spasticity associated with multiple sclerosis (MS), but the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) does not recommend cannabis in this situation as there is inadequate evidence that it's effective. The use of cannabis for pain in MS is also contentious.



The effects of cannabis smoked for recreational purposes are well known. It will induce a sense of being chilled out, perceptions of sounds and colours can be enhanced and time may take on a different dimension. Users are often talkative and become hungry, referred to as the "munchies".

You've guessed it, there are some downsides: users may become sleepy, suffer from poor memory and become demotivated. There are less usual but more serious side effects. Psychosis can occur in heavy users. This means they may have symptoms commonly associated with schizophrenia such as delusions, hallucinations and paranoia. This can be dangerous. It is estimated that 10% of cannabis users are dependant on the drug, that is to say they suffer from withdrawal symptoms when they stop using.

Doubtless the debate about extending the medicinal use of cannabis and legalizing the recreational use of this drug will continue, and we may expect some changes with time.

Move It or Lose It!

Get fit and make friends at easy to follow exercise classes for older people.

Everyone welcome at Stratford Park Leisure Centre in Stroud from 9.30am to 10.30am and George Pearce House, Minchinhampton, from midday to 1pm, both on Fridays. £3 a class.

For more information call Hannah Drew on 01453 754508

FRITHWOOD FACE



Name: Dr Ruth Kelly **Job:** GP partner

What I do: I see a mixture of patients with routine and urgent problems, and have a particular interest in supporting patients with diabetes.

Why my work is important: Being diagnosed with diabetes or any other long term illness has a significant effect on people's emotions and personal lives; it can be tough to live with day to day. By seeing people holistically, I hope to support them to care for themselves.

Top advice: Be kinder to yourself!

Most frequent thing you hear: Are you related to the old Dr Kelly from Stroud? (I'm not I'm afraid but I have heard a lot about him)

Favourite way to exercise: walking my dogs, swimming and yoga.

When I'm not working: Walking my two rescue dogs in the countryside, crafts like sewing and knitting, pub lunches and weekends away.

Most surprising fact about me: I'm a triplet! We're not identical and so far we haven't noticed any kind of psychic connection!

Favourite sport: I'm absolutely hopeless at sport but I used to play goal defence at school and university netball.

WINTER

Winter is here again. The days are shorter, the temperatures are dropping and it's possibly blowing a gale or raining. Little wonder that most of us go indoors and batten down the hatches at this time of year.

For the elderly and frail, there are a host of problems associated with winter, and those living on their own are especially at risk.

Loneliness and isolation are more likely, and with that goes depression. Reduced movement compounds the problems of reduced muscle strength and loss of balance, this in turn increases the risk of a fall and a fracture. Low temperature and inadequate heating can lead to hypothermia. Inadequate nutrition and fluid can lead to confusion, as can a simple infection.

Being older and on your own is no fun for the elderly and frail at winter time. If you are aware of someone in this category, a watchful eye, brief visit to say hello and share a pot of tea gives enough time to make a quick assessment of how things are going. This can make a huge difference to these members of our community.



SING FOR GOOD HEALTH

Breathe in and sing out! A free 12-session singing group for people diagnosed with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) or a persistent lung condition gets underway in January.

Sessions will be starting at the Cashes Green Community Centre (GL5 4NR) from 2pm on Thursday January 17. They will also be run from Holy Apostles Church Hall in Cheltenham (GL52 6HW) from 10.30am and Abbeydale Community Centre in Gloucester (GL4 4BL) from 1.45pm, both on Wednesday January 16.

Breathe in and sing out! is run by the charity Mindsong, which says "Can't sing? Who cares – just come along to breathe, laugh and sing together."

For more details call 01684 273656 or 07989 936270.

Better Balance

Chair-based and standing exercise classes.

Sessions at Chalford Sport & Social Club from 2pm to 3pm on Thursdays. £3 a class

For information call The Sport and Health Development Team at Stroud District Council on 01453 754508.

IT'S YOUR CHOICE!

Take greater control of your medical condition by registering to view your GP records, make appointments and request repeat prescriptions using the Internet.

Online Services Records Access makes it easier for patients to be proactive over their healthcare.

Using the telephone or calling into the surgery is still an option, but growing numbers of people are enjoying the convenience of using their computers to manage their conditions. Having medical records online also means it's possible to access them from anywhere in the world, should you require medical assistance while on holiday.

It's entirely up to patients as to whether they join, and they can withdraw at any time; this won't affect the care received from practice staff.

Patients who sign up for Online Services Records Access will be given login details and invited to think of a password that's unique to them so that they can ensure that they're the only people who can look at their records – although they can share them with family members or carers if they wish.

Frithwood reserves the right to remove online access in situations where information isn't being used responsibly or it's judged it would be upsetting or harmful. In the rare instances that this should happen, the practice will explain the reason for withdrawing access and re-instate it quickly if appropriate.

For more information pick up a leaflet in the surgery or visit: <http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/the-nhs/records/healthrecords/Documents/PatientGuidanceBooklet.pdf>

NEW EQUIPMENT UPDATE

A big thank you to all patients who have contributed to PPG equipment funds via the lottery, one-off donations or sponsoring Dr Tim Crouch's parachute jump.

The money has been used to buy six sets of home blood pressure monitoring equipment. This will allow patients to record their blood pressure at home several times per day over a period of time, which is a far more accurate way of assessing hypertension than making a one off reading at the surgery, and will get around the dreaded 'white coat' effect.

We are particularly grateful to a patient, who wishes to remain anonymous, who has made a substantial donation. The surgery is hoping to use this money to set up a patient communication system called MJog. This system, which works using a mobile phone app, will simplify chronic disease monitoring, allow short notice appointment cancellation and immediate reappointments to be made, notify health campaigns and set up flu clinics and other vaccination programmes. All this information will be recorded on the practice computer system.

Keep up to date with the Frithwood Surgery PPG by 'liking' our Facebook page at <https://en-gb.facebook.com/FrithwoodPPG>



RESOLVE TO MAKE 2019 HAPPY AND HEALTHY!

A new year brings lots of potential to make big changes to our lifestyles, and there's no better time to do this than when we're in our golden years.

Hang out with friends Relationships are particularly important when we're in our golden years – more than enough reason to invite someone over for a cup of tea or a game of cards or just a chat.

Get your brain buzzing Pick up a book or do some crossword puzzles or Sudoku as part of a weekly routine to help build neural connections and retain a quick short-term memory and keen concentration.

Improve your diet Reduce calories, as metabolisms slow over the years, but broaden the amount of nutrients, which means eating more fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts and seeds to your diet and cooking with less fat, salt and sugar.

Move your body Keep weight gain, heart disease and diabetes at bay by finding a form of exercise you enjoy and can do regularly. Jogging, swimming and cycling are excellent forms of cardio vascular exercise - aim for about five 30-minute sessions a week with strength, balance and flexibility training thrown in.

Take up a hobby Hobbies help relieve stress. This is partly because they put us in a state of "flow", a deep connection between mind and body.

Be mindful Do things in the present with your full concentration devoted to the task at hand. It's a great way to find relief from stress and reduce the intensity of chronic pain.

Go outside Nature keeps us healthy in a variety of ways. It encourages physical activity, which counts towards cardio routines, and the fresh air and sunlight gives us a boost. Meanwhile, being among foliage and fauna helps stem depression.

MORE PARTY PEOPLE!



Lynchpins with Dr Crouch



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