

Friends of Parkwood Surgery Newsletter - December 2025

View from the FPS Chair - *Yvonne Metcalf*



Seasons Greetings to you all!

I'll bet few of us know that 'Xmas' the abbreviation of 'Christmas', dates back to the 16th Century with the letter 'X' being the Greek letter 'Chi' which of course symbolises the origins of the Christian festival. Xmas has become an increasingly secular holiday over time, focusing on traditions, like spending time with family, enjoying our traditional Xmas dinner and exchanging gifts. However, it can be a really challenging time for many of us, highlighting how tough life can sometimes be, especially with few people around us. We've highlighted 'loneliness' in our article below.

I came across the word 'glimmer' in a Facebook article recently. 'Glimmer of hope' is a really common phrase in the English language. However, the article used the word in the context of small moments, situations, or experiences that create feelings of happiness – something as simple as a sunset, or stroking your favourite pet, and examples that struck a cord with me were a smile, genuinely asking how someone is, and showing consideration for others around us in our very busy lives. Maybe something for us all to think about in this festive season.

In FPS, we're looking forward to continuing forging our relationship with the practice. We are very aware of the increasing challenges in health care during the winter months and NHS statistics show that the flu season has hit the NHS a month earlier than usual with cases three times higher in October than last year. Have a look at [our booklet](#) about using other resources like pharmacies when we are unwell and remember to order prescriptions well in time for the holiday, which this year will see essentially a 5 day shut down.

It was a real pleasure meeting fellow patients at the flu clinics and we've been wondering if anyone has ideas about how we might be able to meet a wider range of patients in 2026, as the flu clinics are primarily for us older people and

of course are only once a year. Perhaps a monthly drop in meeting in the surgery? Let us know if you have any thoughts, and remember we are there to be a bridge between us as patients and the surgery. We need to know what's coming up for you as patients – good as well as not so good.

In the meantime, keep well and take care.

We're seeing changes in the surgery recently and we are continuing to strengthen our links with the partners and the practice and business manager. We would be interested in hearing your experience of the practice over the last month or so. We meet monthly with the practice, which is our opportunity to give feedback, both what's going well and things which are still problematic. Remember we are unable to deal with medical issues or complaints, but we love to hear from you.



Feedback from the surgery

As your committee, we regularly put forward your queries, concerns and feedback to the surgery management.

The telephone system

The committee continue to raise the issues with the telephone system and how challenging getting through to the surgery can be. Members of the committee are looking at call data to aid the surgery in identifying where any 'bugs' in the system are. The surgery asks that the lines are left open as much as possible during the morning to enable people seeking on-the-day urgent appointments to call.

Prescriptions over the Christmas period

The surgery always requests that prescriptions are submitted 72 hours before needed, and with Christmas around the corner and several days where the surgery will not be open, we advise aiming to put your prescriptions in even earlier to ensure you have the medication you need over Christmas.

The hearing loop system

A patient reported that the hearing loop system to support people with hearing loss had not been working for some time. FPS raised this with the surgery who arranged for an engineer to visit. The engineer determined that the device was beyond repair, and the surgery has already investigated quotes to arrange for a replacement.

What's been happening with FPS?

Check out the minutes of our meetings

The minutes from FPS' monthly meetings, including our most recent November meeting, are available [here](#).

Want to stay up to date?

One easy way to keep up to date with FPS' events is to follow us on our [Facebook](#) page. Every time we update the website, we'll post a link there!

Unsubscribe from FPS communications

If you wish to unsubscribe from receiving communications about FPS, you will need to contact the surgery to ask for this note to be placed on your file. FPS does not hold any data on patients other than that provided directly by them, such as emails sent to the FPS mailbox



Acts of kindness at Christmas

Whilst Christmas is a time of celebration for many, lots of people also report feeling lonely or worried during the festive period.

This year, we're trying out some acts of kindness. These might include:

- donating to a foodbank – [DENS foodbank](#) has a list of highly needed items
- giving a gift to a stranger – many charities collect gifts for the people they help, whether these are people living in poverty or whose Christmases might be particularly hard this year. Why not search for one in particular?

- donating so that somebody can have a Christmas dinner when they might not be expecting one. Many homeless charities offer this facility.

But it doesn't have to involve money at all! Could you:

- help an elderly neighbour to do their Christmas shopping or see the Christmas lights in your local area
- send a text to that friend you've not seen in a while and see if they want to catch up over the holidays
- SMILE! You'll make somebody's day

Let's make this Christmas the kindest Christmas!



Help during the festive period

The surgery will be closed on Christmas Day (Thursday 25th December), Boxing Day (Friday 26th December) and New Year's Day (Thursday 1st January). Services will run on other days during the festive period.

If you require emergency treatment or advice, 111 and 999 are available as usual.

Help with minor ailments can come from your local pharmacy. There will be access to some pharmacy support even on bank holidays. You can find out the nearest open pharmacy using '[Find a pharmacy](#)' on the NHS website. When the official list of pharmacies open during the festive season is released, we will link to it on our [Facebook page](#).

If you are seeking support for mental health over Christmas, there are many services just a phone call away; Mind has collated these [here](#). Again, 111 and 999 are available for emergency treatment; a mental health crisis is an emergency.