

## Update from the Surgery

Well, the stress! I have 2 sunflowers that are huge and wilt if Libby and I forget them for a day. I worry that we have peaked a bit early but who can deny enjoying seeing a creation grow?

The real challenge is how to balance our supply and demand and not so much the sunflowers. On Thursday night I saw the latest Gov email which appears to be a panic response to the "news" that the hospital waiting lists are back to pre-historic times. Ultimately it is a call-to-arms to get back to normal immediately. I don't think that is sensible yet and perhaps with the Indian variant threatening I suspect we will see a U-turn.

It is estimated that the volume of work has increased despite the lockdown and is greater than in 2015 by 20%. We have seen our population increase from about 3000 in 2010 to 4500 today so we clearly have a growing population. This is reflected in the number of staff across the surgery and one of the goals is to ensure that every contact with the surgery is positive. One challenge has been how we respond to a "minor injury".

In the past we received funding to skill our nurses to get minor injury qualifications and re-accreditation. If you had a minor injury we could resource the kit to suture it, splint it or dress it appropriately but with the development of the Urgent Treatment Centres (UTC) the funding has gone. We have also been told the UTC is a resource to use if we are "over-stretched". The thought of sending people to the UTC sits very uncomfortably with me but there has to be a balance - our nurses need to be rewarded for the work they do, feel supported in their training and also have the right equipment for the task. The CCG have drawn a line in the sand and while part of me wants to hand the problem back to them we will make an initial assessment and do what we can to help but if your injury needs referral for further care we will refer you to the UTC.

The whirlwind of this pandemic is like nothing I have ever experienced. In March 2020 there was genuine fear, then optimism, fear, optimism, vaccination, don't move, 2nd vaccine, light at the end of the tunnel... My dad was in hospital last April for 5 days and recovered and we have lost friends and a number of patients from Covid but suddenly that seems to be yesterday's news. If the Indian variant doesn't grip, the NHS will turn it's focus to the problems that have not been dealt with for the last couple of years. We are really back to the 90's when a hip replacement may take 2 years and some of my colleagues have said it may be longer still.

This means that all the work that was done by Tony Blair in the late 90's needs to be redone. It doesn't sound very left-wing but essentially a load of hospital workers were paid a lot of money to get the waiting lists down back then and the same will need to be done again. We know the template - pay for people to work and it will be done. I think in the big scheme of furlough and everything else that it will be a drop in the ocean to pay the hospital teams to do the additional work so hope the government will respond when the social distancing and safety measures make it realistic.

To deal with the stress of the Sunflowers I've enjoyed some great runs and when I'm at the top of Susan's Hill or Cole Wood it is hard to imagine there is a Pandemic going on. With best wishes from the team

Jack Hickey  
GP