

Weekly update from the Surgery

I've woken up buzzing this morning and can't sleep after all the excitement yesterday despite the minor celebration that last night was Friday night. I've been asking the team this week for any snippets to tell the wider community and after picking up 50 vaccines from Charing on Friday was feeling positive but wary that slow steady progress is being made. Nurse Sarah Trigg had organised a motivational sunflower growing competition to keep the team going. Mine is now planted and Libby has called it "Terry".

I got back to an amazing sight in the car park where there was a sign pinned to the fence from Woodchurch Primary School - "Thank you from Woodchurch Village". The detail is brilliant and the colours are so bright and vibrant. The individual letters are wrapped in vinyl so should be weather proof and will stay in place for a long time to come so please come and see it (I might apply for a protection order from the council!).

Philippa from the PPG (Patient Participation Group) had asked if she could have a chat for 5 minutes at lunchtime, so I boiled the kettle and went outside not knowing what to expect.

After a photo shoot by our new sign made by the School, Philippa gave a lovely speech and presented a large poster made up by Claire Town with lovely, supportive, motivational comments from the community. We had just been discussing how to brighten up our very clinical interior and this piece is just perfect and will be a permanent boost to the team. We already have some lovely art work donated and will continue to add to it.

Philippa presented an enormous car boot full of donations from the village and even a collection for the end of lockdown celebrations. So generous and so very appreciated - as said yesterday we have all chosen to do our jobs but to work for and with a community that gives so much makes it so worthwhile. Thank you to everyone.

After the climax of the event we had a debrief in the surgery and everyone was so proud and were sharing the event with other members of the team that weren't there. Poignantly Keely Harris (our Social Prescribing lead) was present in the background. She is slowing returning back to work having lost her husband, John, to Covid in January. I think seeing what the wider surgery team means to the community was a great inspiration to her coming back.

A regular Friday afternoon put the day's events to the back of my mind and when I got home I proudly showed my wife, Lisa, a video that someone had taken of the day's events. It was amazing to see it back and be able to share a really special moment which helped it all sink in a bit more. We will be able to show all the team that weren't there too so thank you to the secret camera person (Lesley Bird).

It was also a nice welcome for our new GP Trainee, Dr Seema Chakravati, who drives from Canary Wharf every day to our little oasis. She has taken over from Dr Lutuf Mian who passed his exams and is starting work at Ivy Court Surgery on Monday. It is great news that we have some local retention of our trainee doctors as we invest a lot of time and (public) money in training them and then often they go elsewhere. Three of our recent trainees have stayed on locally and after yesterday Seema is pretty keen to stay too. For the trainees to work in an area like this provides a real contrast from towns and hospitals and is certainly different to where I trained in Birkenhead 15 years ago. We are also hosting Medical Students from the University of Kent which has opened this year for the first time and some of you may have met Declan and Lily who are enjoying their first year.

As dawn breaks today it looks like another beautiful day and this change in weather, “the vaccine” and the buoyancy of yesterday makes it feel to me as if we are a lot closer to getting back to normal and enjoying life safely and freely.

Proudly, on behalf of a fully motivated team at Woodchurch Surgery - a big Thank You!

Jack Hickey - GP

Special thanks to:

Philippa and Nick Jones; the PPG

All the kind people that made donations for the locally produced products from:

Lucy Slaymaker from Little World Herbs

Karen Stevens from Roseheartsweets.com (and Scott Stevens for Photography)

Jilly Raggett at Woodchurch Market Garden

Woodchurch Wines

Pinecove Nursery

Woodchurch Primary School

The whole community for your support

(Anyone who can give tips on growing sunflowers)

