Volunteering Special!
Greetings one and all! This edition of the patient newsletter is focused on the benefits of volunteering and provides examples of ways in which you may do so in the local area and beyond. So why volunteer? Well, it may seem obvious – to help out people less fortunate than yourself; provide care for animals, maybe; perhaps even improve the environment around you. But there is also increasing evidence that volunteering benefits the volunteer’s own health.

The Mental Health Foundation has produced the following handy guide outlining the mental, emotional and physical – yes, physical! – benefits of volunteering and how to go about doing so – please visit the web address outlined below to access this guide: https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/doing-good-does-you-good

Anyhow, please read on for information about how you might go about volunteering.

May Bank Holiday Weekend Opening Times

Please be aware of the following departures from our normal opening times over the May Bank Holiday weekend:

- **Friday 27th May**  Open as normal (8.00-18.30)
- **Saturday 28th May**  Closed (as normal)
- **Sunday 29th May**  Closed (as normal)
- **Monday - 30th May**  Closed – Bank Holiday
- **Tuesday 31st May**  Open as normal (8.00-19:00)

Please ensure that if you are currently taking medication that you have enough to last you over the holiday period by ordering your prescriptions at least two working days in advance. Otherwise, have a safe and fantastic bank holiday weekend!

Best wishes

The Surgery Team

Heartline Club, Middleton

Founded in 1990, this fantastic and truly worthy local charity provides help, support and encouragement to those with heart and heart related problems. A common difficulty that patients who have suffered with heart disease face is that once the - invariably brilliant - care provided by the NHS after a major incidence ceases, as it inevitably will, there is a void left in patients’ lives and a new struggle to recommence life - often under drastically altered circumstances - begins. Heartline Club helps its members to bridge this gap, meeting twice a week, every week at Middleton Arena (Wednesdays and Fridays, from 10am to 12 noon). Here members can take part in specially tailored health programs; (a separate gym is set aside specifically for Heartline Club); sporting activities, including badminton and bowls; armchair exercise classes; or simply go and have a coffee and a chat. Ad hoc social events - such as graded country walks; charity events; days out to places of interest – are also arranged on a regular basis; indeed a three mile charity walk through Rhodes Woods is scheduled for Saturday July 16th 2016, for members and non-members alike – for instance, Dr Stockton, Dr Thompson and our Finance Manager, Pete are already earmarked to participate on behalf of the surgery!

The club now has over 200 members and a full and varied range of equipment; not bad considering it started off with 6-8 members and the odd bit of borrowed kit! Our very own patient, Valerie Screeton, volunteers for Heartline club as their ladies rep, and credits the club with giving her a revitalised sense of purpose, health and mental wellbeing following her own past struggles with heart disease. A fellow volunteer, Peter Swindells was even more effusive in his praise for the charity, adding poignantly that, having suffered from depression following his heart problems: “Heartline Club saved my life – without it, I don’t think I’d still be here.”

If you have had a heart attack or a history of heart disease and think you may benefit from membership of Heartline club then get yourself down there on a Wednesday or Friday (once you’ve had a tour you can apply for membership) and, as the charity’s slogan goes “relax, allay your fears and enjoy yourself”!! Leaflets with further details are available from the surgery and please feel free to contact us for further information. Continuing the theme of this newsletter, Heartline Club also welcomes volunteers to help out on Wednesdays and Fridays, and at their social events. You can either call in on one of these days; or call 0161 728 5060 or 0161 6432942 for more details.
**Calling All Lumps & Bumps!**
Dr Stockton continues to provide a minor surgery clinic at the practice for the removal of ingrowing toenails, skin tags, cysts or moles. Just contact reception to make an appointment for an initial consultation; we are due to finally receive replacements for the surgical equipment damaged in the fire and a clinic has been scheduled for Saturday 9th July 2016.

**Cancellation List: Do You Know How It Works?**
As you may be aware, we launched our cancellation list service a couple of years ago and this has proved very popular with our patients. If you contact us for an appointment on the day and we have no more available, you will be offered a slot on our cancellation list. We will then contact you should a cancellation occur. This means that you don’t have to keep ringing us to check whether there have been any cancellations and also helps to ensure we have increased availability for our patients. To ensure this service works smoothly, this is an on the day cancellation list only and patients will need to ring up each day to be placed on the list for that day. Patients can also specify certain times and doctors, however obviously this will decrease the chances of a cancellation specific to your requirements occurring.

Please note that we will only contact you should a cancellation arise.

Please continue to cancel your unwanted appointments to ensure the continued success of this service.

**Pet Therapy!**
Good news pet lovers! While most might associate the health benefits of owning a pet as solely from the exercise you might get when taking them the dog for a walk, as Patient.co.uk states, it isn’t just man’s best friend that can help their owners health. A study of 6000 people in Australia found that those who kept animals had lower blood pressure and lower cholesterol – and therefore a lower risk of heart disease – whereas an American study concluded that people who simply stroked their pet on a regular basis experienced less stress and anxiety and therefore less risk of developing cardiovascular diseases.

As well as the physical benefits of owning a pet, a number of studies indicate the positive effect it can have on mental health – research has shown that pet owners tend to have higher self-esteem and are less likely to suffer from loneliness and/or depression.

Of course it isn’t possible for all families or individuals to own a pet – perhaps due to time, financial constraints or both - but there are other ways you could experience the above health benefits. **Perhaps you could volunteer to look after a friend, neighbour or relative’s pet while they’re away.** Or, you may wish to visit - or even volunteer at - an animal sanctuary (Bleakholt Animal Sanctuary - [http://www.bleakholt.org/](http://www.bleakholt.org/) - and Manchester and Cheshire Dogs Home - [http://www.dogshome.net/](http://www.dogshome.net/) - are two such organisations in the Greater Manchester Area).

**Staff Update: Once more, the Patter of Tiny Feet…**
Congratulations to our HCA nurse and Support Team member Gemma, who has recently found out she is expecting another addition to the Roberts brood! Gemma, her partner Dave and her three sons Kadyn, Kobie and Kylan are all excited about their impending new arrival and we’re sure you join us in wishing them all the very best in the coming months. And who knows, maybe it’ll be a girl this time to finally give Gemma some fellow female backup?! Our patients proved very popular with our doctors, however obviously this will decrease the chances of a cancellation specific to your requirements occurring.

**Aged Over 60? – Don’t Miss Out On Your Bowel Cancer Screening!**
About one in 20 people in the UK will develop bowel cancer during their lifetime. Regular screening has been shown to reduce the risk of dying from bowel cancer by 16%.

If you have not been screened in the last 2 years and are aged over 60 then ring 0800 707 6060 to book!

**Patient Survey**
We recently distributed a patient survey and many thanks for your time to those who did get the chance to complete it, as any feedback as to how we might improve your experience as a patient is always greatly appreciated. Anyhow the results have now been collaborated, so please find a brief summary of the suggestions submitted and how we intend to action these.

**Question 1 (Q1)** was about staff presentation. The majority of respondents indicated that as long as staff are smart then a uniform isn’t a necessity but would like us to wear name badges; this has been noted and we hope to have the latter displayed imminently. Q2 was regarding our website and the T.V.s in the waiting room. We are pleased the majority were happy with our website but will strive to continue to regularly update it to ensure it is as accessible and user friendly as possible. Feedback on the T.V. was more mixed and we plan to replace the original content provided with more uplifting, seasonal information relevant to our patients and locality. Q3 concerned this very newsletter and we were pleased the vast majority of readers are happy with the format and content! Q4 was about a suggested patient running club and we’ve taken on board that more accessible exercise would be better suited to some. Thanks for those who expressed interest in joining our patient participation group in Q5 - we’ll be in touch! Finally all suggestion to requests for further comments in Q6 are still currently under consideration and will be responded to in due course; many thanks for these!

**And finally…..Made to Measure Volunteering**
We’ve made a few suggestions of local charities you may wish to become involved with but there are many other ways in which you may wish to volunteer that may be better suited to your only personal interests, needs and/or circumstances – after all, if you become involved with volunteering that appeals especially to you then it might mean you are more likely to continue in the longer term, as well as gaining greater pleasure from doing so. For example, if your interest is sparked by sport; the arts; the environment etc., there are myriad charities and organisations that would benefit from your input, be it locally, nationally or even internationally. This could just involve a small amount of research on your own part, but in the meantime, the following dedicated volunteering search websites and advice pages may be a good starting point: [https://www.ncvo.org.uk/](https://www.ncvo.org.uk/); [https://do-it.org/](https://do-it.org/); [https://www.gov.uk/volunteering](https://www.gov.uk/volunteering).