

**February 2026**

*The Leat is distributed for the patients of Leatside Surgery by the patient group to provide information and news about what is happening at Leatside and also in the wider NHS.*

*The Leat is edited by Mike Mintrum, Graphics by Jill Lawrence.*

## Annual General Meeting

The Patient Group Annual General Meeting will be held on 21<sup>st</sup> April at the United Free Church, Fore Street, Totnes at 1800.

Our Guest Speaker will be Chris Balch, erstwhile Chair of the Torbay and South Devon NHS Trust.

His talk will be

‘Shifting care from hospital to community: opportunities and challenges’

The LPG Officers and committee are due for re-election.

Nominations are called for the posts of Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and seven committee members.

Anyone willing to stand for any of these posts should submit their names to the Secretary at [:seclpgleatside@gmail.com](mailto:seclpgleatside@gmail.com) no later than 7<sup>th</sup> April 2026.

Should an election be necessary this will be held at the AGM.

I urge as many of you as possible to attend the AGM to hear what the Patient Group has been doing for you and to have the opportunity to ask questions about the operation of Leatside.

The Practice Manager and two of our GPs will also be in attendance.

As before we ask you to make a small contribution to the cost of hiring the hall, as the patient group does not have any funding.

## From the Chair

GREETINGS TO ALL LEATSIDE SURGERY PATIENTS AND CARERS. AND A BELATED HAPPY NEW YEAR!

This will probably be last edition of The Leat that I will edit, as I am standing down as Chair of the Patient Group after the AGM. My decision is for personal reasons, and I am sorry to be leaving a role that I have found fascinating and rewarding. The role of Chair will be up for election at the AGM, and you will find details elsewhere in this newsletter.

Also sadly, Jinty Balch, our hard-working secretary has also decided to stand down at the AGM, and so that post will also be up for election at the AGM.

## New Total Triage System

The new total triage system introduced in January seems to be working well and Martin Randall will say more about this later in the newsletter. We are anxious to hear from you what you think of the new system and any problems you have encountered. Please also consider completing the surgery’s feedback questionnaire to help fine tune the new system.

## Pharmacy Campaign

As most of you know our campaign to get the Leatside Pharmacy reinstated, was unsuccessful because of the NHS position that the NHS Resolution decision to withdraw the licence issued to Pharmaderma, could not be appealed. In the face of this the committee has reluctantly decided that no further progress can be made. What we hope to do is to try and get agreement with local pharmacies that would improve their service to patients. This might include delivery of medications, text messages to notify prescription readiness and a more helpful service when medications are not available. We are still discussing how best to achieve this and further details will be published in the Leat.

## Surgery news

### Total Triage Update

At the start of January, we introduced a new way of managing appointment requests at Leatside Surgery called Total Triage. This means that every request for help is looked at by our clinical team first, so we can make sure you are offered the right care, at the right time, with the right person.

Before launching, we spoke at length with staff and patients about what this would mean. We also held an open patient meeting to explain the changes and answer questions. We were really grateful for the support and constructive feedback we received, and it helped shape how we put the system into practice.

Now that the new model has been in place for several weeks, we want to share some clear results with you:

- 99% of all requests are reviewed and processed on the same day they are received. This means you are not left waiting days for your request to be looked at.

- All appointments are being offered within two weeks. Depending on clinical need, patients are being offered:
  - Same-day appointments
  - Appointments within one week
  - Appointments within two weeks
  - Signposting or referral to a more appropriate service
  - Same day response from our admin team

As well as this, many problems are being safely dealt with on the day without the need for a face-to-face visit, where this is appropriate.

Patients have told us they appreciate knowing their request has been reviewed quickly and that there is a clear plan in place. Even when an appointment is not needed straight away, there is reassurance in knowing that a clinician has considered the information first.

For staff, the new system has helped create more organised and predictable days. This allows us to focus on patient care rather than reacting to pressure as it builds, something that is particularly important during the winter months.

We know change can feel uncertain, and we are very aware that this is still early days. We will continue to review how the system is working and make improvements where needed. The data we now receive daily helps us monitor waiting times and demand so we can respond quickly if pressures increase.

Thank you for your continued support as we develop the way we deliver care.

### **Goodbye to Sarah Brinkley**

We would also like to say a heartfelt thank you and goodbye to Sarah Brinkley, Advanced Clinical Practitioner, who has recently relocated to the South East.

Sarah has been a valued and much-liked member of our clinical team. She has provided excellent care to many of our patients and has been a supportive colleague within the practice.

She will be greatly missed, and we wish her every success and happiness in her new role and new home.

### **What does the Social Prescribing Team do?**

Our Social Prescribing team helps people connect with non-medical support in their communities to address the practical, social, and emotional factors that influence their health and wellbeing.

We provide holistic, person-centred support by looking at an individual's whole situation. Because health is shaped by a wide range of social, economic, and environmental factors, we work closely with and signpost people to local groups and national organisations that can help with issues such as loneliness, isolation, stress, housing concerns, long-term health conditions, and financial challenges.

Our goal is to empower individuals to make positive changes in their social circumstances, ultimately improving their overall health and wellbeing.

**Emma Fuente**

### **Committee Members**

*Mike Mintrum (Chair), Katie Porkess (Vice-Chair), Janice Balch (Secretary), Sarah Dingley-Brown, Rod Hewett, Sue Barry Campbell, Sally Lougher, Jack Paterson, and Julie Spinks.*