

# Newsletter for our patients

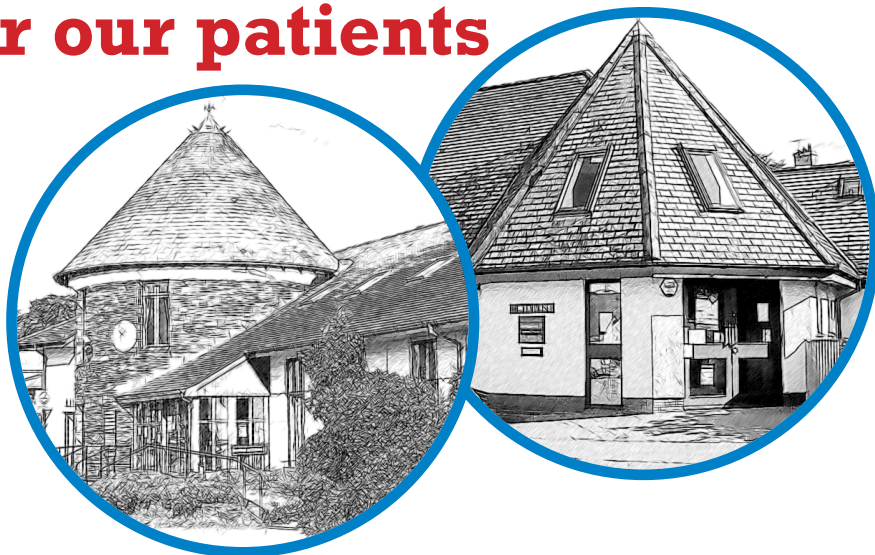
June 2024

Riverside Surgery  
Bovey Tracey  
01626 832666

Tower House Surgery  
Chudleigh  
01626 852379

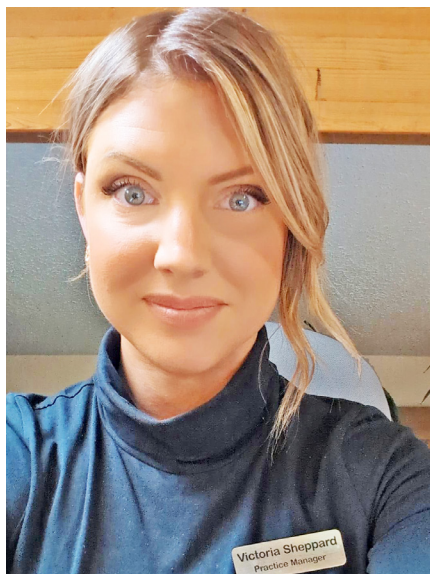


Scan to go to our website



## Staff News

We are so pleased to be able to tell you that we have now appointed a Practice Manager, Victoria Sheppard, who joined us early in May.



Victoria Sheppard

Victoria has a wealth of experience as an administrator and organiser and is already using her many skills to enhance the running of our Practice.

## Telephone system

Our new, long awaited telephone system is working well.

Callers will already have noticed that the message received when phoning the Practice is now much shorter: patients tell us they're pleased with the change.

Further important changes are planned in the way our Reception Team answers calls from patients. These changes are mandated by the NHS and we will tell you all about them in a future Newsletter.

## Covid vaccinations

Anyone over 75, or who has a weakened immune system, should book their booster vaccine dose before the current scheme finishes at the end of June.

## Eligibility for Covid jobs

You can easily check if you're eligible for a June Covid job: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/covid-19/covid-19-vaccination/getting-a-covid-19-vaccine/>

## Book your job

You can book an appointment with us: we have two sessions left: 13th June at Riverside and 14th June at Tower House.

You can also book at other sites, via a phone call to **119** or online at: <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/covid-19-services/covid-19-vaccination-services/book-covid-19-vaccination/>

## Hand hygiene

During the Covid pandemic, we all got used to washing or sanitising our hands frequently. Unfortunately, many of us have

now gone back to our previous habits and are no longer as conscientious about hand hygiene.

It's still important to look after our hands and keep them clean, particularly after using the toilet, to prevent passing on common diseases, including those which cause vomiting and diarrhoea.

The message is **Keep Your Hands Clean**, especially before doing anything connected with preparing food.

You don't have to buy fancy hand washes: using water with a quality skin-friendly soap for a minute or so does the trick.

## Pertussis vaccination

Pertussis is the medical name for whooping cough.

Data released from the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) for the first quarter of 2024, indicates that there were 2,793 cases of whooping cough across the country, as well as five infant deaths.

Whooping cough is a cyclical disease that regularly peaks every 3 to 5 years and, unfortunately, it is anticipated that cases will continue to rise for several months.

Pertussis vaccination is offered in a timely manner to pregnant women wherever possible. To protect their baby, it is very important for pregnant women to

be up to date with their pertussis vaccination. Very young infants are at risk of serious disease and death if they catch whooping cough. If their mother has had her pertussis vaccination, this gives protection to the baby during its early days.

Babies in their early months are too young to be vaccinated, so maternal vaccination is the best method of defence to protect them against this severe disease.

Anyone pregnant will be offered pertussis vaccination from 16 weeks gestation, and will remain eligible for vaccination right up to the birth.

If you know anyone pregnant, please let them know about the need to be up to date with their pertussis vaccination.

## Our Newsletters

These Newsletters are prepared by our Patient Participation Group (PPG) and enable us to let patients know about what is happening in the Practice. They also cover important medical topics as they arise.

The style of our Newsletters has evolved over the years to what you see here, the 23rd issue since the first one (which was dated Winter 2017).

## Our Patient Participation Group

Our PPG is open to all registered patients and to anyone who is a carer of a registered patient.

No training is required in order to become a member, just a genuine interest in taking positive action to help our practice by giving your constructive opinions and some time.

You can get involved in the work of the PPG in a number of ways. You can participate as much or as little as you are able or wish to.

Ideally the PPG will reflect the diversity of the registered patients including for example

by age, gender, ethnicity and health issues.

So are you interested and want to find out more? Or would you prefer an informal chat with the Chair of the group first?

Email your interest to [btcp.ppg@nhs.net](mailto:btcp.ppg@nhs.net) or phone your surgery and speak to Victoria, our Practice Manager, or you can complete an online form to register your interest: <https://www.towerhousesurgery.co.uk/SecureForm?FID=95a8e9b8-26a5-406c-9648->

## Annual General Meeting

The PPG AGM will be held at Riverside on Wednesday 17th July.

Riverside will be open at 7:15 pm ready for the meeting to begin at 7:45 pm.

This will be a good opportunity for anyone interested in joining the PPG to have a chat and see how it works.

## Pharmacy Closure

### Comment from Dr Ben Ward:

"The current Community Pharmacy contract holders for Bovey Tracey, Ascent Healthcare, have been successful in their request to the Devon Intermediate Care Board to amalgamate their two pharmacy licences in Bovey into one. Sadly, as a result, they have vacated the Riverside Pharmacy premises.

"Our Practice was not consulted on this move and was not named by the Devon Intermediate Care Board as an 'interested party' in the process. The Practice, therefore, did not have an opportunity to formally share our opinions with the Devon ICB (though a number of our patients did express their own misgivings to the Board).

"This change has not been in the best interests of our patients or the Practice. We shared our concerns with the Devon ICB as soon as we knew of the closure."

<https://devon.icb.nhs.uk/nhs-devon-board/>

If you would like to give us your thoughts about the closure of Riverside Pharmacy, please contact Victoria, our Practice Manager, by letter, or by email to:

[contact.btcp@nhs.net](mailto:contact.btcp@nhs.net)

## Lyme Disease

This disease is spread by tiny ticks and can cause very long-term severe health problems. It's becoming more prevalent as our climate warms up.

A website (not connected to the NHS) is dedicated to publicising information on all aspects of Lyme Disease: <https://lymediseaseuk.com>

The NHS's views on Lyme Disease can be found at: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/lyme-disease/>

The NHS site contains clear pictures of the "bull's eye" rash frequently seen after a bite from an infected tick. Note though that the rash may vary considerably from the classic "bull's eye".

## Prevention

As with many other aspects of ill health, prevention of an infection is far better than trying to treat it afterwards.

The NHS Lyme Disease information says:

### To reduce the chance of being bitten:

- ❖ cover your skin while walking outdoors and tuck trousers into socks
- ❖ use insect repellent on your clothes and skin – products containing DEET are best
- ❖ stay on clear paths whenever possible
- ❖ wear light-coloured clothing so ticks are easier to see and brush off

## Removing attached ticks

The NHS Lyme Disease website also sets out how to safely remove a tick which has attached itself to your skin. You'll need good eyesight together with very finely tipped tweezers.