

Litchdon Medical Centre

Surgery Newsletter



Issue: Spring 2026

Welcome to Litchdon's newsletter.
It gives you all of the latest Practice news
which we hope you will find useful.



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This month we're trying out a new look –
let us know what you think of this
newsletter by scanning the QR code:

Feedback for Litchdon Medical
Centre's new style practice
newsletter



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Practice Management Association Awards

We are proud of recent staff achievements on being shortlisted as finalists for the Practice Management Association awards at a national level.

🇬🇧🇮🇪 Innovation in General Practice Award

Darren, PCN Dementia Support Worker

Recognised for his incredible dedication and contribution to shaping our unique PCN Dementia Support Service.

🇬🇧🇮🇪 Outstanding Contribution to General Practice Award

Rowan, PCN Wellbeing Link Worker

Celebrated for her inclusive and comprehensive design and implementation of the Pathway Prescription Programme. Find out more about the programme by visiting:

www.barnstaplealliance.co.uk/pathway_prescription



🇬🇧🇮🇪★ Lifetime Achievement Award Finalist Sharon Bates (Management Partner)

A truly well-deserved recognition of her dedication and exceptional leadership — not only at Litchdon, but across the wider North Devon healthcare and voluntary sector throughout her extensive career.

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Wishing Sharon a Happy Retirement 🌸

After 12 wonderful years with Litchdon, Sharon has taken early retirement from her role as Practice Manager at the end of March 2026. She first joined Litchdon as a receptionist when she was 17 before leaving to continue her career within the NHS at North Devon District Hospital. After 22yrs working at the hospital, Sharon then returned to the practice as our Practice Manager in June 2014. Through dedication, hard work, and genuine care for both patients and colleagues, Sharon became an invaluable leader of our team. During this time, she was also involved with several charities within the local community; previously Chair of Trustees for North Devon Hospice, currently Director for North Devon Against Domestic Abuse, Trustee & Chair of Alstrom Syndrome UK and a volunteer dog walker for the Cinnamon Trust.

While we are very sad to see her leave this position, we are delighted that she will continue supporting primary care locally as Management Lead for the Barnstaple Alliance PCN and Co-Management Lead for the North Devon Primary Care Collaborative Board. We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks for her many years of commitment, leadership, and service to our practice and our patients.



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Welcoming Hannah into the role 🙌

Hannah Doidge has stepped into the role of Practice Manager from 1st April 2026. Hannah started with us in 2014 as a member of the reception team before working in various roles, including Personal Assistant to the Practice Manager, Ops & IT Coordinator, PCN Operational Manager, and Deputy Practice Manager.

Hannah has also recently passed her Level 5 Operational & Departmental Manager apprenticeship with distinction. A lot of hard work went into completing this course, and this is a fantastic and well-deserved achievement that will stand her in good stead for her new role.

We are very proud of her achievements and development and wish her every success in her new role.



(Sharon Bates, left & Hannah Doidge, right)

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Fundraising for Charity

Our Christmas charity raffle raised an amazing £700 which we have donated over 3 charities:



This year's charity to receive the annual donation as chosen by the GPs is Wave Wahines.

Wave Wahines exists to create joyful, inclusive spaces where women and girls can access surfing, connect with nature and build community. Their vision is for a world where every woman and girl – no matter her background – feels safe, seen and celebrated in the ocean to inspire the next generation of surfers.



We collected items for NDADA (North Devon Against Domestic Abuse) during November. Thanks to everyone's kind generosity we were able to donate many items such as children's books, children's toys, toiletries and gift cards.



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Covid Spring Booster & RSV Vaccinations

We are in the process of inviting eligible patients to book their COVID spring booster vaccination.

Invitations will be sent by text message with a booking link – please use this link to arrange your appointment. If we don't have a mobile number for you, we will contact you by phone or post instead.

Clinics will run on selected Thursday evenings and a Saturday throughout April and May.

Our outreach team will be in touch directly with patients who are housebound to arrange a visit.

Those who are eligible at the time will also be offered the RSV vaccine. This vaccine protects against Respiratory Syncytial Virus, a common virus causing severe lung infections like pneumonia and bronchiolitis.

Please note there is no need to contact the practice about these vaccinations. We will be in touch with everyone who is eligible as soon as booking is available.

More information on who should have the vaccinations can be found here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/vaccinations/covid-19-vaccine/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/respiratory-syncytial-virus-rsv/>

Thank you for your patience and support.



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**North Devon and Torridge Climate Forum
National Emergency Briefing
Climate and Biodiversity**



Saturday April 18th at 11.00am in Barnstaple Library, Room 3b (top floor)

Wednesday April 22nd at 7pm at Braunton Academy, Issac Hall, Braunton

The Forum will focus on the **National Emergency Briefing**, given in Westminster late last year, to an audience of 1,200, including 120 MPs and leaders from business, culture, faith, sport and the media. It was presented by leading UK experts in climate science, food security, economics, national security, nature and of course, health.

The Briefing has now been edited into a 45 minute film, 'The People's Emergency Briefing', which presents a calm, evidence-based overview of how the climate and nature crisis is affecting everyday life in Britain - and what the science says about future risks and responses. The initiative is explicitly non-partisan and supported by a wide range of organisations, including the National Trust, WWF, the Royal Meteorological Society, UK Health Alliance, National Education Union, Exeter University, Church of England and many others.

In January, Government published the report by the Joint Intelligence Committee on '**Global Biodiversity Loss, Ecosystem Collapse and National Security**'. The Committee warns that environmental degradation is a direct and major threat to UK food security, national security and economic stability.

The Forum will show the film, followed by a discussion on what more we can do locally to give the National Emergency Briefing and the report of the Joint Intelligence Committee the recognition they deserve so that the public can be fully informed.

If you can't make the Climate Forum, watch out for other locations. You can contact Rosie, Litchdon PPG, 07713168331 for more information.

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Blood pressure is a normal part of how our bodies work. But when it stays too high for too long it can put extra strain on the heart and blood vessels, increasing the risk of heart attacks, strokes, heart failure, kidney disease, vision loss and even dementia.

Monitor and track your blood pressure by purchasing your own easy to use BP machine, get it checked at your local pharmacy or now even borrow a monitor for free from your local library. Once checked, you can see what the results might mean by using the online NHS blood pressure checker, which also provides advice and guidance on what action to take on your results.

<https://www.nhs.uk/health-assessment-tools/check-your-blood-pressure-reading>

1 in 3 adults in the UK have a raised blood pressure and many don't realise it, but there are small everyday choices we can make that may help bring it down:

- Exercise
- Stop smoking
- Reduce alcohol & caffeine intake
- Look after your mental health/lower stress
- Medication compliance



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65+ Men

A simple scan can tell you if you
have an abdominal aortic aneurysm

This is an enlargement of the main blood vessel in
the abdomen and if left untreated it can be fatal

Men aged 65+ are most at risk

NHS screening invitations will be sent to men aged 65
this year and those over 65 can request a scan



For more information visit www.screening.nhs.uk or talk to your GP

Contact us direct at: Somerset & North Devon AAA Screening Programme,
Musgrove Park Hospital, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 5DA

Telephone: 01823 344567 email: SaNDAAA@somersetft.nhs.uk



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CONNECTING TO YOUR COMMUNITY



Take a look at the community listings,
events and volunteering opportunities
available in
North Devon and Torridge.

REGISTER TODAY
www.devonconnect.org



Managed locally by North Devon Voluntary Services



Email: admin@ndvs.org.uk

Tel: 01271 866300



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Hand Hygiene

Hand hygiene helps prevent the spread of infections in communities, particularly in healthcare and care home settings. Regular hand washing or sanitising can significantly reduce the risk and spread of viruses and infections such as flu, diarrheal illnesses, respiratory infections and helps battle antibiotic resistance by limiting pathogen transmission.

As part of the CQC requirement, our staff are audited and observed annually for their hand hygiene, including non-clinical staff, to ensure both patient and staff safety in the prevention of infection spread.

How to wash your hands effectively

- Before applying any soap, wet your hands thoroughly with warm running water.
- Apply one measured dose of liquid soap.
- Use the below six stages to decontaminate all areas of your hands.
- Rinse hands thoroughly with warm running water.
- Dry hands with paper towel using a patting technique or use hand dryer, paying particular attention to the gaps between your fingers.



Palm to palm



Palm to back with
fingers interlaced



Palm to palm with
fingers interlaced



Fingers clasped



Rotational rubbing
of both thumbs



Tips of fingers in
opposite palm

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Think Green 



Please help with carbon and noise pollution by turning off your car engine while in the car park.

Try alternative modes of transport for getting around, such as car sharing, using the bus, cycling or walking.

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361 Energy

361 Energy is a non-profit, Community Interest Company who can support you to save money on fuel and water bills.

They provide free, independent advice to homeowners, tenants, landlords, businesses and community organisations throughout North Devon to find practical ways to manage bills reduce energy usage and access cleaner heat and power, saving money and cutting harmful carbon emissions.



They can help with:

- energy and water debt
- discounts and changing supplier
- energy saving solutions
- free home visits

Services include:

- in-home energy visits to offer practical energy saving solutions
- help understanding bills and how to pay less
- advice on energy and water debt, including debt write-off
- energy efficiency funding for home improvements
- free energy saving measures such as LED lightbulbs

Visit <https://361energy.org> for more information

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As we head into spring and summer, we may be lucky enough to see some sunshine, however even in the nice weather we need to remember to stay safe.

HERE COMES THE SUN **NHS**

...doo da doo doo

Make the most of your summer by staying SUN SAFE

Sun safety practices allow you to enjoy the summer months freely without compromising your health.

-  Keep out of the sun at the hottest time of the day, **between 11am and 3pm**
-  Regularly drink water and limit your alcohol intake
-  If you are going to do a physical activity, plan to do this during **cooler times** e.g. early morning or evening
-  Keep your home cool by **closing windows and curtains** in rooms that face the sun
-  When outside, cover up with suitable clothing such as an appropriate hat and sunglasses, **seek shade and apply sunscreen with at least SPF 30 and a four star UVA protection**
-  Check on family, friends and neighbours who may be at **higher risk of becoming unwell**, and if you are at higher risk, ask them to do the same for you

If you are concerned about yours or a loved one's health during hot weather,
seek medical advice by visiting [111.nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk)

For further info & advice go to <https://www.hmcoastguard.uk/safety-advice>

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TOP 10 TIPS For The Beach!

1 Always swim at a beach watched by our friendly Beach Patrol Officers

2 Swim between the red and yellow flags

3 Always swim with a friend. Children should swim under supervision at all times

4 Don't swim under the influence of alcohol or drugs

5 Use any emergency intercom available at all First Aid Offices

6 Read and obey safety signs

7 Don't run and dive into the water

8 Be Sun Smart - use at least SPF15+ sunscreen

9 Check weather conditions before you swim

10 Wear proper swimwear and footwear