DECEMBER 2025 | ISSUE 9

FORDINGBRIDGE SURGERY NEWS

The Fordingbridge Surgery Newsletter - Christmas 2025

Working in partnership with all our patients, providing high quality care in a professional, safe and friendly manner



For this edition of our newsletter, we have chosen a photograph taken on Monday 8th December at our festive thank-you evening, where we celebrated working together with our wonderful volunteers, the trustees of Friends of Fordingbridge Surgery, and our Patient Participation Group (FOFS PPG).

The photograph was taken beside our POD room, which was made possible thanks to funding secured by our dedicated trustees. Further details about the POD room were shared in our autumn newsletter, which is available to view on our website. This valuable facility supports the delivery of our Healthy Hearts Programme, which you can read more about on page 2. We encourage all patients to look after their heart health by booking an appointment in our POD room via our online appointment system to check and take responsibility for their blood pressure.

This Christmas, surgery staff chose to support the Sarah Kinsley Fund, a fantastic local charity. Funds were raised through a Christmas jumper day and festive activities. Please see page 4 to find out more about this wonderful charity and how you can support them.

This newsletter is packed with helpful information and guidance for our patients, and we encourage you to read it and share it with others who may find it useful. You will also find an update from Jane Marlow, Chair of Friends of Fordingbridge Surgery and the Patient Participation Group, highlighting the excellent work achieved recently. This includes the children's Christmas card competition and early plans looking ahead to 2026.

If you would like to become involved in this friendly and supportive group, there are currently vacancies for a trustee and an honorary secretary. We would be delighted to hear from anyone interested in helping to support the surgery and our patient community.

On behalf of the whole Fordingbridge Surgery team, we hope all our patients had a very happy Christmas, and we wish you all a very happy and healthy New Year.

from Practice Manager, Michelle Raymond

Fordingbridge Surgery Healthy Hearts Campaign



The Fordingbridge Surgery

JOIN THE FORDINGBRIDGE HEALTHY HEARTS PROGRAMME

Take control of your blood pressure and protect your future

Why it Matters

Every 5 minutes, someone in the UK has a stroke or heart attack – and in half of those cases, the cause is high blood pressure.

It's often silent. But it's **easy to check** – and we can help you act early to stay well.

Our Mission

We're launching Fordingbridge Healthy Hearts to:

- Prevent strokes and heart attacks
- Help you manage your blood pressure
- Support healthier lifestyles
- Spot problems earlier, and act faster

Quick Facts

- 1 in 3 adults in the UK has high blood pressure
- 6 million people don't even know they have it
- High blood pressure costs the NHS £2.1 billion each year
- We're already supporting 3,000 local patients with high blood pressure or heart risks

NHS Health Checks

Your Free 5-Year Heart MOT

If you're aged 40–74, you're entitled to a free NHS Health Check every 5 years.

This check assesses your risk of:

- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Type 2 diabetes
- Kidney disease

Have you had yours?

See your NHS Health Check history in the NHS App

Just log in and go to 'View your GP health record' to see past health checks and test results.

Not sure? Ask our reception team – we'll be happy to help.

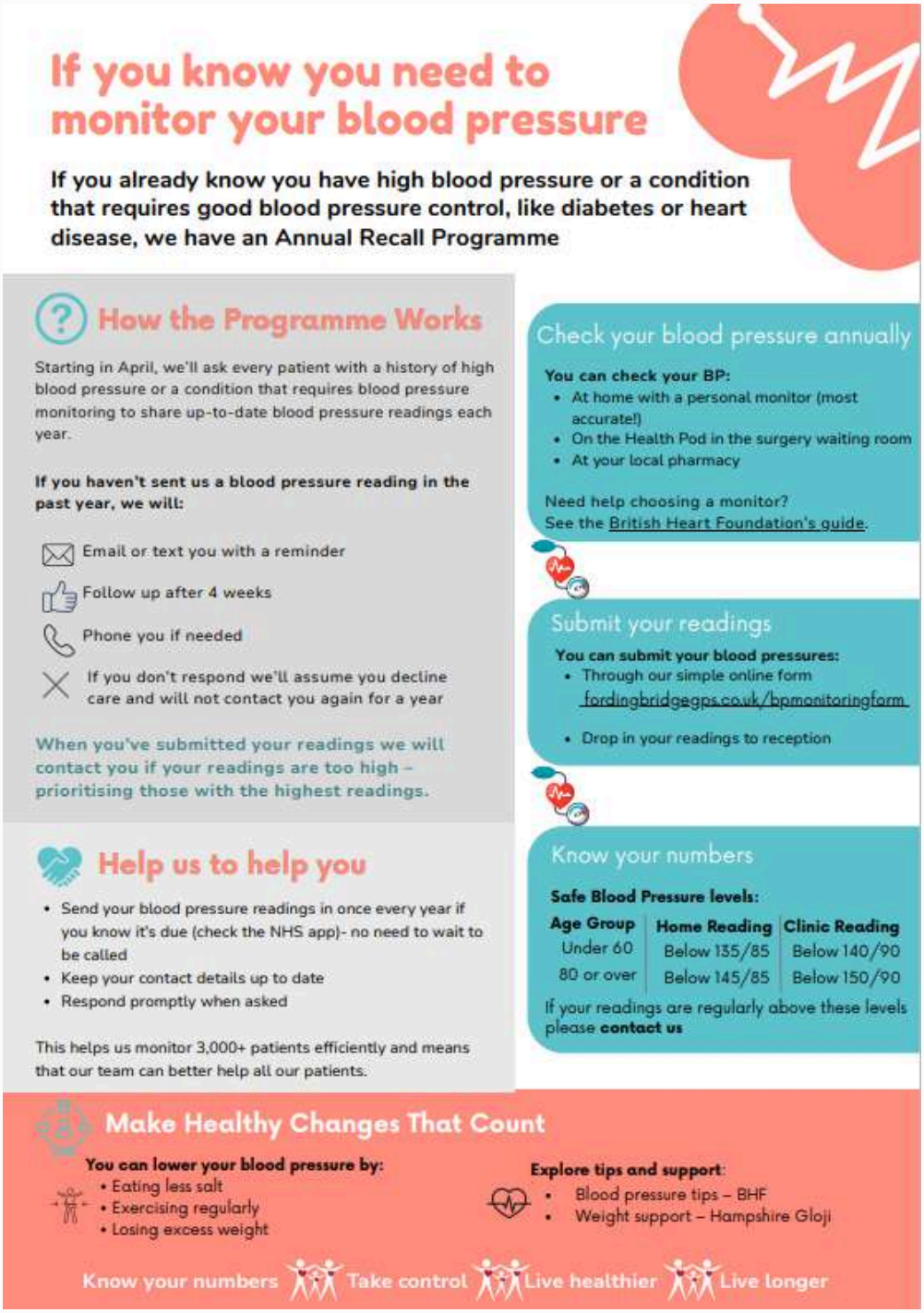
Let's Do This Together

Checking your blood pressure is simple, fast, and life-saving. We're here to support you every step of the way. Let's keep Fordingbridge hearts healthy.

Know your numbers | Take control | Live healthier | Live longer

Book your POD appointment online, or ask a receptionist

Fordingbridge Surgery Healthy Hearts Campaign



Medico Legal (private work) requests

Not all services provided in this surgery are paid for by the NHS.

Medico legal requests such as To Whom It May Concern (TWIMC) letters, insurance claim forms, firearms licences or Medical examinations for other organisations (eg DVLA) are private requests for which a fee is payable.

From 1st January 2026, the process for private requests is changing, and payment for these services will be required in advance. Work is completed as soon as possible, but cannot take priority over the NHS Services we provide.

Further information about private services and the fees they incur can be found on our website https://fordingbridgegps.co.uk/docs/J82131/GP%20Fees%20April%202025-26.pdf

WINTER NEWS

PRINCESS ROYAL TRUST FOR CARERS

Thursday 20th November was Carer's Rights Day and we were pleased to welcome Amanda who joined us from the Princess Royal Trust for Carers.

Amanda spent time with our clinicians explaining how to refer carers to the service, and she also set up a small display in the North Reception waiting room to promote their service including Emergency Planning and Carer Support to carers.

Leaflets are available for collection from the surgery, and more information about the services and support they can offer are available online https://carercentre.com/







SARAH KINSLEY FUND

This year, the team at Fordingbridge Surgery have picked the Sarah Kinsley Fund as their chosen Christmas charity.

The Sarah Kinsley Fund was founded in the late 1970's by a group of friends who wanted to raise money to support a teenager, Sarah Kinsley, who had kidney failure. Sarah died, sadly, but a charity was founded in her memory to create a permanent source of help for children and young adults with special needs. The aim of the Sarah Kinsley Fund is to help pay for those things that can really help the child or young person and their family, that are just not available from the NHS or the education system.

Our Christmas Jumper Day on 8th December was supported by staff, FOFSPPG Trustees and our amazing band of volunteers who joined us in the evening for mulled wine and mince pies.



More information about the Sarah Kinsley Fund can be found on their website https://sarahkinsleyfund.org.uk/

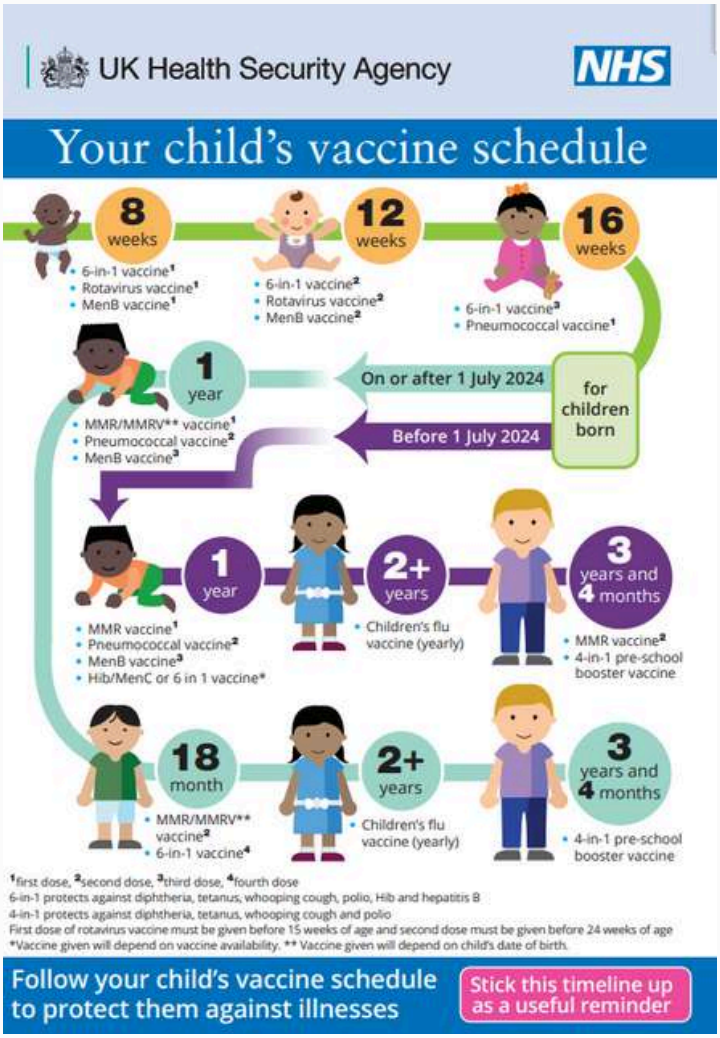
MEDICAL NEWS

2026 Childhood immunisation schedule changes

Varicella (chicken pox) vaccination added to routine childhood immunisations

From 1st January 2026, all children will be offered a combined measles, mumps, rubella and varicella (MMRV) vaccine instead of measles, mumps and rubella vaccine (MMR) as part of the childhood routine two-dose vaccination schedule. Dose one will be offered at one year of age and dose two will be brought forward from three years four months to the new eighteen month appointment.

There will be a single dose selective MMRV catch-up programme for older children who have not yet had chickenpox infection or two doses of varicella vaccination which will start from 1 November 2026 to 31 March 2028. Eligible children will be called during the catch up period, please wait for your invitation.



Lung Cancer Screening Programme Update

Thank you for all your interest in the new National Lung Cancer Screening Programme!

We have received many enquiries - please see below for the answers of some frequently asked questions:

If you are eligible for the Lung Cancer Screening Programme (age 55-74 and have previously smoked), please expect an invitation letter to arrive in the post in the next 6 months. These letters are part of a national programme and sent to you directly by the Hampshire screening service.

Please wait for your invitation to arrive, as the surgery is unable to refer you sooner, however if you develop chest symptoms that you are concerned about, then please contact the surgery as usual.

If you require a CT scan as part of your screening, this is available only in Southampton and unfortunately cannot be offered elsewhere.

Dental Problems? Here's What You Need to Know



Information for Patients Attending GP Practices with Dental Concerns

❗ **Please Read Before Booking or Attending Your GP**

GPs are **not trained or equipped** to diagnose or treat dental conditions. We understand it can be frustrating if you're struggling to access NHS dental care, but it's important to speak to the **right healthcare professional** for your issue.

🦷 **Why Can't GPs Treat Dental Problems?**

- Dental problems such as **toothache, abscesses, broken teeth, and gum disease** require a dentist's expertise, equipment, and treatment facilities
- GPs **cannot:**
  * Perform dental examinations
  * Extract teeth
  * Drain dental abscesses
  * Prescribe dental antibiotics
- **Antibiotics alone** are **not a long-term solution** to dental issues

✅ What You Should Do If You Have a Dental Problem

1. Try to Contact an NHS Dentist First

Even if you are not currently registered:

- Visit: www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist
- Or call: **NHS 111** (free, 24/7)

They will:

- Help you find an **available NHS dental provider**
- Refer you to an **urgent dental service** if appropriate

2. For Urgent Dental Problems (Including Pain, Swelling, or Trauma)

If you cannot get an urgent appointment with a dentist:

- Call **NHS 111**

  *They can refer you to an **Urgent Dental Care Centre**

  *Available **evenings and weekends** in many areas

3. When Should I Go to A&E?

You should **only attend A&E** if you have:

- **Severe facial swelling** that affects vision, breathing, or swallowing
- **Uncontrolled bleeding** following dental work
- **Trauma** causing loss of consciousness or broken facial bones

A&E is not appropriate for routine dental pain or infections.

🚫**Why Antibiotics Are Not Always the Answer**

- Dental infections usually **need treatment at the source**, such as a filling, root canal, or extraction
- Antibiotics without dental treatment **can make things worse** in the long run
- Dentists are trained to assess when antibiotics are necessary — **GPs are not**

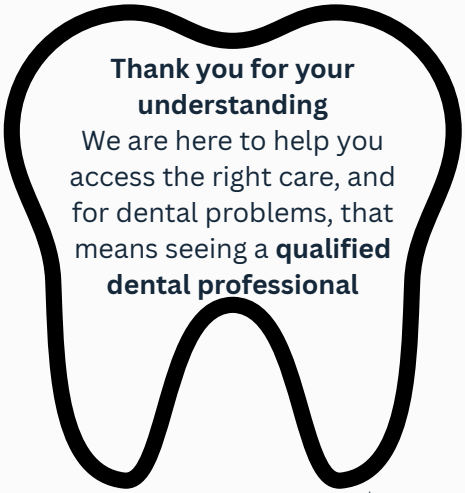
💡 **Top Tips to Avoid Dental Issues**

- **Brush twice a day** with fluoride toothpaste
- Avoid sugary snacks and drinks
- **See a dentist regularly**, even if you don't have pain
- Don't wait until there's a problem to seek dental care

🔎 **Still Need Help?**

If you're struggling to find a dentist or don't know what to do:

- Call **NHS 111**
- Visit: **www.nhs.uk** for advice and service directories



THINK PHARMACY FIRST!



From soothing an earache to treating a UTI, your local pharmacist can now provide medicines for seven conditions, if necessary, without the need for a GP appointment or prescription.

Subject to age eligibility. For more information, visit nhs.uk/thinkpharmacyfirst

See your pharmacist

Help us help you





MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

We know that this time of year can be a tricky time. Help and support can be accessed from the following resources:

Call

111 for non-emergency medical concerns

Safe Haven: **0344 2645310**

Samaritans: **116 123**

Text

'SHOUT' to **85258**

FRIENDS OF FORDINGBRIDGE SURGERY - PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP CHAIRMAN'S NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2025

Dear Friends,

Since our last update, the Friends of Fordingbridge Surgery have been busy and enjoyed a whole series of events, each one bringing our community together and raising much-needed funds for patient support.

Our first gathering was a delightful coffee morning on 20th September at a new venue for us, Godshill Village Hall. It was lovely to welcome both familiar faces and new friends for coffee, conversation, and truly delicious cake. Thanks to your generosity, we raised £268.

Then, on 1st October, we celebrated a particularly special moment: the official opening of the new pod room. Councillor David Millar, joined by the Mayor, cut the ribbon. Dr Downes expressed thanks to FoFS and the Town Council for funding the new health pod and pod room, and Dr Wallis offered an encouraging update on the Healthy Hearts project currently underway in the surgery.

October was, as ever, flu-clinic season. The surgery team delivered an outstanding service, from smooth booking to efficient vaccinations. Our wonderful patients were incredibly generous, and with the help of Mel and Sheila, FoFS raised a remarkable £2,896, all of which will benefit patients.

Later in the month, on 24th October, we enjoyed a lively quiz night at St Mary's Hall, Fordingbridge. Around 60 enthusiastic quizzers joined our quizmaster Andy for an evening of fun and friendly competition. A tasty ploughman's supper fuelled the brainpower, and the event raised £562.

This autumn also saw a brand-new initiative: our Christmas card design competition for local schools. We were thrilled to receive entries from Forest Edge Schools (Breamore, Hale and Hyde), Forres Sandle Manor, and St James' School in Alderholt.
Our winners were:
1st: Annabel (Hale)
2nd: Mai (Breamore)
3rd: Roy (Forres Sandle Manor)
Runners-up: Lucas (Alderholt), Abigail (Hyde) and Esther (Alderholt)





FRIENDS OF FORDINGBRIDGE SURGERY - PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP CHAIRMAN'S NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2025

Continued:

It was a joy to meet the children during the Fordingbridge Light Switch-On, where they received Waterstones gift tokens, presented by Father Christmas and introduced by the Mayor. Trustees Andy and Carole Ann created a wonderful display of all the cards in the shop window next to the Kebab House. We also ran a stall during the Light Switch-On, selling Christmas cards and raffle tickets. The town hall was buzzing with visitors—many stopping to chat, meet us, and support FoFS. Thanks to everyone who joined us, we raised an additional £342.All in all, it has been a fantastic year, full of energy, community spirit, and great teamwork from both our fundraising group and our PPG.

If you have secretarial skills and would like to join a lively and committed group, please see the advert for our Secretary role on the back page of this newsletter. (This is not a trustee position.) We are always delighted to welcome new volunteers to help at our events.

Plans for 2026, our 25th Anniversary Year, will begin early in the new year, so keep an eye on Facebook and on the surgery screens in both reception areas for news of upcoming events. We're excited already for what will be a special year!

Wishing you all a very Happy Christmas and a healthy, peaceful 2026.

With best wishes,
Jane Marlow
Chairman, Friends of Fordingbridge Surgery Patient Participation Group







FORDINGBRIDGE SURGERY

CHRISTMAS HOURS 2025/2026

Wednesday 24th December 2025 (Christmas Eve)	Normal Hours
Thursday 25th December 2025 (Christmas Day)	CLOSED
Friday 26th December 2025 (BOXING DAY)	CLOSED
Saturday 27th December 2025	CLOSED
Sunday 28th December 2025	CLOSED
Monday 29th December 2025	Normal Hours
Tuesday 30th December 2025	Normal Hours
Wednesday 31st December 2025	Normal Hours
Thursday 1st January 2026 (NEW YEAR'S DAY)	CLOSED
Friday 2nd January 2026 and onwards	Normal Hours

When the surgery is closed and you need urgent medical advice, please call

111 - Out of Hours Service

or

999 – for a life-threatening problem

When dropping off or collecting prescriptions please check the collection dates carefully

PLEASE GIVE THE DISPENSARY AT LEAST FIVE WORKING DAYS WHEN RE-ORDERING MEDICATION
PLEASE DO NOT RUN OUT JUST BEFORE CHRISTMAS or THE NEW YEAR

THE FORDINGBRIDGE SURGERY – DR P DOWNES & PARTNERS

TARGET

TIME FOR AUDIT
RESEARCH GOVERNANCE
EDUCATION TRAINING

The surgery will be closed on
Thursday 12th February 2026
from
12:30pm – 6:30pm

Our GPs and Nurses are attending essential training provided by Hampshire and Isle of Wight Integrated Care Board (ICB)

If you are unwell during this time and would like medical advice, please ring the Out of Hours service on **111.**

If you have an emergency, please dial **999**
This surgery will re-open at on

Friday 13th February 2026

at 8:00am

SbPuRT social blister pack recycling team
www.spurt.uk

FORDINGBRIDGE GREENER LIVING

Blister Pack Recycling Scheme

We are pleased to announce the continuing success of our blister pack collection events!

Our next events will be on

Saturday 17th January 2026
Saturday 21st February 2026
Saturday 21st March 2026

in Avonway Annexe, from 10am - 12 Noon alongside the Repair Cafe

A reminder that empty, mixed material (plastic and foil) medication blister packs will be accepted, with a donation of £1 per 50 packs. The recycling scheme costs £112 per box for around 5000 packs. Your help is much appreciated.

Repair Café

fofs Friends of Fordingbridge Surgery

THE FORDINGBRIDGE SURGERY

fofs
Friends of Fordingbridge Surgery
Supporting with care, compassion and consideration

Friends of Fordingbridge Surgery

have a vacancy for an

Honorary Secretary
and a
Trustee

The positions will be vacant from the Annual General Meeting in April 2026

Further information can be obtained from:
Judy Poore – fofs.ppg@gmail.com
or Jane Marlow – fofs2jm@gmail.com

Raising funds to purchase equipment to benefit the patients of Fordingbridge Surgery

FOFS Patron
Mr Ian Newman

fofs.ppg@gmail.com

Registered Charity
Number 1094882