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To All Barnabas PPG Members ...
[Printed copies to those PPG members without email]

[If you can't read any of the attached documents, or want printed copies of anything mentioned, please contact me and I'll try to send you a copy.]

Welcome to the November bulletin for Barnabas PPG members. It is mostly Covid-19 this month.

Coronavirus

There's a lot of talk at present about the Covid-19 vaccines. I'm not going into any of the details here apart from to say that for anyone interested in some overview and a look at the logistics I've written a number of posts on my blog, <https://zenmischief.com/>, over the last month.

Vaccine Roll-out Priorities

The *Guardian* yesterday (Saturday 26/11) ran an article outlining updated thinking on the order in which various groups are offered Covid-19 vaccination. The highest priorities seem to be: (1) older adults in care homes and care home workers; (2) those 80 and over and health and social care workers; (3) those 75 years and over; (4) those 70 and over and clinically extremely vulnerable individuals; others then follow. However this is not yet fixed and could change. *Guardian* report at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/28/extremely-vulnerable-in-uk-given-high-priority-for-coronavirus-vaccine>.

Updated Guidance

Earlier this month the government issued updated guidance for the clinically extremely vulnerable. Details <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/clinically-extremely-vulnerable-receive-updated-guidance-in-line-with-new-national-restrictions>.

GPs in England told to be ready to administer Covid vaccine

Also early in the month GPs were told to be ready to start administering Covid-19 vaccinations before Christmas, and this seems to be regularly re-emphasised, as the availability of at least one vaccine in the next 2-3 weeks is being hyped up. *Guardian* reports at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/04/gps-in-england-told-to-be-ready-to-administer-covid-vaccine-by-christmas> and <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/10/covid-vaccine-nhs-england-sets-out-plans-for-gp-clinics>.

Free Vitamin D

The BBC reports that over 2.5 million vulnerable people in England will be offered free Vitamin D supplements starting in January. Report at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-55108613>.

Long Covid

And finally in this section ... A significant minority of Covid-19 patients are suffering ongoing illness and symptoms, often for months, in what has been dubbed "long Covid". I'm not sure why anyone is surprised as we know this can happen with other viral infections like glandular fever (as happened to me). One BBC Correspondent has written about the devastating effects at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-54793726>. The NHS is setting up special centres to treat "long Covid" patients, see <https://www.england.nhs.uk/2020/10/nhs-to-offer-long-covid-help/>.

PPG News

Formal PPG Meeting, 18 November, Minutes

We held our second formal meeting via Zoom on Wednesday 18 November. The minutes are attached.

Formal PPG Meetings in 2021

The following dates have been fixed for formal PPG meetings next year.

- Wednesday 20 January, 1330
- Wednesday 17 March, 1330
- Wednesday 19 May, 1330 [AGM]

- Wednesday 21 July, 1330
- Wednesday 15 September, 1330
- Wednesday 17 November, 1330

All the meetings will be at 1330 hrs via Zoom; the links for the Zoom meetings can be found in the minutes of the 18/11 meeting.

Informal Contact Video Calls

Also attached are the notes from our informal video calls since early September.

We have two remaining informal call scheduled for this year:

- Wednesday 2 December, 1300
- Tuesday 15 December, 1600

The Zoom link for both is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7279594414?pwd=VmYwODdoWGg2eTFvTlVjVlZyRmhSQ09>

Informal Contact Video Calls in 2021

I have scheduled dates for our regular 2-weekly-ish informal calls for the whole of 2021, although if we find we no longer need/want them they can be cancelled. The dates & times are:

Thursday 7 January, 1000 :: Tuesday 2 February, 1400 :: Friday 19 February, 1100 :: Thursday 4 March, 1500 :: Tuesday 30 March, 1200
 Monday 12 April, 1600 :: Tuesday 27 April 1800 :: Monday 10 May, 1000 :: Tuesday 1 June, 1400 :: Monday 14 June, 1100 :: Friday 25 June, 1500
 Thursday 8 July, 1200 :: Tuesday 3 August 1600 :: Friday 20 August, 1800 :: Thursday 2 September, 1000 :: Tuesday 28 September, 1400
 Monday 11 October, 1100 :: Friday 22 October 1500 :: Thursday 4 November, 1200 :: Tuesday 30 November 1600 :: Monday 13 December, 1800

These dates and times vary to allow as many as possible to join at least occasionally.

The Zoom link for these meetings is the same as above.

Again the details are also in the minutes of the 18/11 meeting.

General NHS News

Vaccination Importance

There's an NHS article at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/why-vaccination-is-safe-and-important/> on the importance and safety of vaccination in general. The important message is:

Vaccination is the most important thing we can do to protect ourselves and our children against ill health. They prevent up to 3 million deaths worldwide every year. Since vaccines were introduced in the UK, diseases like smallpox, polio and tetanus that used to kill or disable millions of people are either gone or seen very rarely. Other diseases like measles and diphtheria have been reduced by up to 99.9% since their vaccines were introduced.

Or to quote Prof. Alice Roberts:

The two greatest defences against infectious diseases are:

1. Clean water
2. Vaccines – the single most life-saving medical innovation in the history of medicine

Blood Test for Cancers

Early detection of cancer dramatically improves outcomes and life expectancy. Starting next year the NHS is therefore going to trial a blood test which is said to be able to detect over 50 different cancers often years before symptoms become apparent. Note that this is a trial, with a large but limited number of participants; if the results in 2023 show the test works, there will be a larger trial in 2024 and 2025. More in the Guardian report at <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2020/nov/27/nhs-to-trial-blood-test-to-detect-more-than-50-forms-of-cancer>.

Newsletters

Only one newsletter which may be of interest this month, and that's from **Ealing CCG** and is attached.

My final bulletin for this year should be out just after Christmas, so meanwhile here's wishing everyone a peaceful and healthy Christmas (or whatever other mid-winter festival you celebrate).

Keith

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