

## **Some Questions answered on Covid-19 vaccinations by Dr Mark Howcutt**

We are pleased to report that the Aylesbury Vaccination Hub has had a very successful start over the weekend. Our team have been very involved with almost every single doctor and nurse involved in jabbing over the weekend, with great support from our admin team and lots of work by Ellen Solley, our Practice Manager.

### **"Which vaccines are currently available?"**

The Pfizer BioNTech vaccine (Pfizer) is most available currently although there are increasing supplies of the Oxford Astra Zeneca vaccine (AZ) coming through.

### **"Which vaccine should I have?"**

Both vaccines currently available are effective and safe. They both offer good protection even after one dose - although you will need to come for the second dose later to ensure the protection continues. You may have seen that some people are waiting for one vaccine over another. Please do not do this. It is also not true that the Oxford vaccine (AZ) is the "British vaccine" – both have been an international collaboration. Both vaccines are effective and the sooner that we are vaccinated, the sooner that we can relax restrictions.

### **"Where can I have my vaccine?"**

Your Haddenham Medical Centre team are supporting the Aylesbury Vaccination Hub at the Stoke Mandeville Stadium where we are currently giving the Pfizer vaccine. We are jabbing, preparing vaccines and providing administrative and managerial support. We are also delighted that so many of our patients and our Patient Participation Group are involved in volunteering there too. Thank you to everyone who has given up their time for this important work.

The Government has said it would like all over 80 to be vaccinated by the end of January and all patients over 70 to be vaccinated by mid-February. These are ambitious targets. We know that many people would find it easier if we had the vaccines in the practice but we do not yet have information about when that will become possible. In the meanwhile, patients will be invited to attend Stoke Mandeville Stadium and may also be invited to other centres for their jab. If you are, and you can get there safely, please take up this offer. We can only call the right number of patients for the available vaccines and if people do not attend their appointments then vaccines might be wasted which would mean that we cannot reach everyone as quickly.

### **"I've heard that I can have the vaccine at the Odeon Cinema in Aylesbury."**

We've heard that too but despite having received all the update emails and attended all the meetings (including one just three days ago), we have no information about this. It appears this is a pharmacy-led service and that patients will receive a letter inviting them to attend if they are eligible by phoning a national vaccination phone line. We will keep you updated as the information comes to us.

### **"But I would prefer to have my vaccine at the surgery and given by the surgery team."**

We would like to give you the vaccine at the surgery too but so far we have not been allowed to have a supply of vaccine to do this. As you would expect, all of our clinical, admin and reception teams are fully trained to provide the vaccination in the practice as well as at the vaccination centre. We already have extensive plans on how we can provide the AZ vaccine to patients and we could start with just a few days' notice. We've shared these many times with the "powers that be" and they know that we can do this when vaccine supply is available. But please do NOT delay getting your vaccine waiting for us as we cannot know when (or even if) we will be allowed to vaccinate at the surgery.

### **"I've been asked to prove my identity by sharing bank details to book an appointment."**

COVID vaccines are free on the NHS. No-one in the NHS will ever ask you for bank details. Unfortunately, there are criminals who will take any opportunity to try to scam vulnerable patients. Please be vigilant!

