Newsletter June 2022 / Johns blog

See John’s experience below.

Fern House, a little while ago, had a new phone system installed which replaced the old “out of date” system. I recently called to make an appointment and was 28th in the queue, which although sounds high, it at least gave me an idea on how long I was to wait. This in turn gave me the choice to hang on or call back later. I hung on and got through in about 20 minutes. The time however, was not wasted as I did 20 minutes work while waiting. Fern House have experienced teething problems with the new system but once identified have been resolved. The bottom line to me is getting through at peak times or early mornings, can take time so if your call is not urgent, call later, but if you do call at a peak time at least you know where you are in the queue.

When my call was answered I was asked by the receptionist a few relevant questions to determine who best I should talk to or see. Receptionist have been trained to do this as not everyone requires a consultation with a GP e.g. a Nurse Practitioner or Physiotherapist may be better placed to treat you.

Thinking into the future the Covid Pandemic has changed the way GPs operate and I do not believe they will return to the old normal. For decades we have had a GP shortage which has not been addressed by successive Governments. It takes 10 years to train a GP so the solution is not a quick one. To ease the situation this is what can we all do:

* Accept the fact that you may not see a GP
* Only book an emergency appointment if it is actually an emergency
* Remember a pharmacist may well be able to resolve your issue
* If you cannot make your appointment, do CANCEL it
* An appointment is for 10 minutes and for one thing only so prepare and be succinct
* As from mid June you will be offered the choice of a telephone or face to face consultation
* Remember the practice is always extremely busy so be patient and under no circumstance be abusive to staff who are trying to help you.