

# Austen Road Surgery Quarterly Newsletter

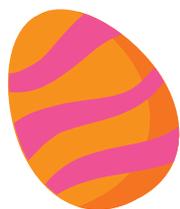
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**AUSTEN  
ROAD  
SURGERY**



**ARS PPG**



**WELCOME**



**To Our Q1 Newsletter!**

Bringing you the latest updates, resources, and stories from Austen Road Surgery and the Patient Participation Group.

In this edition, you'll find important information on surgery hours and how to access care over Easter, updates on new services like Voice Connect, and guidance on when to use NHS 111. We're also highlighting key health topics, including vaccinations and cancer awareness, alongside local support services available across Surrey.

We're sharing a reminder of the impact of missed appointments, with over 1 in 13 appointments lost to no-shows, and how small actions can make a big difference to the wider community. Alongside this, you'll find a patient story celebrating the power of staying active, a recommended read on nutrition and wellbeing, and opportunities to get involved with local groups and upcoming PPG activities.

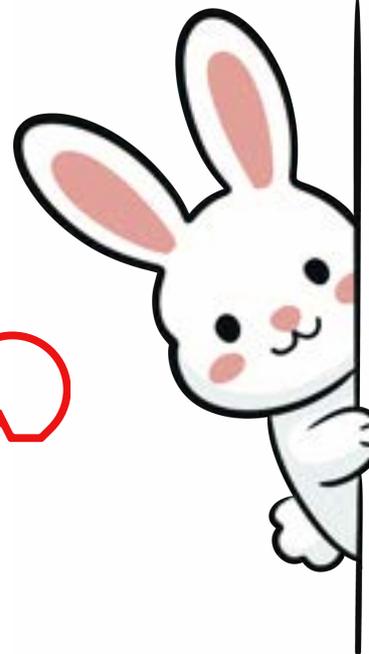
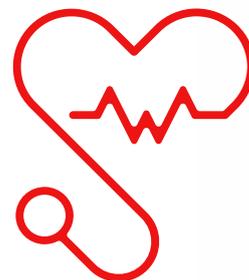
We are always open to feedback and suggestions via the PPG chair Susan Walsh ([susan@theclassificationguru.com](mailto:susan@theclassificationguru.com))

[www.austenroadsurgery.nhs.uk](http://www.austenroadsurgery.nhs.uk)

**01483 564578**

# Surgery Hours

Day	Opening times
Monday	8:00am to 6:30pm
Tuesday	8:00am to 6:30pm
Wednesday	8:00am to 6:30pm
Thursday	8:00am to 6:30pm
Friday	8:00am to 6:30pm
Saturday	Closed
Sunday	Closed



## Surgery Hours - Easter (April 3<sup>rd</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup>)

3 <sup>rd</sup> Good Friday	<b>CLOSED</b>
5 <sup>th</sup> Easter Sunday	<b>CLOSED</b>
6 <sup>th</sup> Easter Monday	<b>CLOSED</b>



### Our Doctors

Dr Kay Stephenson  
Dr William Waller  
Dr Simon James  
Dr Sarah Dalton  
Dr Sarah McKelvie

### Our Nurses

Sue Grinsted  
Bushra Alhamidi  
Nichola Moorey  
Rachel May  
Sophie Oldland



### Other Staff

Dr Soutakbar (Sam) Hessam -  
Advanced MSK Physiotherapist  
Abdul Ireed - Pharmacist

# Holiday urgent and emergency contact details



## OUT OF SURGERY HOURS

- **NHS 111**
- **Woking Walk In Centre** - 8am - 8pm 7 days a week, and throughout Easter. Last admission is 7.30pm.
- **Pharmacist**
- **Haslemere Minor Injuries Unit** - 8am -5pm 7 days a week, and throughout Easter Last patient booked at 4pm,

## NON EMERGENCY CONTACT

As above

## FOR ANY LIFE THREATNING EMERGENCY CALL 999

**999 is for life-threatening emergencies like serious road traffic accidents, strokes and heart attacks.**





## **When to use NHS 111 online or call 111**

**NHS 111 can help if you think you need medical help right now.**

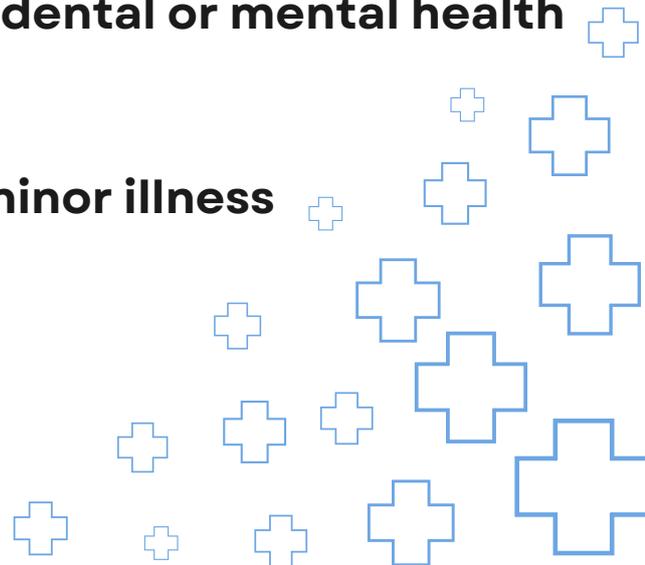
**You can get help from NHS 111:**

- **by using 111 online**
- **in the NHS App**
- **by calling 111**

**111 can direct you to the best place to get help if you cannot contact your GP during the day, or when your GP is closed (out-of-hours).**

**Depending on what you need, you might be advised to:**

- **call 999 or go to A&E in an emergency**
- **go to an urgent treatment centre**
- **see an evening and weekend GP (out-of-hours GP)**
- **book a callback from a nurse**
- **get urgent specialist support, for dental or mental health problems**
- **contact your own GP surgery**
- **see a pharmacist for help with a minor illness**
- **look after yourself safely at home**



# Local pharmacy opening hours over Easter



Town	Pharmacy	Phone Number	Good Friday 3 April 2026	Easter Sunday 5 April 2026	Easter Monday 6 April 2026
Cranleigh	<b>Boots the Chemists</b> Village Chambers, High Street, Cranleigh, GU6 8AT	01483 274207	10:00-16:00	14:00-17:00	Closed
Cranleigh	<b>Cranleigh Pharmacy</b> 128 High Street, Cranleigh, GU6 8RF	01483 274323	14:00-17:00	Closed	Closed
Guildford	<b>Boots the Chemists</b> 85/89 High Street, Guildford, GU1 3DS	01483 561776	08:30-18:00	Closed	10:00-16:00
Guildford	<b>Merrow Park Pharmacy</b> Kingfisher Court, Guildford, GU4 7EW	01483 322225	Closed	10:00-13:00	Closed
Guildford	<b>Superdrug Pharmacy</b> 101 High Street, Guildford, GU1 3DP	01483 560355	09:00-14:00; 14:30-18:00	14:00-17:00	Closed
Guildford	<b>Tesco Pharmacy</b> Ashenden Road, Guildford, GU2 7UN	03456 779310	10:00-16:00	Closed	10:00-16:00



# HELP YOUR COMMUNITY

**569 PATIENTS**

# DIDN'T SHOW UP

(from 1<sup>st</sup> Sep 2025 - 28th Feb 2026)



**7,476**  
appointments



**569**  
no shows



That's  
**1 in 13**  
appointments that could have  
gone to other patients

The cost goes beyond money or our GP's time, it could be putting other people's health at risk.

One day, that person could be you.

**CANCEL VIA THE NHS APP OR CALL US**

Just 1 hour notice can **help another patient**

# Surgery Updates



Thank you, Goodbye and Good Luck to Dr Ricardo Verissimo, who will be leaving the surgery on thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> April. Dr Verissimo will be moving to a Practice nearer to his home and we would like to wish him all the very best.

We are also saying Thank you, Goodbye and Good Luck to our long-standing Practice Manager, Alison, who will be retiring at the end of June 2026 after 7 years at Austen Road Surgery and 43 years working for the NHS.

A new Practice Manager is expected to join around April, allowing for an overlap period to support handover.

And we are saying Go Go Go! Cheering on Dr Waller, who will be taking part in this years Brighton Marathon on 12<sup>th</sup> April.



He says “After completing the Edinburgh marathon last year and raising some much needed funds for Amber Foundation I thought I would try something closer to home! On 12th April I will once again be putting on my running shoes and taking part in the Brighton marathon in support of Amber Foundation and all the amazing work they do. I am so grateful for any support that you can offer this amazing charity. I have seen first hand the incredible work that Amber do to support homeless young people get back on their feet. Every penny counts! Thank you for your generosity!”



**If anyone would like to sponsor, you can do so here:**  
**[https://www.justgiving.com/page/william-waller-3?](https://www.justgiving.com/page/william-waller-3?utm_source=CL&utm_medium=DT)**  
**[utm\\_source=CL&utm\\_medium=DT](https://www.justgiving.com/page/william-waller-3?utm_source=CL&utm_medium=DT)**

# Surgery Updates

## Primary Care Network Social Prescribing update

At the last PPG meeting, Kayleigh, a PCN Manager, gave a presentation on the Guildford East Community Link Social Prescribing service.

The service supports patients with non-medical issues affecting wellbeing, including housing, relationships, loneliness, finances, employment, and carers' support.

The team currently consists of 2 social prescribers, with a 3rd due to start at Easter.

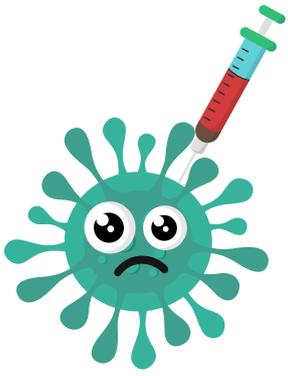
Support is delivered face-to-face in practices and community locations. There is a local 4-stage pathway:

1. Initial assessment
2. Research and joint planning
3. Short-term follow-up
4. Longer-term follow-up

Early patient feedback has been positive. Social prescribing helps you with your well-being. It takes a holistic view and recognises that many things affect the way we feel. If you are lonely or isolated, or you are worrying about money or feeling anxious, you may find your usual enjoyment of life takes a knock.

Life events, like bereavement, an illness or a fall can all trigger a downward spiral in our personal well-being. Social prescribing can help to address these things by finding out what is important to you and then putting you in touch with the people and activities that might help you to feel better.

Learn more here: <https://www.surreyheartlands.org/guildford-and-waverley-social-prescribing/>



# Vaccinations

## Covid Spring Booster

The Covid Spring Booster will be offered again this year at the surgery for all patients over the age 75. Those patients with auto immune systems will hear directly from NHS England regarding their illegibility.

## MMRV Vaccine – The Essentials

### What it is

The MMRV vaccine protects against four diseases:

- Measles
- Mumps
- Rubella (German measles)
- Chickenpox (varicella)

### Why it matters

These infections spread very easily and can cause serious complications, including:

- Meningitis
- Brain inflammation (encephalitis)
- Pneumonia
- Hearing loss

### Who it's for

Mainly young children as part of the NHS routine vaccination schedule:

- Some older children may also be offered it
- Older kids/adults (born before end of 2019) may still get the MMR vaccine instead (no chickenpox protection)



## **Patient Partner – Voice Connect**

We now have a dedicated phone line to help you manage some of your GP services: **01483 314059**

This number will also be available on our website. You can use it if you normally call the surgery to request prescriptions.

### **What you can do with Voice Connect (from 8 December)**

When you call, you'll be able to:

- Order a repeat prescription
- Cancel an appointment
- Request an appointment

Please note:

Patients under 16 cannot order medication through this system.

### **Getting started:**

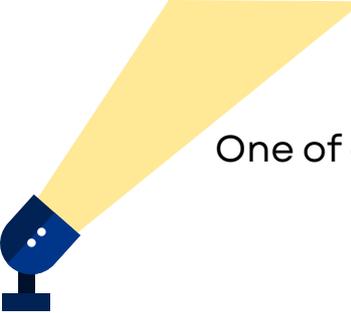
The first time you use Voice Connect:

1. Call the dedicated number.
2. You'll be asked for your date of birth.
3. You'll also be asked for your telephone number. This must be the number we have on your medical record.
4. You'll then be asked to create a PIN. This PIN is your key to using the system in the future, so please keep it safe.

If you forget your PIN, just contact the surgery and we can help.

### **In some cases**

If another patient has the same date of birth and the same phone number as you (for example, shared household numbers), you won't be able to set up the system yourself. In this situation, please contact the practice and we will set it up for you.



# Featured Article

One of our PPG members has kindly written an article to share with us anonymously.

## “On your marks....”

I’ve heard these words many times over the years... and off my wife goes. The next race is always just around the corner, and she loves it - the camaraderie, the competition, the chance to line up alongside people in her own age group and see what she can do.

The British Masters Athletics Federation runs events throughout the year, with the annual indoor championships recently held at Lee Valley Athletics Centre to round off the winter season.

Athletes compete in five-year age bands, starting at 35 and stretching all the way to 90+. And yes, it’s just as brilliant as it sounds. Watching a 66-year-old set a new world record in the 200m? That’s the kind of thing that makes you rethink what “getting older” really means.

And it’s bigger than most people realise. There are at least 30 clubs in Surrey alone, around 8,000+ masters athletes across the UK, and roughly 1,900 masters clubs in England, with even more across Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. Quietly, steadily, this is a movement.

Most clubs, like Woking AC or Aldershot, Farnham & District AC, have a Masters section. Training is there if you want it... But it’s not compulsory. People of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities turn up to throw, sprint, jump, or simply give it a go. Shot put, 60m, whatever takes your fancy.

That’s the real magic of it. It’s not just about performance, it’s about people. Community, movement, and a shared love of staying active. And getting involved is surprisingly simple. Join a local club, register, and you’re in. Before you know it, you could be lining up somewhere unexpected like us - Poland. Italy. Even the USA.

In fact, that’s exactly what’s next for us. At the end of March, we’re off to Toruń for the European Championships, where around 4,000 athletes from across Europe will come together to compete.

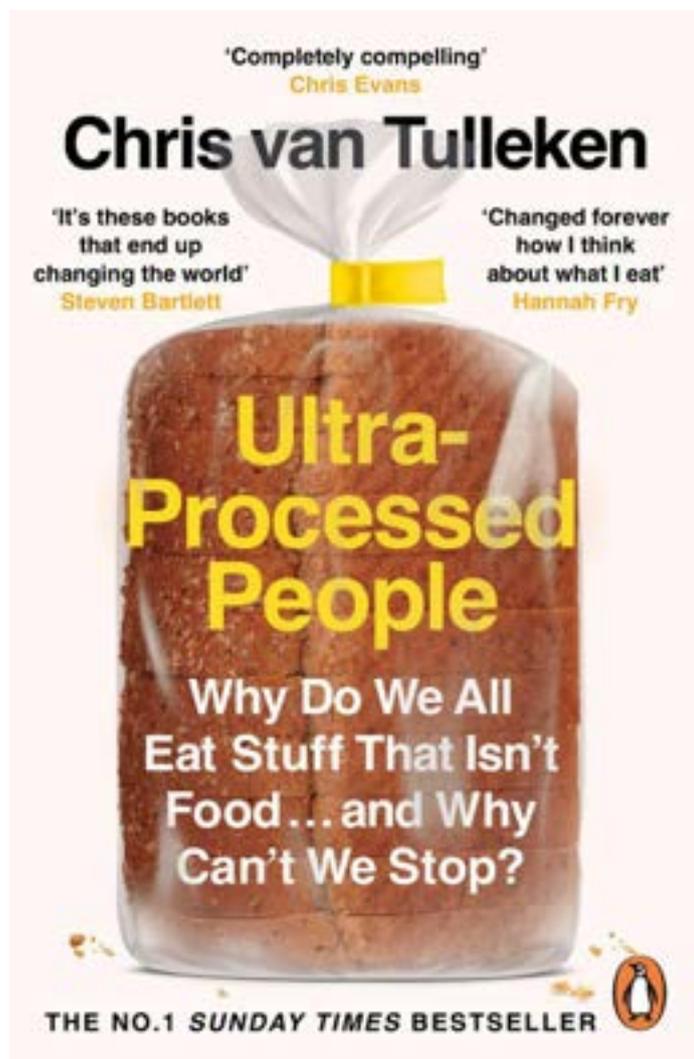
Proof, if it were needed, that the finish line doesn’t get any less exciting with age.

If you’d like to share something for consideration, PPG member or not, send it to [susan@theclassificationguru.com](mailto:susan@theclassificationguru.com).

# Book recommendation



**Dr S McKelvie** has given us another fantastic book recommendation - *Ultra Processed People: Why do we all eat stuff that isn't food... and why can't we stop?* by Chris van Tulleken.

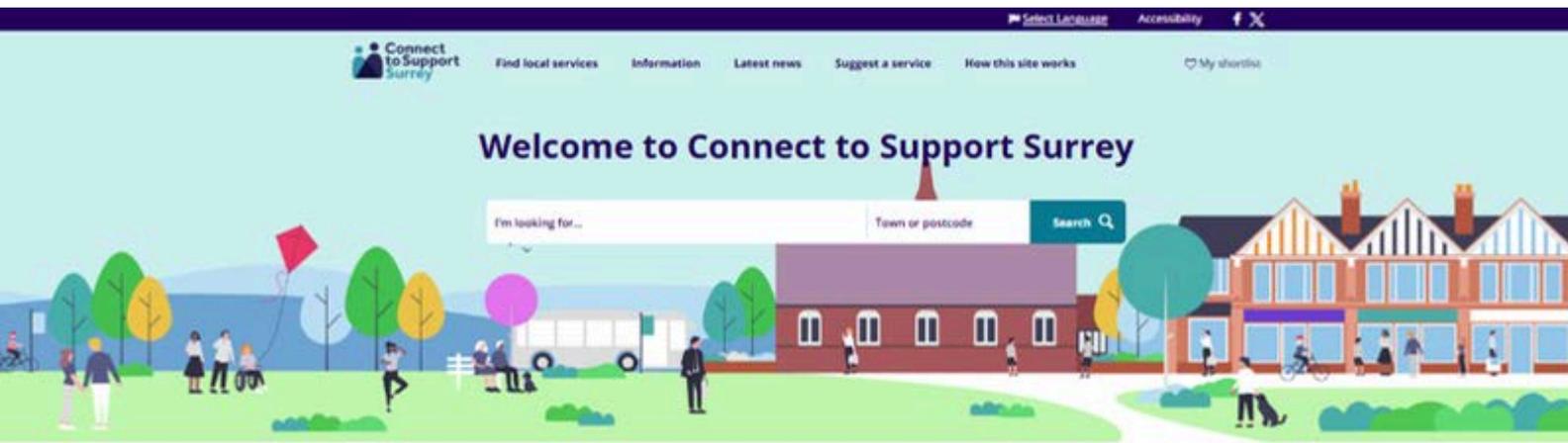


*Ultra-Processed People* by Chris van Tulleken explores how much of what we eat today isn't really "food" in the traditional sense, but ultra-processed products designed for convenience, shelf life, and profit.

These foods are engineered to be irresistible, often combining additives, flavourings, and textures that encourage us to eat more while giving us less nutritional value. The book challenges the idea that poor diet is simply down to personal choice, showing instead how our food environment has been shaped to make overconsumption the default.

Rather than focusing on guilt or willpower, van Tulleken highlights how ultra-processed foods affect our appetite, gut health, and long-term wellbeing, often disrupting the body's natural signals that tell us when we're full. He also examines the role of the food industry in shaping what's available and how it's marketed, making it harder to avoid these products. The key takeaway is not perfection, but awareness: understanding how these foods work is the first step towards making more informed choices in a system that doesn't always make that easy.

# Resources



## Find a local service

Start exploring local care and support in your area to help you stay independent, healthy and connected to your community.

 <p><b>Support to live your life independently</b> If you want help and support to stay living in your own home.</p>	 <p><b>Support in your local community</b> If you're looking for free and low-cost groups, activities and support in your local area.</p>	 <p><b>Health and wellbeing</b> If you're looking for services that support your wellbeing and help you stay healthy.</p>
 <p><b>Your home - options</b> If you're looking for care homes, supported independent living or advice on homelessness.</p>	 <p><b>Help with travel</b> If you're looking for help getting out and about or getting to hospital appointments.</p>	 <p><b>Looking after family or friends</b> If you need support to help you care for your friends or family.</p>

## Who it's for

This Surrey County Council website has a wide variety of useful information for anyone living or working in Surrey, helping you find local care and support to help you stay independent, healthy, and connected to your community.

[www.connecttosupportsurrey.org.uk/](http://www.connecttosupportsurrey.org.uk/)

## Dementia Clinics from Dementia UK

Admiral Nurses from Dementia UK offer support with getting a diagnosis, understanding symptoms, communication, planning future care, managing behaviour changes, and coping with grief or care transitions.

Free dementia support clinics will be held in Woking and Guildford in April, taking place in private, accessible rooms inside Nationwide Building Society branches.

Nationwide has already held clinics in more than 250 branches, and they are open to anyone living with dementia, worried about their memory, or caring for someone with dementia. People do not need to be Nationwide customers to access this support.

The clinics will be held on:

- **Tuesday 7 April 2026** at Nationwide, 5 Mercia Walk, Woking, GU21 6XS
- **Wednesday 8 April** and **Thursday 9 April 2026** at Nationwide, 32/34 High Street, Guildford GU1 3EL

To book an appointment, please visit [dementiauk.org/nationwide](https://dementiauk.org/nationwide) or speak to a Nationwide colleague.

For more information or to book an appointment, please email [nationwide.south@dementiauk.org](mailto:nationwide.south@dementiauk.org) or telephone the Admiral Nurse Dementia Helpline on 0800 888 6678.



UK Health  
Security  
Agency

**NHS**

# Eligibility for shingles vaccine

If you have a severely weakened immune system (as described in the Green book chapter) you will be offered the shingles vaccine from 18 years of age

If you are over 70 years of age and have not had shingles vaccine before you remain eligible up to your 80th birthday

## Turning 70?

ELIGIBLE FROM (YOUR BIRTHDAY)	DATES OF BIRTH	PROGRAMME START DATE	PROGRAMME YEAR
± 70 <sup>th</sup>	1 September 1953 – 31 August 1954	1 September 2023	Year 1
	1 September 1954 – 31 August 1955	1 September 2024	Year 2
	1 September 1955 – 31 August 1956	1 September 2025	Year 3
	1 September 1956 – 31 August 1957	1 September 2026	Year 4
	1 September 1957 – 31 August 1958	1 September 2027	Year 5

## Turning 65?

ELIGIBLE FROM (YOUR BIRTHDAY)	DATES OF BIRTH	PROGRAMME START DATE	PROGRAMME YEAR
± 65 <sup>th</sup>	1 September 1958 – 31 August 1959	1 September 2023	Year 1
	1 September 1959 – 31 August 1960	1 September 2024	Year 2
	1 September 1960 – 31 August 1961	1 September 2025	Year 3
	1 September 1961 – 31 August 1962	1 September 2026	Year 4
	1 September 1962 – 31 August 1963	1 September 2027	Year 5

# MENWALKTALK

MEN'S MENTAL HEALTH CHARITY

IT'S  
OK  
NOT  
TO  
BE  
OK

@MenWalkTalk

MENS WALK AND TALK GROUP

"WHEN IN DOUBT; WALK IT OUT"



WE MEET IN YOUR AREA!  
SCAN THE QR CODE FOR  
MORE INFO



JOIN US



MENWALKTALK.CO.UK  
REGISTERED CHARITY NO. 1188361



**Kidney Cancer UK**

Supporting kidney cancer patients for over 25 years

# KIDNEY CANCER

**Early diagnosis can save lives**

We are here to support everyone affected by kidney cancer

## DID YOU KNOW?

Kidney cancer is the **sixth most common cancer** in the UK, yet many people are diagnosed late because symptoms can be subtle, mistaken, or ignored. If something doesn't feel right, **always talk to your GP**

## KNOW THE COMMON SIGNS



**DULL BACK ACHE  
THAT WON'T GO**



**FEELING VERY  
TIRED ALL THE  
TIME**



**BLOOD IN YOUR  
URINE**



**CONSTANT NIGHT  
SWEATS**



**← SCAN HERE**

For more information visit:  
[www.kcuk.org.uk](http://www.kcuk.org.uk) or call  
our **FREE Support Line** on  
**0800 002 9002**



# WEDNESDAY COFFEE CLUB

*Do you have an empty diary on a wednesday morning?  
Come and join a lively range of people for a friendly chat over a hot drink.*



JOIN US AT THE ST. JOHN'S CENTRE  
WEDNESDAYS FROM 10:15 TO 11:30

**EVERYONE IS VERY WELCOME!**

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

GERALD HUNT - 07545 256114

MERROWCOFFEEMORNING@SAINTJOHNS.ORG.UK

