Dear Patients,

As we are all aware, the current Coronavirus pandemic has presented huge challenges over the last few months. Nobody has been immune from the disruption, uncertainty and, at times, distress.

The practice team are normal people and we share the same fears and anxieties as all of you. While the number of deaths from the virus is falling, coronavirus remains a very real threat to everyone and the practice cannot simply return to “normal”. To let our guard down now would risk the safety not only of staff but of other patients and this is not something we are prepared to do.

Face masks of the sort worn by our staff are worn predominantly to protect the patients they are treating. If a patient comes in who is suffering from coronavirus (and they may not be aware of this themselves) then our team are only protected by, either, social distancing from the patient or if the patient wears a face covering or mask. It is not normally possible to socially distance if you are attending for a medical appointment. These are the risks our team face on a daily basis. Their professionalism and commitment to you, our patients, means they shoulder this risk every day.

We are therefore asking ALL patients to wear a face covering when attending the practice for ANY reason. Unfortunately we cannot supply masks – the supplies of PPE are unreliable and we must preserve stocks of clinical masks for our staff so that we can protect you, our patients. We do not expect you to wear a clinical or fluid resistant mask but a homemade face mask or scarf, even a bandana over your mouth and nose would be adequate. You may notice that not all staff are wearing masks – this is because the areas of the practice these staff work, and their roles, mean they are able to comply with social distancing guidelines. Patients who come to the practice without a face covering, and with no medical reason why they cannot wear one, may be asked to return home and book another appointment once they have a face covering.

We are also considering whether we need to keep our front doors locked. We wish to avoid this at all costs but we are seeing more patients coming into the practice to make appointments or ask general questions. The ONLY reasons for coming to the practice are to attend a booked appointment or to pick something up from us where it cannot be sent to you. Samples, prescription requests, letters etc MUST be put in the brown wooden letterbox to the left as you come in first set of the main front doors. You should contact us by phone for anything else, including booking an appointment.

Please understand that if our practice team become unwell we will not be able to treat patients – we are asking our patients to help us so that we can continue to help you.

We know many patients are anxious about the months ahead, managing existing and new health conditions and flu vaccinations. We are working to find new ways of working to ensure the safety of our patients, their carers and our staff whilst ensuring you receive the care you need. A huge amount of work and planning is going on behind the scenes to restart services and to keep you safe – please be patient with us. If you have urgent concerns, please contact us, by phone, for advice.

Thank you for your understanding and your continuing kindness.

The Burnham Surgery