

MINUTES - JOINT COMMITTEE OF THE PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP (PPG) AND
BEARSTED MEDICAL PRACTICE

Thursday 17th March 2022 at 1.00pm at the surgery

1. Welcome and introduction

Jeanette welcomed all to the meeting.

2. Those Present

Terry Armstrong, Chris Dobson, Dr Lisa Dolman, Steve Hodgson, Goff Norrington, Christine Shade, Tony Spice, Jeannette Ward (Chair)

3. Apologies

Gillian Barry

4. Minutes from Meeting on 16th December 2021

The minutes were accepted and signed by the chair.

5. Matters Arising

Chris to develop suggested questions to be used in a survey of members about the triage system.

Complete (see agenda item)

PPG committee to undertake the survey. **Complete (see agenda item)**

Jeannette to arrange for updating of the various self-help leaflets produced by the PPG. **Ongoing.**

Jeannette had identified a potential new committee member from amongst those who attended the AGM. However the potential candidate did not want to join the committee (**Complete**)

6. Update on Practice matters from Steve Hodgson

Steve noted that the switch to the new telephone system was due on April 4th. There were a multitude of benefits but the main ones were expected to be: improved call quality and a call back facility to avoid patients having to stay on the phone. The message can be changed very quickly to adapt to changing circumstances and to help manage caller expectation. The system would include call recording (which would unfortunately require an additional GDPR message) and this would allow investigation of both caller and reception staff in the event of an issue. The system will recognise the incoming number if it is registered with the practice and this will speed up information retrieval to help the receptionist manage the call. Where multiple household members have registered the same number, there will still need to be an identity check.

It was agreed the PPG would publicise the changes but only when the final implementation date was clear.

Action: Steve Hodgson to keep Jeannette informed.

Steve noted there were three new reception staff bringing the total to 7. The method of their induction had been improved and all are very keen to gather high quality information to assist with processing patient requests.

A second paramedic had arrived and she and the Clinical Pharmacist were keen to introduce themselves via the newsletter.

Action: Jeannette to coordinate the newsletter.

The Winter Access fund was coming to an end and so Dr Sharma and Helen Dyer would be leaving at the end of March.

7. Patient Feedback on Triage system

Jeannette referred to the report prepared separately and summarised some of the key findings. In general the feedback on the workings of the triage system was positive with the exception of general dissatisfaction with the telephone system.

There was a sense amongst some patients that the reception staff were in too much of a hurry to get through the call and move on to the next. Whilst this is understandable when there are many calls waiting it could easily reduce the quality of the exchange and lead to poor solutions. Steve agreed there was still some training needed and a requirement to slow down on occasions.

Jeannette noted that many of the patients thought it would be good if the receptionist introduced themselves at the start of a call to make the exchange friendlier.

Chris noted that it would be really useful if, when a patient needed multiple interactions e.g. ring in, need blood test, ring back for results and need to speak with a doctor, ring back to make appointment with the doctor, that the process could be run by reception staff. The need to make multiple calls into a system that is overloaded can be frustrating and worrying for the patient. It was agreed that this could be an aspiration but was not practical with the current system.

A proportion of those contacted thought that the triage system was beneficial and better than the previous walk-in clinic although others took the opposite view. Dr Dolman reiterated that the walk-in clinic was no longer viable with the number of daily calls now more than double the maximum number of patients at the walk-in clinic. She also noted that quite a lot of issues were being resolved by telephone which is beneficial for both the patient and the practice.

The triage system would continue to evolve to match the needs.

8. Healthy Walking update

The transfer of sponsorship of the Healthy Walking Group to The Ramblers "Wellbeing Walks" is creating problems. The fit between what we do and what Ramblers describe as Wellbeing Walks is not good, there is an increase in bureaucracy through the need to interact with multiple systems and it is discriminatory. Quite reasonably Walk Leaders have to be registered with Ramblers to be covered by their insurance. However it is essential to have an email address to register. One of our Leaders (and several in other local Healthy Walking Groups) does not have an email address and therefore cannot be a Leader. Walkers also cannot be registered without an email address.

Communication with and support from Maidstone Borough Council has always been poor, again an issue duplicated across other walks in Mote Park, Headcorn and Lenham.

At a meeting of the walk leaders it was agreed that the Bearsted Healthy Walking Group dissociates from The Ramblers and Maidstone Borough Council and operates independently. Much of the same documentation such as individual walker registration, weekly walker registers, risk assessments, walk descriptions will be required. This will be managed by the secretary of the PPG. Insurance is being obtained with Ansvar who specialise in Charity and Community Insurance via a broker, Access Insurance at a cost of £157.43. This provides full Public Liability Insurance, Legal Cover and covers the walk leaders against any claims associated with the walks. In the first instance this will be funded by the PPG but other sponsorship options could be considered.

Chris noted that funding had previously gone from the PPG towards items in the practice but asked if the Healthy Walking Scheme might be something the practice would consider funding. Steve thought this was a possibility and would pursue it.

Action: Steve to see if the practice might fund the Bearsted Healthy Walking Scheme insurance.

Jeannette noted she was also taking the topic to the Ridge PCN PPG Chairs' meeting.

Tony asked if there was a wider principle here for the practice to publicise and prescribe other ideas not already included in the social prescribing leaflet, an example being the new allotments, the adoption of which can be very beneficial for mental wellbeing. Another example was Singing for Health

9. PPG Chairs' Update

Nothing to report. Jeannette noted the meeting of the PCN PPG Chairs next week.

10. Finance

The finances are attached. Recent expenditure included a grant of £30 towards Megan Stickings book hunt, the cost of Public Liability Insurance for the Beasrted and Thurnham Fayre and the purchase of the main prize for the raffle that the PPG will run at the fair in lieu of an entry fee. Fifty percent of the proceeds from the raffle will go to the fair's charity.

In the first instance the insurance for the Healthy Walking Group will be paid by the PPG.

There is a need for a reprint of the self-help leaflets. Tony and Christine had completed a review and update of the content. The first 450 had been produced at a cost of £126.40 but the options for the reprint were £128.85 for 250 or £147.33 for 500. It was agreed we should go for a run of 500.

11. AOB

Goff proposed and Jeannette seconded that the PPG would like to record a vote of thanks to all those involved in the COVID vaccination programme - an extremely successful and well run exercise.

Chris asked if there is a specialist resource within the practice for dealing with Long COVID. Steve replied that there is a referral pathway in place for dealing with such cases.

Jeannette wanted to record that when new members join the PPG virtual group she needs to remember to advise them of their options under GDPR.

12. Future meetings

PPG 7th July	Joint 4th August (This is a change from 21st July)
PPG 1st September 2022 (to prepare for AGM)	
PPG 6th October	Joint 20th October
PPG 5th January 2023	Joint 19th January 2023
AGM 15th September 2022	



