

Bearsted Patient Participation Group
Notes of meeting 2nd December 2021 at 1200 at Bearsted Surgery

1. Welcome to those present.

Terry Armstrong, Chris Dobson, Tony Spice, Jeannette Ward.

Steve Hodgson joined to brief the meeting.

2. Apologies.

Gillian Barry, Goff Norrington, Christine Shade.

3. Briefing by Steve Hodgson

Steve noted that the post-pandemic surge in demand on the practice was now known to be not a surge but a new steady state. He believes this is how it will remain until and unless people start to take more ownership of their health. Patients no longer seemed to wait a day or two once symptoms had emerged as they used to do, but contact the practice at the first sign. He noted that additional NHS winter funding was not the answer, in part because obtaining additional staff using such funding was extremely difficult.

Steve noted that there was still a need to explain the workings of the triage to more patients so that they were able to understand it and accept being managed by it.

However he noted that for this practice, the telephone system was a significant source of issues for patients. A new system is to be introduced next year, hopefully at the beginning of March but subject to support from OpenReach. Some of the features are:

- a. A call back feature such that patients need not wait on the phone. The system would call back twice at the point where the patient reached the front of the queue to cover a missed call.
- b. The possibility of changing the phone message easily.
- c. A smart phone link - if a patient rings in from a smart phone they will be offered the opportunity of receiving a link to enter their request into the surgery triage system.
- d. If a patient calls from their recognised number, the system will bring up their details for the receptionist, reducing the amount of input that patient needs to give.
- e. There will be call recording at reception. This will help to deal with any significant issues arising during calls.
- f. The system can quickly be reconfigured if there are major issues e.g. a flood, whereby doctors would be able to work effectively from different locations.

Steve also reported on the COVID booster campaign. He noted that if the requirement to wait fifteen minutes after a Pfizer vaccination was lifted and if some of the Administration was simplified, the practice could provide the same very rapid

service as they had done for 'flu vaccinations. There was now a massive amount of data around the Pfizer vaccination that suggested the 15 minute wait period was not necessary and also the administration requirements imposed on the practice had been relaxed in many other situations.

Steve then left the meeting.

4. Notes from PPG meeting 9th September 2021

The notes of the meeting on 9th September were accepted and signed by the Chair who also signed the notes from the 2020 AGM which were approved at the video AGM in October.

Matters arising:

Communicating change to patients: Chris had met with Steve and Sarah Harrison to discuss the content and vehicles for communicating change with patients. Unfortunately due to illness, Steve had not progressed with the topic after the meeting. The key messages were going to be that the practice is very busy and performing ahead of the metrics set by the NHS as expectations of performance. On a typical day the surgery receives almost 400 incoming calls representing 2.5% of the patient population. These incoming calls lead to between 250 and 300 GP appointments per day. However the triage system is ensuring that those in most need receive their appointments on the same day. It is worth noting that EU guidelines expect doctors to see face to face a maximum of 25 patients a day. The messaging would also note that the practice recognises there can be difficulties and long wait times to get through to the practice but that there were plans in place to address this issue. (see below)

Jeannette, Goff and Tony had met to establish if various local platforms could be used to communicate with the community. The responses had been positive and Goff had a set of posters made to alert the community to the workings of the PPG and to advise people to join the community if they want to hear more about the practice. Distribution of these posters was agreed:

Tony to distribute to the Parish Council noticeboards, the railway station, the Madginford shops and the shops next to the green.

Terry to distribute to Downswood shops and Parish Council noticeboards and to Hollingbourne shops.

Jeannette to distribute to the shops on the Ashford Road.

5. Finances

Goff would report formally at the joint meeting. So far we have spent just £25 to support the Bearsted Book Club distribution and £35 for the printing of the posters noted above.

6. Healthy Walking

Walking continues to go well with up to 30 walkers each week. There is trepidation about the switch to Ramblers sponsorship which appears overly bureaucratic with systems not adapted to regular, repeated Health Walks. There has been

significant delay to the website we are supposed to use to record attendance, walks and any incidents. At a recent meeting with MBC we expressed our concerns and our needs (mainly insurance with perhaps some training). MBC are looking at whether we could become part of Involve.

7. Update from Task and Finish Group

Chris has met with the group twice. The group is looking at ways of improving the service provided by all of The Ridge PCN practices. Chris has been asked not to share the detail of the data at this point; suffice it to say around about 90 appointments per week per 1000 patients are being offered across the PCN. This is more than 250 per day at Bearsted. At the moment the Bearsted triage system is seen as a good model and the proposal is to try to increase the number of paramedics in the system so that all the practices can operate in a similar way. It is recognised that there is a number of constraints within the system and these are being prioritised. Whilst many patients may view the telephone answering system as the main constraint, this is not necessarily the case - for some practices, a vastly improved telephone response system at this stage would overwhelm the number of available appointments.

8. Communications

Noted under Matters Arising.

9. AOB

Jeannette noted that the PCN PPG group had produced a survey asking about experience with the GP service.

She also suggested that it would be useful to obtain feedback on the triage system specific to Bearsted. It was agreed we could e-mail the PPG group to establish if a small number of individuals would be prepared to talk to PPG committee members about their experiences.

Chris to develop some suggestions for questions.

Jeannette would advise Steve of this intention.

Jeannette would circulate the document outlining the PCN PPG's activities/successes.

10. Future Meetings

The joint meeting was confirmed for 16th December at 1300hrs at the surgery

PPG 3rd March 2022	Joint 17th March
PPG 7th July	Joint 21st July
PPG 1st September 2022 (to prepare for AGM)	
PPG 6th October	Joint 20th October

AGM 15th September