

**Notes of a meeting held online (Zoom)
due to Covid-19 restrictions.
6 pm on Thursday 24th September 2020**

Present:

Dr. S. Lall

Ann H – practice manager

Ann E – practice manager

Martin – patient

Ken – patient

Carol – patient

Lin – patient

Amanda – patient

Sue – patient (Chair)

Several PPG members had apologised for absence for various reasons. Participating on Zoom was not for everyone and it was hoped that it would not be long before face to face meetings could resume.

The Chair welcomed everyone and confirmed this would be a shorter than usual meeting and was more in the nature of an update.

2020 flu jab clinics were discussed. The practice appreciated the assistance of some PPG members at the September clinics, who assisted with the flow-through abiding by covid-secure measures. Further dates had been given if they could further assist. 10th October and 12th October. Four members could, and the Chair said she would ask again. The clinics had meant additional organisation by the practice this year because of the extra measures.

A PPG member reported that there had been distress caused to patients who were either at work or otherwise could not use a phone to book appointment at 8.30 am onwards and were offered no alternative. The practice responded that it is looking into releasing some pre-bookable appointments later each day to ease the situation, but noted that not all health professionals were yet able to see patients face to face and were working remotely due to their own health restrictions in the face of Covid-19. This fact was often not known to patients. Diversity was mentioned, including those patients from ethnic minority communities from all backgrounds. The practice does have access to interpreters.

Since lockdown restrictions had been partially lifted, there had been some negative comments about the time it takes to get through on the telephone. Despite this being a nationwide problem, patients are naturally concerned with their own experience. The practice is aware of this, and in particular receptionists are frustrated too but at the present time with current restrictions there is no magic wand. To inform patients on issues that the practice cannot pass on in the waiting rooms, it was suggested that bite-sized messages could be given to patients to listen to, during the wait time. The practice will look into this, and in the near future will send the PPG their ideas for messages to gather patients' views.

Dr. Lall brought the PPG up to date re additional members of the practice, some for Reach Healthcare and some funded to work within our Primary Care Network and therefore shared with the other local practices. These included social prescribers who refer patients to non-clinical services and activities, one specialising in children and young adults, and pharmacists who could work on medication reviews and assist some patients direct.

Online apps (e.g. DoctorLink) for GP consultations were discussed, with the benefits, also the time-consumption for GPs if not used correctly. The practice is actively looking into an alternative online E consultation system which could become an additional way of accessing a non-urgent appointment. The PPG asked that as soon as this was up and running, they be informed to help promote it.

Covid-19 was referred to throughout the meeting and as numbers of new cases unfortunately were rising again, and with the winter months coming, it was possible that Hot Sites (Covid secure) would be needed again but may be in different venues. All is uncertain at the moment, and the practice said it would have to adapt to new rules and guidance from NHS.

General communications with patients was discussed, including the Facebook community pages. Despite a minority complaining about the system or the practice, the vast majority of people were silent, so PPG members felt that practice staff should not feel demoralised, as social media platforms did not bring out the best in some people, especially with fears of Covid still current. When there is a new-normal, other online platforms might be considered.

The Chair closed the meeting and confirmed that she would set up another Zoom meeting at a future date.