**COMMUNICARE** May 2023

The PPG were pleased to hold their 41st AGM at the end of March at the Wansford surgery – due to the restrictions of Covid there had been a lapse of some 18 months since the last meeting in October 2021. Attendance was poor with only thirteen patients present including the PPG officials plus Dr Rhiannon Nally, the Senior Practice Partner, and Ms Annette Johnson, the Deputy Practice Manager.

The chairman expressed his thanks to all other officials and also to the practice staff with whom there was good two-way communication on all matters. The PPG acted as critical friends and were happy to be involved in the many challenges which the practice needed to resolve. The treasurer presented the annual set of accounts – there had been little movement with receipt of investment interest but very limited donations. Unfortunately due to Covid and ageing problems the past coffee mornings, day coach trips and short holidays are now not viable.

Mrs Wendy Spencer and Mrs Heather Gough presented their resignations and stood down as officials and were thanked for their conscientious, exemplary, self-less and invaluable service, both for more than 20 years, on behalf of the Practice’s patients – the other six officials indicated their willingness to continue in office. It was acknowledged that there was a need for younger people to come forward – the advent of zoom meetings might be attractive to some thus avoiding the necessity to attend face to face meetings. This matter will be addressed in several ways over the coming months not least by the use of social media. However one patient present at the meeting did offer her services and will be adopted as an official at their next meeting.

Dr Nally confirmed that the patient list had increased by 20-30% over the last two years – however consultations were also up by 15% since the pandemic. The patient numbers had increased from 4900 to over 10,000 since she joined the practice. The practice catchment area covered 120 square miles and included over 30 villages. In the past patients had been accepted from outside this catchment area, with the proviso that they would not be eligible for home visits. Over the last few months the patient list has been closed for anyone living outside the area but it has now been decided to seek permission to close the list for all new patients, in or outside the catchment area. Although obviously a retrograde step, it was necessary and also seen as a way in which to highlight the problems of space and need to obtain funding for expansion, both at Wansford and Kings Cliffe. Permission has just been granted for the refurbishment of the surgery at KC– this work will be undertaken as quickly as possible and will include the addition of a proper reception area and an additional consulting room. However, permission has not been granted for the use of the first floor space. Although welcome, this upgrade of the KC premises was not a long term solution, especially from the parking aspect.

There are plans to expand the Wansford surgery, beyond the current premises – but currently there is a delay in obtaining the necessary permission and funding.

Mr Simon Fairhall informed the meeting that the garden project at KC Active would be gaining momentum again as the weather improved, with the planting of the raised beds – many volunteers were available and both the café and pavilion were being well used.