

**Balance Street Health Centre**  
**Minutes**  
**Patient Participation Group (PPG) Meeting**  
**Monday, 22 September 2025 at 6.00pm**

**Present:** Ruth Kerry (Chair); Dr Atherton (GP); Anita Thomas-Epple (Secretary);;Lynn Furber; Ian Rose; Sally-Ann Owen; Suzanne Mackay; Lorraine Tams; Diane Robbins ; Sue Dallison; Kerry Fisher; Gill McGowan; Julie Ridge; Mayor Barrie Houlihan, Freya Shenton (GP Nurse)

**Minutes:** ATE

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Apologies</b> Carol Pickering (Treasurer); Tim Hames (Practice Pharmacist); Gill Simpson (Vice Chair); Dr Trewin (GP); Megan Emery (Reception Lead); Alison Winson.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Introduction and welcome</b> Chair Ruth welcomed new Mayor, Barrie Houlihan and later GPN Freya Shenton	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Matters Arising from Previous Minutes</b>	
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Point 2.2.</b> Chair Ruth noted that the MPs letter on our behalf has not been responded to as yet so it has been forwarded to the 'MPs correspondence team' at Dept of Health and Social care. We await a response.	
<b>3.2</b>	<b>Point 4.2</b> Sally-Ann shared that Megan had sent her a response from the ICB regarding the complaint about Health Harmony, which contained inaccuracies. Sally-Ann responded and now would like to know if Megan has had any further correspondence from ICB.	<b>Megan</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>PPG and Town Council Survey Results</b> Mayor Barrie shared with the PPG that the Town Council supports the Practice PPG that we need a Health Hub with extended services, given the rate that the town is growing and that we have already exceeded the provision for housing target meant to run until 2031. There is more development scheduled so the pressure on our health services will increase significantly.  If it were accepted by planners that there is a need, then comes the question of where would the hub be situated and Town Council is including this in the neighbourhood plan around the area of the car park adjacent to the surgery.  Town Council don't have power for this but will advise this to potential developers in their area. NHS do not have funds for this either so we need to work in collaboration and look at the future for the next 9 years or so. Actioning this will be compounded by the fact that ESBC will no longer exist in 2 years due to re-structuring. All of this can delay progress.	

<p><b>4.1</b></p>	<p>Our survey results show a demand for additional services by practice patients. To date the survey was completed by 1,300 patients and is seen a great and significant response.</p> <p>Barrie suggested a follow-up survey for patients that do have to travel for further services, what are these services, how do they get, there, cost implication in time and money. Useful evidence to support case for savings for economy if services were here. Barrie to draft a questionnaire of about 5 or 6 questions and share with Lynn, Anita, Kerry</p> <p>Practice will identify patients that are coded for referrals to complete the questionnaire (some may be in receipt of Voluntary Transport Schemes who can be targeted to complete a survey). The questionnaire will again come from Town Council and the PPG.</p>	<p><b>Barrie, Lynn, Anita Kerry</b></p>
<p><b>5.</b></p> <p><b>5.1</b></p>	<p><b>Practice Update</b></p> <p><b>Booking Appointments – Total Triage</b></p> <p>Dr Atherton shared that there are contractual changes for GP practices, such as moving from analogue to digital. This has been driven by the BMA as they are worried that soon GPs will be overwhelmed by requests for appointments.</p> <p>Dr Atherton shared the following on behalf of Megan: Practice changing the way patients book appointments and will commence 1<sup>st</sup> October 2025, moving from usual booking system to a new approach called Total Triage. It means every request for a GP appointment will be reviewed by a clinician first. This helps the practice make sure patients you get the right care, at the right time, with the right person.</p> <p>Why the Change?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Faster access to the most appropriate care</li> <li>- More efficient use of appointments</li> <li>- Better support for urgent and routine needs</li> <li>- Reduced waiting times</li> </ul> <p>Patients will use online form accessed by app or website. Those without internet can still ring and form will be completed for them by receptionist. Children will always be made a priority.</p> <p>The change will be reviewed in the coming months to see whether it has made a positive impact.</p>	
<p><b>6</b></p>	<p><b>Jobs in Practice</b></p> <p>Freya Shenton, General Practice Nurse (GPN) shared with the PPG the week in the life of the Practice GPN.</p> <p>Freya started with the practice as a receptionist and re-trained at University as a GPN. She much prefers general practice nursing to hospital nursing. Her role is extremely busy and very varied.</p>	

7.	<b>Flu Saturdays</b> Megan shared timetable of volunteers in WhatsApp. PPG to wear tabards.	
8.	<b>Any Other Business</b> None	
9.	<b>Next Meeting Date</b> <b>Monday 17 November 2025 at 6.00pm</b>  <b>Christmas Drinks</b> <b>Wednesday, 3 December 2025 at 7.00pm</b> The Plough, Stafford Road.	