

Minutes

Balham Park Surgery Patient Group Meeting No 224

Thursday 10th April 2025 – 6.00pm to 7.30pm

By Zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5960844672>

Welcome by Chair

Caroline welcomed everyone and started the meeting with a 'virtual' presentation to Jo, who has been appointed a partner. Caroline had dropped in a present and encouraged Jo to open it at the meeting. Jo thanked the group for their support and was delighted with her present, a photograph of Hildreth Market taken by a BPS patient. Caroline reminded us that this is the last meeting before the AGM next month and also the first meeting without Harry.

Members present and apologies for absence: Present- Caroline Wentzel (chair), Sally Riley, Mr and Mrs Varma, Michael Gottlieb, Carol Holloway, Monica Unwin, Dorothy Garland, Lynne B, Sara Castro, Sue, Rose, Lynne Westhead (secretary)

From the surgery: Jo Foley

Apologies from: Jo Davies, Dr Chana, Claudia

Q&A with Doctor and surgery news

Jo confirmed that the waiting room has been repainted and the donated photos have been hung. The rest of the building is being painted as and when access is possible.

A new nurse has been appointed; this is timely as the head nurse is on maternity leave. Dr Sophie Weiss is now also a partner. Recruitment otherwise is stable; one of the registrars, Dr Butler, will be staying on. The partners are digesting the new contract, which Jo considers more supportive than recent ones, enabling the practice to look at the workforce and recruit if they need to. Space, however, continues to be an issue. There has been an estates survey Wandsworth-wide; the inspectors raised a number of issues which support the surgery's need for more space. Jo isn't sure how it will translate into action. Caroline offered representation on any working group by the BPSPG.

There has been a good response from the measles vaccination article in the Bulletin, with lots of patients contacting the surgery for more information. Eight patients over 50 have already requested vaccinations. Adult vaccinations are not funded by NHS but BPS took the decision to prioritise it anyway, funded from their own resources.

There is a Covid clinic running (midweek) on 24 April; if there is appetite for further boosters, BPS may do one in early May. Kumar asked if the wide availability of Covid vaccines for over 75s at pharmacies was taking patients from the surgery. Jo confirmed that we offer it for patients who prefer to come to the surgery. Pharmacies commonly get their vaccinations 2-3 weeks before doctors so often people have completed their vaccination before the invite goes out from BPS but BPS prefer to offer it as they have our complete medical records and many patients prefer the familiarity of the surgery (500 have booked already). Mike suggested that there should be an explanation for patients as to why six monthly vaccinations are still needed. Dorothy and Monica explained that they had had vaccinations at the pharmacy as they weren't aware BPS would be offering it. Jo explained that the arrangements with the NHS are very last minute.

Caroline raised the issue of the Shingles vaccine following a recent article in The Guardian presenting new evidence that this vaccine helps prevent dementia and noted that the window for getting it is quite narrow. Jo confirmed that we should be automatically invited when we drop into the age range and the immune-compromised patients could request it; otherwise, patients might consider having the vaccine privately.

Rose also raised the question of the pneumonia vaccine which she had a few years ago. Jo confirmed that this is a one-time vaccine so she will not be recalled for further vaccinations.

Kumar also raised the issue of completion of medical forms by partners; he had experienced a long wait. Jo replied that this sort of work is classified by NHS as non-essential, so patients are advised that a four-week wait is common and in line with most other surgeries. In a typical week c 200 requests are received.

Matters arising from minutes of the March meeting and review of actions taken.

List of actions:

Action: Caroline to seek out possible speakers for education talks (and ascertain their potential availability) for discussion at the next meeting (will be discussed at AGM). Caroline has been working on this and has made some progress. She suggested adding end of life care to the list of possible topics. We agreed that we need to have a plan for the next 12 months in place after the AGM. Sara offered to reach out to a potential speaker and Sally, who volunteers at Trinity Hospice, offered to help identify a speaker. LSW will circulate a note about the suggested topics and speakers to everyone before the AGM.

Action: LSW to circulate note

Action: Michael was asked, in the first instance, to pursue the possibility of securing the St John Ambulance trainer. They were not able to offer help but Jo has contacted the First Aid provider for the practice and is confident that he will be able to offer training.

Action: Caroline to contact chair of Thurleigh Road patient group. Contact has been made and a meeting arranged.

Action: Jo F. to share the letter with Caroline to digitally excluded patients and update the PG at the next meeting. Caroline pointed out how valuable Rose's experience with IT difficulties has been and Carol's contribution to the letter. The letter has been sent. Jo explained that so far the outreach has been to targeted patients (identified by those phoning in for appointments, GP recommendation) and is not sure how to proceed with other patients, mindful of the need to control the size of the list.

Action: To keep under review and consider adding to Objectives for 2025/6

Update on complaints – Dorothy and Jo

Dorothy had analysed the 105 F&F responses. The large majority were good or very good. Specific comments were made about reception (the great majority positive), repeat prescriptions and liaison with secondary care, all familiar topics. Dorothy commented that there has definitely been a positive move in reaction to Care Navigators. Jo mentioned that the uniform has helped the CNs to bond as a team. Jo has also been attending the CN meetings to discuss feedback and showing that the practice will support CNs in dealing with unfair feedback.

A patient had contacted the PG raising the issue of over-use of text reminders. Jo explained that there has been an overlap between messages sent by the practice and by another

provider. Jo has started a review of which messages are sent and whether text is the best method of contact.

Action: Jo to report back on the outcome of the text review

Caroline asked for a report on feedback trends for the AGM.

Action: Dorothy and Jo to prepare

Blood tests

Returning to the question of patients losing blood test appointments if they are late, Jo explained that lateness is a big issue and that the practice does its best to be flexible. Caroline asked if the text confirmation could mention that if you are late the appointment will not be held but Jo pointed out that the numbers of characters is limited. Sally asked what notification there is for patients; Jo said there is a notice in reception but patients don't necessarily see it. Carol suggested adding a message to the Accurx. Jo showed us all that there is a message on the appointments page of the website but it is quite low down and she will move it right to the top. Caroline suggested patients are handed a notice by the phlebotomist explaining BPS policy if they are late.

Action: Jo to ensure message re appointment timings to be made prominent on the website and to discuss with CW if a note would help.

Communications

- **Welcome video:** Jo said that the partners had very much liked it and thanked everyone again. Jo is putting it into the induction training for all staff not just CNs. Caroline suggested that we should enter it for NAPPs award. Caroline asked for ideas for more videos. Suggestions were:
 - Sally – outline the role of the PG; Lynne B supported this.
 - Caroline – blood pressure with Romy (though he is leaving). LSW queried whether we should be making videos about clinical issues but Caroline clarified that we would be suggesting topics rather than making the videos.
 - Jo – pathway to care at the surgery.

Action: Caroline to investigate costs of making a video with her contact.

- **Education talks-** long term plan to be discussed at AGM
- **Website update:** Dorothy and Caroline have reviewed the website and produced a note detailing issues, to be sent to Jo.
- **Bulletin:** last issue went out on time and most people both received it and could open it.

Relationships with other groups

- Wandsworth Primary Care Patient Forum: the next meeting is on Wednesday 7th May at 2pm. LSW will attend and anyone who would like to come along is welcome.
- Thurleigh Road patient group. Caroline is organising a meeting with their lead.

Any other business

- Finance. Caroline reminded everyone that the Balham Park Surgery Liaison Group has a business account with the NatWest Bank (Sort Code 60-01- 34, A/C No 21693099) Our balance was £6504.61 as of 27 December 2024 (last statement)

At present there are three signatories on the account and we need two signatures to approve any cheque: Val Moore, Caroline Wentzel and Mahdi Z.

Both Val and M have left the group. Nat West have requested that we appoint a new signatory and Lynne Westhead has kindly agreed to take on this role. In addition, it seems sensible to apply now to set up online banking facilities. In order to do this, NatWest requires a copy of the meeting minutes showing approval of this change.

Action: members to approve the change at the AGM.

- Meeting day. We agreed to remain with Thursday.
- Jo mentioned that work is being done on group consultations for conditions like menopause and diabetes. Doctors are being trained on how to run such sessions and will roll it out to other health professionals. She asked if BPSPG would be interested in a role. Caroline agreed in principle but asked for more information.

Action: Jo to send Caroline more information

- It was suggested that the AGM could be held in person. Most agreed that we should stick to Zoom but also have a summer party. AGM to be advertised on TV screen and posters.

Action: Caroline to arrange

- May 31st – June 6th is Patient Group Awareness Week. Any volunteers to have a presence in the waiting room? Caroline will send out a timetable.

Next meeting : AGM Thursday 8th May