

NOTES- JOINT COMMITTEE OF THE PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP (PPG) AND BEARSTED
MEDICAL PRACTICE

Held on Tuesday 22nd April 2025 at 1.00pm at the surgery

1. Welcome and introduction.

Fiona welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Present

Fiona Brown (Chair), Chris Dobson, Sue Jackson, Goff Norrington, Bill Shepherd, Tony Spice, Derek Stevenson, Dr Hannah Warren.

3. Apologies

Sarah Harrison, Sue Henderson.

4. Minutes from Meeting on 28th January 2025

The minutes were approved and signed by the chair.

5. Matters Arising from 28th January.

Action 8.1: Sarah to have the label for the October meeting changed from AGM to "Notes PPG 21st October". **(Complete, thanks)**

Action 5.2: Sarah to include Healthy Walking Group referrals on the agenda for the next practice meeting.

Dr Warren noted this had not happened but also thought a better forum would be the Clinical Meeting, the next of which is scheduled for 8th May. She would raise it there.

Action 5.1: Dr Warren to publicise the Healthy Walking Group at the next Clinical Meeting so that potential walkers can be alerted by the Clinical Staff.

Action 5.3: Sarah to establish if a confidentiality agreement (*for PPG members*) was required. At this meeting members noted that, whilst they do not hear any patient information at the PPG meetings, financial matters are sometimes discussed. In addition patients who contact the PPG do sometimes provide medical information (unasked for). Because of these points, confidentiality is needed amongst the PPG committee. Whether this requires a written commitment is yet to be resolved. In Sarah's absence this item is carried forward.

Action 5.2: Sarah to confirm whether a confidentiality agreement is required.

Action 6.1: Sue H to make contact with Sophie. (*re. the website and screen*) **(Complete. The PPG would like to express their thanks to Sophie for all her efforts and also to compliment her on the quality of the waiting area display which brightens up the waiting area.)**

Action 7.1: Goff to update the (*PPG web*) address prior to a reprint of the leaflet. **Complete. In the interim the erroneous web address is being blanked out on existing leaflets.**

Action 7.2: Fiona to draft an advert for the PPG that could play out on the screen in the waiting room. **Still to do.**

Action 5.3: Fiona to draft an advert for the PPG for inclusion on the screen.

6. Update on Practice matters.

Dr Warren noted a new GP contract is now in place. Within it there is a big push on cardiovascular health with a focus on blood pressure and cholesterol. There will be less acceptance of home-generated blood pressure readings and more use of 24 hour blood pressure monitoring to identify at-risk patients. This is a big project being lead by Dr Williams. One of the issues the PPG had raised was the long wait list for 24 hour blood pressure monitoring and this could now be explained.

The option of obtaining more 24 hour monitoring equipment was raised but Dr Warren noted it is not just the machines but the fact that two nursing appointments are required for each application. Thus having more monitors could put excessive pressure on the nursing operations.

The new contract did include an uplift in funding but this will be absorbed by the higher NI and

minimum wage costs.

The funding of equipment was discussed in this session and Goff asked for a list of needs and priorities with appropriate costings.

Action 6.1: Sarah to provide an appropriate list of equipment priorities with financial implications.

Dr Warren noted that the “Did not attend” numbers had increased again, mainly for the nursing staff appointments. There were 159, 126 and 175 missed appointments in January, February and March respectively. The leaflet currently being prepared will include the information about the opportunity to cancel appointments easily which might help the situation but this is over 450 appointments that could have been used for other patients.

7. PPG Update including issues raised with the PPG by patients

Quite a few issues had been raised by patients either via the email system or at the Time for Talk session at Madginford Library. To respect the patients’ input they are included here for any comments by the practice:

Clarification around the use of The Vines:

Dr Warren noted that “enhanced access” is a requirement of the contracts which includes a need for Saturday surgeries. West Kent runs a large Saturday clinic covering 16 surgeries and those surgeries can book appointments at them. The Bearsted practice has contracted this to The Vines. If triage on Friday indicates an urgent need but the Bearsted practice is full, then a space will be booked at The Vines. This needs to be done at the point of identification of the need because the spaces are taken quickly. The patient is then advised of the appointment and if, for any reason, they cannot take it, such as lack of transport, then it will be cancelled but it means the patient will have to use 111 or re-enter triage on the following Monday.

Fiona noted that this is another example of a process that could usefully be publicised to the patient population. She used this opportunity to ask that the PPG be informed of any new or changed operating processes that are implemented so that consideration could be given to how they might be publicised.

Action 7.1: Sarah and Fiona to work together when any new or amended operating processes are introduced to see how best they might be publicised to the patients.

Update on Blood Test waiting list.

Those who attended the Madginford session were surprised to learn of long waiting times for blood tests. At a previous meeting Sarah had noted the employment of a phlebotomist who had virtually eliminated the waiting list. Dr Warren noted that, unfortunately, the phlebotomist had been ill which had perturbed the system by requiring other nurses to do blood testing in addition to their other roles. The phlebotomist is now back at work and the situation should improve quickly.

Are new patients still being pointed to the PPG?

In Sarah’s absence this could not be resolved. However post meeting a copy of the current registration form was obtained. It seems this is a new, NHS generic application for registration with a GP and contains no reference to PPGs. This explains why new referrals to the PPG were not happening.

Action 7.2: PPG to consider how new patients can be encouraged to join the PPG virtual group.

Mechanism for follow-up on missed COVID boosters.

Dr Warren noted that patients were given three opportunities to register for the booster by text offering an appointment. After that they would need to take ownership of getting an appointment outside the routine vaccination clinics.

The patient who had raised this wondered why he could not have been told that there was a catch-up clinic at the time he was offered the original appointment, which he was unable to make. Clearly this would be impractical because patients would simply try to choose the event that most suited them, potentially resulting in the catch-up clinic being as large as (and therefore staff-consuming) as the main clinic.

Is there a plan to smarten up the waiting room?

A number of individuals had offered to get a team together to redecorate the waiting room! Dr Warren noted that the need for sprucing up the waiting area and some other areas was acknowledged and quotes were being obtained.

Waiting time for 24 hour blood pressure monitoring kit.
Covered under item 6.

Clarification around obtaining a PSA test - does it need a face-to-face appointment beforehand or is it simply a triage request?

Dr Warren explained the current system which had been in operation for some time. If a patient requests a PSA test via triage, they are sent a text with a link to information about the strengths and weaknesses of the PSA test and more general information about prostate cancer. If the patient decides that, having looked at the information, they wish to go ahead, there is a link to make an appointment to have the test. There is no requirement for a face-to-face consultation before a test is carried out.

What has happened to the dermatoscope?

Old timers on the PPG committee were surprised to hear that the dermatoscope they had purchased was in need of replacement. However there was some confusion around this topic. Dr Warren and some of her colleagues believed that one of the dermatoscopes in current use had been bought with funds raised by the PPG. However the PPG had actually bought an SLR camera with a specialist lens which could be used to photograph skin abnormalities as part of tracking or to send to a consultant for review. This is not a dermatoscope! However the situation is that one of the actual in-use dermatoscopes requires replacement. This will appear in the list actioned under 6.1 above.

8. Healthy Walking update

Nothing of significance to report. Thanks to the PCN for funding the insurance once again.

9. Finance

See below. The net balance does not include the £100 quiz night Memorial Hall deposit which should be returned (an income), or the £65.64 owed to Goff for quiz prizes & gifts to Judy & Anne for running the quiz night (an expenditure). Judy does not charge anything for doing the quizzes, but donates the £50 cheque we give her to the Heart of Kent Hospice. Taking these amounts into account, the PPG net balance is £2,027.17. Our submission to Tesco for a grant from their 'Stronger Starts Scheme' is still pending & could take up to 12 months before a decision is made. The £1000 grant from Bearsted Parish Council has now been received to cover the replacement crash trolley.

10. AOB

At the previous meeting Dr Warren had expressed an interest in working with the PPG to host health awareness talks, something the PPG had done independently in the past. The previous experience was mixed with a talk about diabetes being well attended but one about cancer attracting only a handful of an audience. There was some discussion about the logistics of this around how we might gauge interest in advance in order to obtain a suitable venue. Some sort of free-ticketing process might be needed. It was agreed the first topic would be cardiovascular health in line with the new GP contract. A date of Saturday 6th September was suggested.

Action 10.1: PPG and the practice to work together on the logistics of an event.

11. Proposed dates for future meetings

PPG 21st July	Joint 29th July
AGM 11th September at 1900hrs	
PPG 20th October	Joint 28th October
PPG 19th January 2026	Joint 27th January 2026
PPG meetings 1030hrs on Mondays, Joint meetings at 1300hrs on Tuesdays.	



BEARSTED PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP

Income & Expenditure For Financial Year 2024/2025 - Updated 21/04/25	
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Date	Description	Income (£)	Expenditure (£)
01/08/2024	Balance B'fwd from 2023/24 Accounts	694.01	
04/10/2024	Easy Print UK - Young Persons & Self Help Leaflets		195.72
25/10/2024	Reimbursement to Goff - Suggestion Box bought from Amazon		17.98
25/10/2024	Reimbursement to Goff - Giles Seiger Gift - 2023/24 A/C's		11.50
26/11/2024	Reimbursemet to Goff - NAPP Joining & First Annual Fee		80.00
13/01/2025	April Quiz Night - Bank Transfer for Hire of Memorial Hall		46.00
13/01/2025	Refundable Deposit for Hire of Hall (Cheque No.000032)		100.00
03/03/2025	BPM/Easy Print - Self Help + Healthy Walking Leaflets		155.00
26/03/2025	Payment from the Ridge PCN for Public Liability Insurance	191.40	
28/03/2025	Reimbursement to Chris Dobson for Public Liability Insurance		191.40
11/04/2025	Proceeds from Quiz Night	905.00	
17/04/2025	Donation from Bearsted & Thurnham Parish Council	1,000.00	
		2,790.41	797.60
NETT BALANCE		1,992.81	