

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

Tuesday 29th July 2025 at 1.00pm at the surgery

1. Welcome and introduction.

Fiona welcomed all to the meeting. She noted that Tony Spice was taking some time away from the PPG Committee. The meeting thanked him for his contribution, wished him well and hoped to see him back soon. Chris noted that during this break, Tony wanted to continue receiving notes of meetings and any other communications.

2. Present

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

3. Apologies

There were no apologies, all present.

4. Minutes from Meeting on 22nd April 2025

The minutes were approved by the Chair.

Ahead of the rest of the meeting Fiona thanked Hannah and Sarah for the positive way in which the practice were working with the PPG. She believes a positive, constructive relationship benefits both the practice and the patients.

5. Matters Arising from 22nd April 2025

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

This was publicised at the Clinical Meeting and went down well with the clinicians. In order to facilitate referrals, additional leaflets would be welcome.

Action 5.1: Fiona to supply additional Healthy walking leaflets to be distributed amongst the clinical staff, particularly the nurses who work with patients to manage various conditions.

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

The funding of equipment was discussed 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. **(Complete)**

This had been supplied and it was agreed the PPG would fund a new Dermatoscope. (See under Finances below)

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. **(Ongoing)**

With respect to encouraging new patients to join the PPG, a copy of the current registration form was obtained post (the April) meeting. 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. **(Ongoing)**. It was agreed that a "join the PPG" article could form the basis of the next Bearsted magazine.

Action 5.2: Chris / Fiona to provide the article.

Action 10.1: PPG and the practice to work together on the logistics of a Health Event. **(See below)**

6. Update on Practice matters.

Sarah noted that both telephone calls and triage requests continued to increase. In June 2024 there were 6741 calls and 4003 triage requests. In June 2025 both these numbers had increased to 7161 and 4209 respectively. Noting that this is the summer period, she also provided the triage data for January this year - 5371 requests.

In response to a question from Derek, Hannah noted that the triage is just that, identifying what the appropriate actions are in response to the request whether it be a GP appointment on the day or in the future; a telephone consultation, a referral or a nurse or Health Care assistant appointment. It was definitely not a consultation and explains how around 200 triage requests can be dealt with each day.

Sarah was asked if there are any resources for publicising the NHS App for those who could use it to reduce contacts where appropriate. There was some evidence of experts attending various surgeries to run education sessions. Might these be available and appropriate for Bearsted?

Action 6.1: Sarah to check what educational resources are available to expand the use of the NHS App.

Still on the topic of technology, Sarah noted they are exploring the potential for QR codes to be available on the doors to the nurses consulting rooms. These could be used by patients to link to the NHS App to obtain test results from their visit.

Many patients do provide as much information as they can in AccuRx requests but some are still reluctant to do so, perhaps due to concerns about confidentiality. However the better the input, the more likely the triage team is going to be able to identify the right course of action. This should continue to be a communication point whenever the statistics around AccuRx or its processes are discussed. This is a message both Sarah and Fiona could include in their AGM updates.

Action 6.2: Sarah and Fiona to reiterate the value of good information in triage

requests in their AGM presentation.

The Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust website publicises the existence of an Urgent Treatment Centre as separate from A&E. However a recent attempt by Fiona to visit the centre was not successful. The staff she encountered did not seem to know of its location or even its existence. Hannah Warren was surprised and disturbed by this and agreed to follow up on it.

Action 6.3: Dr Warren to investigate the workings of the Urgent Care Centre at Maidstone hospital.

Sarah noted that Lisa Felstead, the senior receptionist has taken ownership of the IT support that was previously given by Sophie Moule who has now left. Lisa will not carry out the work but will delegate to various staff and so she is our main point of contact.

Finally Sarah noted that the lease for the building is up for renewal and the owners would like the practice to sign for a further 25 year term. This gives the practice some leverage and they were producing a list of wants and needs (which includes redecoration of the building.) She asked if the PPG had any specific suggestions for improvements / changes as part of this renewal process.

Action 6.3: PPG members to send any suggestions to Sarah, copy the other committee members.

7. Health Event 22nd November

Hannah reiterated that the first Health Event would take place on 22nd November and would focus on cardiovascular health. She hoped that there would be three such health events each year, providing both an opportunity to educate patients and also to make the practice more visible in the community.

For this event the focus would be on 40 to 60 year olds as the group most likely to be unaware of any risks they were running.

After internal discussions and those with the PPG it had been concluded that keeping the session simple was the right option with an emphasis on follow-up after the event. If their data were not already available, participants would be encouraged to make appointments for cholesterol and blood pressure checks and then QRisk scores could be calculated. For those at moderate or high risk based on their QRisk score, follow-up consultation could be arranged with a view to lifestyle changes and potential medication.

There would be a morning and an afternoon session, each lasting up to 1.5 hours. Three or four GPs would attend together with other clinicians. There would be three or four presentations of around 10 to 15 minutes each focusing on various aspects of cardiovascular health. These would be interspersed with and followed by open Q&A sessions.

Healthcare Assistants would be there to take blood pressure measurements and there would also be a Kardia heart rhythm monitor/ recorder.

All of the 40 to 60 age group will be sent a brief text publicising the event and offering them places. They would then book a place through a link to AccuRx for

either the am or pm session. Whilst nobody has any real idea of how many would attend, the sessions could each accommodate up to 100 participants. In the event of over-subscription a further event might be possible or the presentations circulated.

In addition to the individual invitations a video will be produced and an advert put onto the waiting room screen.

There is some concern that other age groups may feel left out of the process but this will have to be managed. The reasoning behind the chosen age group needs to be emphasised in any wider publicity beyond the individual invitations.

8. PPG Update

The main topic was the forthcoming AGM. It was agreed it would follow a similar format to previous years. For information, last year's agenda is below:

Welcome and introductions.

Apologies for absence.

Minutes of the last AGM on 21st September 2023.

Terms of reference for the PPG Committee. PPG report.

Healthy Walking Group.

Treasurer's Report.

Surgery Report. Information from the practice.

Election of officers. Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer

Talk by member of surgery team.

Questions from the members.

Any other business.

Within Sarah's input for the surgery report amongst other things could be statistics plus information about the triage and perhaps an emphasis on the value of good information and a reiteration of the confidentiality of that information.

There was discussion about the talk by the surgery team and something around frailty and continued health in later years was suggested. This would align with the likely audience demographic.

The AGM would be publicised via the Virtual Group around the 3rd week of August and by a poster within the waiting room.

Action 8.1: Chris to prepare the agenda and circulate the Terms of Reference for review and also the minutes from the last AGM.

Action 8.2: Sarah to prepare her update.

Action 8.3: Hannah to consider the topic for the presentation and identify an appropriate presenter from within the team.

9. Healthy Walking update

Nothing of significance to report. Chris will provide an update about any referrals from the practice following the publicity at the Clinical meeting.

10. Finance

Updated financials attached.

Payment for the Emergency Crash Trolley has now been transferred from PPG funds. An allowance of £990 has been included for the purchase of new dermatoscope.

From the shown PPG account balance of £410.70, there is a requirement for leaflet reprints at a quoted cost of

100 In Case of Emergency (ICE) walkers cards = £52.80

'Join the PPG' A5 recruitment leaflets = £53.24

50 'Join the PPG' A4 recruitment leaflets = £42.16.

The total cost of all these leaflets is £148.20, leaving the balance of the PPG account standing at £262.50. On this basis the committee cannot commit to any further expenditure.

After discussion it was agreed that 10 A4 "Join the PPG" leaflets would suffice. This would increase the cost per unit but decrease the overall cost.

The Tesco application is ongoing.

11. AOB

"Message in a bottle"

Sue H explained the Lions system. It is particularly applicable to older and more frail individuals who might require a home visit by emergency services. A sticker on their door would indicate their membership of the system and then a further sticker, usually on the fridge door, would indicate the presence of a plastic container with their medical conditions and medications described on forms within it.

Hannah was extremely enthusiastic about this system and suggested linking up a member of the frailty team with the Lions contact. There are upwards of 300 people registered with the frailty team and these might all benefit from this system.

Action 11.1: Hannah to identify a contact for Sue.

Action 11.2: Sue to progress the contact with the Lions and potentially link the Lions directly to the practice.

12. Proposed dates for future meetings

AGM 11th September at 1900hrs

PPG 20th October Joint 28th October

PPG 19th January 2026 Joint 27th January 2026

PPG 20th April 2026 Joint 28th April 2026

PPG meetings 1030hrs on Mondays, Joint meetings at 1300hrs on Tuesdays.

