

MERSEA ISLAND PRACTICE PATIENTS GROUP  
Minutes for the Annual General Meeting on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 5.30pm  
At the Mersea Community Support Hall, Melrose Road

Attending:

Maureen Phillips – Chair	Alan Mogridge	Alan Tucker
Jenny Chalklin	Barbara Peter	Janice Tucker
David Cooper	John Tasker	Linda Westley
Ross Cousens	Jayne Taylor	Martin Westley
Malcolm Ede	Paul Taylor	Pamela Wright
Sarah Hurley		Su Rhys Jones – Secretary

Practice Team: Dr Katherine Patel  
Kris Cullen, Operations Manager

Maureen welcomed Dr Patel, Kris and members to the first Annual General Meeting. She reminded those attending that this was not the place to raise personal complaints, but to take this directly to the Practice.

### Practice Update

Kris said that the BT internet and telephone issues had been extremely difficult with many days lost. On these occasions patients were asked to attend the Surgery in person and appointments could be made. The Doctors and Nurses had managed to run Clinics but it had been challenging. Today the whole computer system had crashed again. It was found that a computer had been signed out and then would not allow anyone to sign in. Kris said this was a national problem and fixes were being looked at.

A patient asked if there was a Plan B for when telephone and internet problems were experienced? Another patient said that BT were always happy to supply additional internet modems to bypass the landline problems. Kris said that they had purchased a 4G router and worked on laptops, but this was not ideal.

The Practice is now fully staffed. The new Advanced Nurse Practitioner, Sian Cousins, was now in post. Emma will now be working a 2-day week, Monday and Tuesday and Sian will work 4 days a week. Sian will run clinics as the GP does but will not treat children under 1 year. Sian will also do home visits when necessary.

There is now increased capacity at the surgery some days they can have up to 100 appointments available with some appointments still available late into the morning. With no telephone prescription requests being allowed, this has freed up the reception staff to be able to complete other work. The outside prescription post box is now fixed to the wall close to the door. This will allow prescriptions to be requested out of hours. This means that their request will be at their nominated pharmacy in 48 working hours.

The telephone system problems continue, with the latest being that callers finding that once they get to the #1 position, the telephone rings out. This is because the system has stuck and patients are asked to be aware of this, they will need to redial and join the queue system again.

Kris said that there were various training courses now being scheduled. The plan is for Karen and Sian to start COPD training shortly. Karen is also to attend a training programme on treating leg ulcers. Megan will also be carrying out Learning Disability checks once her training is complete.

The Surgery will be closed for training on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> April and Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> June from 12pm. These dates have been added to the website. Kris said she is still working on improvements to the website but this was a very big job and she was already extremely busy.

Several patients had notified the PPG of questions about the Frailty Score now on their medical records when using the NHS APP. Dr Patel said that these were not completed by the Doctors but by an automated system each time a GP accessed that patient's health record. This explains why some patients have 4 or 5 scores on the same day, all within a few minutes. There was nothing that could be done about this and Dr Patel urged patients to ignore it until told otherwise by their GP.

The Practice is now Veteran accredited and would have a named GP for those patients. More information is now on the website.

A patient said how much she had enjoyed the Seated Yoga and that it had improved her well-being. Kris said another course was running at the moment and felt that this had given patients a clearer understanding of how yoga could help them.

Maureen thanked Kris for such a comprehensive update. Dr Patel said she had to leave as she still had paperwork to complete. The Group thanked Dr Patel for her time this evening.

## **Minutes**

The Minutes for the meeting on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January were agreed.

## **Report from the Chair**

Management Team update:

- New members of the Management team are Christine Cheatham and Jane Morgan
- Updated Patient Information Pack for PPG Members, currently with the Practice for comments, hope issue this in May.
- Finalised the PPG Strategy – making good progress in achieving our aims so far, more work to do, particularly around community engagement
- Completed members survey – thank you to everyone who responded.

#### PPG Networking Group:

- A group set up by SNEE ICB to help PPGs to network, share best practice, develop ideas about training for PPGs. We have only had one meeting so far, but there are plans to have speakers on different health topics and work on patient engagement. Maureen holds the contact list for all PPG Chairs in the SNEE area.

#### PPG Champions Group

- A NHSE group for PPG Chairs who are interested in influencing national policy. Meetings are every other month. Currently reviewing the work that NHSE are doing in promoting PPGs which should be issued soon. The Care Quality Commission are developing new guidelines for practices to engage with their local communities, there will be some specific targets in the future and of course this work will be easier for practices who have an active and engaged PPG.
- Looking at Digital Inclusion/Exclusion – The speaker from the NHSE was very clear that whilst they are trying to encourage all patients to become digitally aware and use the NHS App., patient choice must be respected and efforts must be made to ensure patients who don't want to use the technology or cannot do so are not excluded from access.

#### Health and Wellbeing Webinars Group

- A project developed by the West Suffolk PPG Chairs Group, to look at developing health related webinars for patients focusing on a series of health issues.

#### Meeting with Colchester Neighbourhood Team

- The team is currently going through a reorganisation, so little to go on at present. However, they did send me some information on digital awareness and this was forwarded to members giving details of various drop-in sessions around Colchester to give advice in registering and using the NHS App. Details were circulated to PPG members.

[www.colchester.gov.uk/digitalaccesssupport](http://www.colchester.gov.uk/digitalaccesssupport)

they provide a range of support services for anyone in the borough who needs help getting online or using online services. Dr. Patel agreed that the PPG and practice could look at supporting some NHS App training on Mersea.

#### Memory Café

- This takes place on the second Wednesday of the month here and provides an opportunity for those with memory difficulties and their carers to meet up and enjoy some supported time with different activities. There has been carol singing; seated yoga; health talks. Katie is leading this with support from community360.
- Continuing to provide support in opening and closing; one other PPG member has agreed to join a rota, we are looking for at least two more people. There is no need to undergo security checks and training unless you wish to stay and help at the café.

#### PPG UK News

- A monthly newsletter with a range of information and resources that PPGs might find useful. The February one included access to online data about GP practice performance in relation to appointments and access, information about same day access hubs, results of a survey on patient experience of online consultations and online GP surgery registration.
- Open to any PPG member to join, contact Maureen for details or email [ppguknews@gmail.com](mailto:ppguknews@gmail.com)

## Meeting with Sir Bernard Jenkin MP

Maureen emailed Sir Bernard for an update on his meeting with the Health Minister and we had an online meeting on 6 March. He is very keen to support the practice and the PPG on Mersea and will be keeping in touch. There is nothing definitive about surgery development at present. However, given the direction of travel following the Fuller Stocktake we may see changes in priorities for Primary Care and GP Practices in the longer term. Fuller promoted the idea of more investment is needed in primary care and moving towards a service that promotes wellness rather than dealing primarily with illness.

## Courses/ events

- Kings Fund – understanding the NHS – a four-week free course, very interesting, would recommend to anyone interested in understanding the history, development and current plans for the future of the NHS. [www.kingsfund.org.uk](http://www.kingsfund.org.uk)
- Co-create online course on Health Inequalities and how to involve local communities in making change. Maureen is currently working with the ICB and another PPG chair on developing a course for PPGs on community involvement. This should help us in working with other community groups on Mersea and perhaps becoming more representative.
- Two SNEE courses on Equality and Diversity and working with volunteers

## Some data from NHS England

- Two million more GP appointments a month are being delivered for patients (in Dec 2023) compared to the same month before the pandemic a 9% increase compared to pre pandemic numbers.
- The pharmacy first scheme has signed up over 10,000 pharmacies to treat seven common conditions including sinusitis, sore throat, earache, infected insect bites, impetigo, shingles and uncomplicated urinary tract infections in women over 65.

## Update on the Action Tracker

The only outstanding item not addressed is the funding of membership for the PPG for the National Association of PPGs. The practice were asked to revisit their earlier decision.

## Presentation by Maureen Phillips on the work of the PPG in 2023

Maureen was unable to make the computer presentation on her laptop connect to the projector, despite valiant efforts by Kris and Jayne, and said she would instead talk through her notes.

Copy of presentation attached

Maureen thanked everyone for attending the meeting and reminded them that the next meeting of the PPG will be **Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> May**, at 5.30pm, at the Community Support Hall, Melrose Road (opposite the Town Council Office).