

**MERSEA ISLAND MEDICAL PRACTICE PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

MINUTES

11th March 2025

In attendance:

Maureen Phillips	David Cooper	Maggie Whittaker
Su Rhys Jones	Sarah Hurley	Geoff Whittaker
Martin Westley	Barbara Peter	Pamela Wright
Linda Westley	Nigel Hinderwell	Christine Cheetham
Julie Pearson	Alan Mogridge	John Akker
Karen McGiver-Jones	Peter Clements	Roy Chamberlain
Roy Chamberlain	Alan Tucker	Hubert Seiffert
Hilary Sellens	Martin Sellens	

Kris Culmer joined from the GP Surgery. There was an emergency at the practice this evening and Dr Patel sends her apologies

Apologies for Absence: Richard Rusell-Grant; Jenny Chalkin; Rosie Brown; Teresa Webster.

Maureen welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded everyone of the agreed conduct and content of the meeting. There were no objections to recording the meeting.

Declarations of Interest: John Akker raised a conflict of interest, he has now become a councillor elect and therefore was not attending as an individual but as a council representative. He was congratulated on his appointment.

Minutes: The minutes dated 14th January were agreed as an accurate record.

Action Points from the meeting:

A short document was distributed to members prior to the meeting drawing together the various strands of discussion about the development of the surgery at this point in order to ensure there was no further need to revisit issues already discussed at a number of recent meetings. A member asked that thanks to Maureen was recorded in the minutes.

Newsletter distribution was agreed, copy in church pantry and other areas as discussed.

Practice Update

The practice are advertising for a part-time secretary to work alongside Sarah, for a few days a week and to provide cover for each other during holiday periods. A new

receptionist joined the team last week and is undertaking her training, she lives on the island and is settling in well.

Four of the six registrars with the practice have passed their final exams and will be leaving the surgery in the next six months, the practice will be seeking replacements to train at the Mersea Practice and are very proud of their achievements.

All staff have to do their BLS (Basic Life Support) training, this is now due and will be done in 2 sessions this Friday then the following Monday lunchtimes.

Megan (HCA) is progressing well on her Nurse Associate training course and is back this week following her first six week placement in A&E. Bernadette has recently reduced her hours.

Kris asked how people are finding the new phone system. Several people mentioned how much they liked the ring back function. One person experienced a problem, but it does seem to be working fine. There was some general discussion about the improvements in access at the practice and Kris mentioned the recent article in the Gazette that highlighted how well Mersea practice are performing on same day appointments (link below).

[North Essex GP surgery appointment waiting times revealed | Gazette](#)

A patient asked about the extended access option, this has been available for some time and is helpful for people who are working or have other commitments during the day, the appointments are available in the evening and during the day on a Saturday, either in person or on the phone at one of the other local PCN practices. More details are on the practice website. There was a query about where patient notes are kept for this option and Kris confirmed the other practices are able to log into the patient notes through the clinical system.

There are still no further updates on works at Barfield Road, lots of meetings and emails, but no significant progress.

Sickness in the surgery has caused a lot of pressures, particularly the Noro virus, so there have been some staff shortages over the last few weeks.

The practice are currently sitting in top position for Diabetes in SNEE, our PCN is number 4 in the country for diabetic care.

Kris asked for contact details for Refresh Mersea to see if they could get some spring flowers displayed outside the surgery. John Akker volunteered to get this organised.

ACTION ; JOHN AKKER

Patient Questions:

There were some questions regarding the list closure, which is now rolling forward on a monthly basis. The practice continues to refer new patient requests to the ICB, there was some question as to whether the PPG should be representing these patients as well as they are Mersea residents. It is not clear how that data could be accessed and it is also likely to have GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations

designed to give individuals more control over how their personal data is used and clarify responsibilities of organisations using such data), implications as the patients concerned will have registered with another practice. Maureen to address with the Integrated Care Board Network Group. Kris confirmed that temporary patients from the Caravan sites are not being accepted either while the list is closed, if they need help they will need to use the emergency access centre.

ACTION :

MAUREEN

A patient asked about the impact on the practice of the Colchester hospitals' pressures and the early discharge of patients. It was agreed that the surgery is very busy, and some of this may well be due to early discharge but this has not been quantified by the practice. It will impact on all local practices to some extent and this is really an issue for the Integrated Care Board.

A patient asked about the Practice Veteran Support Accreditation. This means that, as part of the health commitments of the Armed Forces Covenant, the practice have a dedicated clinician who has a specialist knowledge of military related health conditions and veteran specific health services. This is important in help ex-forces to get the best care and treatment.

A patient suggested that a leaflet should be given to estate agents to ensure that people who are seeking to relocate to Mersea are made aware they will not be able to register with the local GP practice. It was generally felt that this is an ICB issue, they are responsible for ensuring patient access.

There was also a question as to whether the ICB could insist that the practice registers specific patients, this has not happened to date, but it is believed that in certain circumstances, the ICB could make a case for a specific patient to be registered with the practice even though the list is currently closed.

PPG Update

Maureen began by thanking the Management Team for all their hard work this year in progressing several projects, the new PPG leaflet, developing potential new leaflets and the development of the Diabetes Event. She introduced the work that each team member has been focusing on. Martin Westley for ensuring accuracy in information sent to members and working on the NHS App support sessions. Christine Cheetham who has rejoined the team, and provided a fascinating presentation on the First Responders and the Ambulance Service at one of our meetings recently and also attending a training event around recruiting and management of volunteers provided by the Integrated Care Board. Pamela Wright who has joined the team this year and is working with Maureen on the community development presentations and promoting the PPG locally, the first presentation will take place in June at the Ladies Luncheon club, it was suggested that Probus might also be interested in hearing about the PPG. Geoff Whittaker who has also joined the team recently and has just completed a course on understanding the NHS, and

also undertaken the ICB course on volunteer recruitment. He has also recently attended the People and Communities Assembly and will be working on the patient contribution to the Integrated Urgent Care Strategy working party. A member of the team also thanked Maureen for her drive and hard work during the year and this was supported by members with a round of applause.

New PPG Leaflet – this has now been printed and distributed to every home on the Island with the Mersea Life Magazine.

Change NHS Consultation – this is progressing and Maureen recently attended an online NHSE event where PPG chairs were asked to give their opinions on the things that mattered to patients. The four top priorities were GP Access; Waiting times for hospital procedures, Ambulance waiting times and A&E. There is also a short online survey asking for patient opinions on emerging priorities for the NHS, (the link has been circulated to members.) Maureen stressed the importance of PPGs in taking part in national consultations where possible, it demonstrates we are local groups representing local patients, if we don't take these opportunities to get involved there is a danger we could be seen as uninterested and unnecessary.

Digital Inclusion Action Plan – recently issued by the Government. This PPG has voiced concerns about digital exclusion and good to see this plan goes some way to addressing this. There will be a government body recycling used mobiles, laptops, computers, ipads etc from government departments that can then be issued to those not yet digitally enabled. There will also be some work for councils in developing greater free digital access in a wide range of public spaces. In a time of increasing digitalisation in the NHS it is important not to leave anyone behind, there should always be alternatives for those who are unable to or do not want digital access.

GP Contract – this has recently been agreed and Maureen talked about the emphasis on reducing the administrative burden for GPs and clinical staff, allowing them to focus on patient care rather than counting Quality and Outcomes Targets, many of which have already been met. There is to be more focus on prevention and a target to reduce deaths from Cardiovascular Disease by 25% over the next ten years. This is the first time in many years that a change to the GP contract has been agreed with no changes and demonstrates the desire of NHS to work with GPs to focus on more early interventions and greater emphasis on prevention.

AGM briefing

The focus of the AGM was to review the progress against the PPG strategic plan developed in 2023/4. It was felt that this plan would help focus activity and create a dynamic and effective PPG. The plan focuses on seven key areas of activity.

Increase membership and local awareness of PPG

- Identify locations for promotional posters – surgery, local council website, GP surgery, pharmacies, online
- PPG leaflet – currently being distributed to all homes on Mersea
- Community Open Day 19th October 2024 – excellent event to promote the PPG, signed up for next autumn
- Community Group Presentations – first scheduled for June 2025, a member suggested Probus might be interested in hearing more about our work, the contact is Geoff Sexton

Structural Development of PPG

- Offering mix of meetings, online and face to face as suggested from results of member survey
- Review frequency of meetings; trial of four meetings a year with one a social event involving the practice to help foster a more collaborative approach, Maureen felt members would all benefit from getting to know the practice better
- Email group established for those who prefer not to attend meetings but want to remain involved
- Membership numbers are in the low 60's and the email list is now around 30

Collaborative work with the GP Surgery

- Regular communication, meetings, emails, telephone discussions
- Joint work e.g. new proxy leaflet
- Specific Health Events e.g. Diabetes event in May. The team would like to do more of this type of event, perhaps not necessarily just Diabetes. The team would like to hear from others with ideas for other events, it would be good to have a plan moving forward

ACTION: ALL MEMBERS

Identify topics and speakers for meetings;

- A range of topics covered, one of the best was about cardiovascular disease prevention by Dr Patel; Anthony West from the ICB attended to discuss surgery development; Chris Cheetham gave a presentation on first responders and ambulance service, there was also an interesting talk from 111
- Sian, the advanced practitioner has been with the practice for a year now, and it is possible we could ask her to come and talk to the PPG about her role

ACTION : KRIS

- Plans for 2025/6 include Healthwatch and potentially another GP led presentation and we would welcome any ideas from members on subject that might be of interest and we can try and find a speaker

ACTION : ALL MEMBERS

Communication

- Newsletter – paused as our lead had to step down – plan to begin again in near future
- Emails to members - trying to ensure these are focused on what may be of value to members – it is sometimes difficult to know what might be of interest and there is a lot more dropping in the inbox from the Integrated Care Board and from other health related organisations. We may try to do a more regular update like the December one with some brief notes and links for anyone who wants to take a look, we received some positive feedback on this
- Regular articles in Mersea Life Magazine

Working with others

- PPG Network – led by the Integrated Care Board team, all PPG members are welcome to attend, contact Maureen for more details. The Network is mostly focused on sharing information and encouraging members to get involved in Community Involvement and Strategy Development. The Integrated Care Board annual **EXPO** event will be in Newmarket this year on 4th July, everyone is welcome to attend
- PPG Chairs Collaborative – led by some active PPGs – sharing ideas, experience, expertise and developing shared projects
- NHSE PPG Champions Group – currently on hold due to restructuring of NHSE and Dept of Health and Social Care. Excellent in providing access to centre of NHS; some training events and links to various departments. **NB News on 13/03/25 is that the NHSE is being completely shut down, all work will be undertaken by Department of Health and Social Care which is part of the Minister for Health's responsibilities, this will require review to prioritise or cease current work flows**
- PPG UKNews – a regular newsletter about all things NHS, specifically relevant to PPG. Invited to join steering group.
ppguknews@gmail.com for anyone who wants to receive a copy
- There are some PPGs who are innovative and active, but they are in a small minority. Unfortunately, not every practice has an active PPG, and in some cases, no PPG at all

Special Projects

- NHS App Support events – the PPG were successful in our bid for funds to promote the NHS App – which has been used to print leaflets and fund display boards. Held drop in event, four library events and one online event. Approximately 50 people have been helped, we haven't been able to solve every problem, but have been able to

identify quite a lot of support information we have been able to use to help patients

Discussion

A member asked whether the PPG receives any funding to carry out the work we do e.g. the leaflet, paying for the use of the hall etc. The PPG do not receive any funding, we have this small pot of money from the GP Federation for undertaking the NHS App, we have been lucky in that there is no charge for using the Community Support Hall.

A question about exemption for practices having to pay the higher rate of National Insurance, as yet there has been no news on this.

A member asked for a report on what is happening with Barfield Road development, at present there have been a number of meetings, but no progress on developing the work. Maureen confirmed that she would be in contact with Anthony to check progress before the next meeting.

ACTION : MAUREEN

Maureen thanked everyone for attending and the Meeting closed at approximately 6.45pm

Date of Next Meeting: 13th May 2025 at the Community Support Hall 5.30-7pm

Contact Maureen Phillips for more information about joining the PPG or joining the email list; MerseaPPG@hotmail.com