

Patient Participation Group

Minutes of the Full Meeting on 15th December 2020 Meeting held by Zoom; at 7.00 pm

Leader: Rosie Chisnell, **Minutes:** Graham Fothergill

- 1. Present:** Amanda Preedy, Rosie Chisnell, Graham Fothergill, Joy Hall, David Wilkinson, Ken Spooner, Barry Hall, Angela Dormer, Brenda Davies, Robert Sprigge, Sally Elliott, Chryssie Cobbold, Ros Sherry, Penny Berry, Tony Dollimore, Kay Loveless, Jan Burt, Janet Bell, John Bell, Mike Pye, Pam Hill, Grahame Hill, John Stead, Lynne Drake, Phyllis Stevens, Patricia Fidoe.

Apologies: John Townend, Tony Stowe, Vivienne Fountain

- 2. Declarations of Interest:** None.

- 3. Minutes and Matters Arising from Meeting held on 17th November**

Minutes: Agreed

Matters Arising: Robert commented that each time he uses eConsult he has to re-enter previous demographic and other standard information.

Ken explained that because of pressure of work due to her involvement in the setting up of the Covid-19 vaccination programme, Nurse Wendy would be unable to give her presentation on contraception and childhood immunisation at this Meeting and this will be postponed until a future PPG Meeting.

- 4. Covid-19 Vaccination Programme**

Ken reported that, after much planning by the Practice and the PCN, the first group of Covid vaccinations would take place on 18th, 19th and 20th December at the Roebuck Surgery. A batch of 975 doses of vaccine are expected to be delivered to the site; these will be given to patients over 80 years of age and to local Care Home staff.

The organization for this had involved much additional work for all staff in the PCN and had diverted resources from the usual day-to-day running of the surgeries. This exercise will be repeated for the 3-week follow-up booster vaccinations as well as for all future cohorts who will receive the vaccine.

Ken confirmed that, after agreement with Stevenage Borough Council and approval by the police, the PCN would have exclusive use of the public car park close by the Roebuck surgery. Members of the PPGs would assist in marshaling and car park management on each of the three days of this first vaccination programme. In response to a question from John, Ken explained that the Practice had about 500 patients who were in the 80+ age group, about 200 of whom will receive their vaccination at the Lister Hospital (see below).

Dave reported that he had been refused a vaccination at the Lister because of his previous history of an allergic reaction to a flu vaccine. Ken explained that this was dependent on a clinical judgement at the vaccination site but that it may be reversed as the result of a decision by one of our GPs. Ken said that he had no idea when there would be a delivery of vaccine to start on the

next cohort of patients (the 75 - 80 age group); this will be dependent on the NHS and the CCG getting their act together.

It was noted that some patients in the Practice had received their vaccination at the Lister but the Practice is not being notified which patients these are until up to three days later. This has put additional work on the surgery staff as a result of poor communications between the Lister and the Practice because of different online booking systems being used by the two locations. Practice staff have had no formal training for the system used by the Lister and have had to resort to watching a YouTube video.

In response to a question, Ken said that, officially, if the PCN had vaccine left over on the third day from its first batch, it could not be used for other patients who were not in the 80+ group. Ken confirmed that the Practice were unable to make any transport arrangements for patients to get to the Roebuck surgery.

In response to a further question, Ken said that, so far, only four or five patients had refused the Covid vaccination and that a further 10 - 15 had deferred their decision.

5. Practice Update

Ken explained that the Covid vaccination programme would have a huge impact on staff and there will be a slower turnover in all aspects of the management of the Practice. The BMA has recommended that some aspects of clinical practice should have a lower priority than usual but Ken feels that this is unacceptable.

The Practice is actively recruiting for a new GP partner to replace Dr Ng who left for personal reasons. Ken is hopeful that the post will soon be filled. The PCN will be recruiting a Physician Associate and also a Care Coordinator who will have special responsibility for end-of-life situations, including those in the Care Homes for which the Practice is responsible.

Ken reported that there had been some recent dissatisfaction relating to the absence of face-to-face appointments (some of which were required just for general discussions!). During November, the Practice held a total of 1200 face-to-face appointments which was considered to be a reasonable number in comparison with other Practices.

Ken noted that there had been an increase in the uptake of flu vaccinations among the "at risk" and elderly patients and that fewer cases of flu had been reported in the Practice. Flu vaccinations for the 50 - 64 age group had gone smoothly and the childhood flu vaccination programme had been completed.

Ken made a plea to all patients to strictly observe the Government rulings and regulations over Christmas to try to ensure that hospital and GP services were not overloaded.

6. Medlink

Ken reported that the questionnaire provided by this online system for the regular review of patients with serious conditions (such as asthma, COPD, heart failure etc) was proving very successful, with a 90% uptake and an excellent quality of responses which are then reviewed by a nurse and actioned where necessary.

7. Primary Care Network (PCN) – Feedback

Graham reported that a PPG member from each of three Practices in the PCN had attended the first part of a PCN Management Meeting but felt that we were still being kept at arms length from being involved in relevant PCN discussions. The Minutes from the part of the Meeting that the PPG attended are attached herewith. At Zoom meetings on 10th and 14th December, the four PPGs, together with two Practice Managers, discussed preparations (marshaling and car parking) for the impending Covid vaccination clinics at the Roebuck surgery. At that stage, Stevenage Borough Council were being less than helpful regarding exclusive use of the public car park. *(Subsequent note: this issue did get resolved just prior to the start of the clinics).*

8. Cancel Out Cancer (COC)

Rosie reported that the Zoom COC presentation on 9th December went well; there were 20 participants. A number of people have already signed up for the next session on 16th January. Rosie and Mandy have implemented a few minor changes which have improved the presentation. Rosie mentioned that use of the Practice's text facility had been very effective in publicizing the sessions.

9. Covid-19 Research

Graham, together with Mandy and Rosie, reported that they had recently joined a Zoom presentation by Professor Natalie Pattison, Professor of Nursing at the University of Hertfordshire and the East and North Herts NHS Trust. Professor Pattison leads the Patient and Public Involvement Group (of which Rosie, Mandy and Graham are members) which, in essence, reviews the protocols of the University and Trust's research projects from a public, rather than scientific, perspective.

Natalie explained, that with the advent of Covid-19, all other research projects had been put on hold and all their efforts were now directed at Covid-related research, the studies being part of national multicentre projects. These covered many aspects related to the pandemic including, among others, drug treatments, mental health aspects of long-term hospitalised patients and their relatives, the effects of end-of-life and bereavement on the wellbeing of nurses and other hospital staff: many of these she reported on in detail in her excellent 90-minute presentation.

10. Health Walks – Update

Joy reported that although the Health Walks can continue to be held, many participants are being put off by the limitations imposed by the Covid pandemic (e.g. the need for advance booking by email) and there were only three patients on the last walk. The absence of post-walk refreshments also has a negative impact on the attendance. *(Subsequent note: because of the imposition of Tier 4 regulations, Health Walks are cancelled until 4th January at the earliest).*

11. How to Engage with the Younger Element

Rosie reported that she had not received an acknowledgment or a response to her email to Carol Whittle of Carers in Herts and feels that she will not be able to pursue this avenue any further. Graham mentioned that he was aware that other PPGs in the locality and beyond had similar problems in recruiting younger patients to the PPG or getting them to attend meetings. Ken commented that this was a wider issue and that many non-PPG organizations had similar problems in attracting the younger element.

12. Speakers for Future PPG Meetings

Jan will arrange for one of the Admiral Nurses to give a presentation to the PPG later in the year but, at the moment, they are far too busy with their normal casework.

Graham reported that Phil Lumbard, the CCG's Associate Director for Urgent Care, had given an excellent presentation of their new initiatives whereby they can arrange timed appointments for patients at the Lister Hospital Emergency Department or at their own Practice. He agreed to ask Phil if he would be willing to give his presentation at a future PPG Meeting.

13. Any Other Business

In response to a question from Robert, Ken confirmed that our Practice looks after more Care Home residents (about 200) than any other Practice in the locality. The high bed turnover of such patients caused additional high demands on the GPs' workload.

Graham mentioned that the PPG Officers were considering holding a Zoom Quiz if there was sufficient support for such a venture. Ken and several members said that they would be interested. Graham and Mandy agreed to look further into the idea.

The Meeting ended at 8.30 pm with cordial exchanges between the participants for the forthcoming Christmas and New Year.

The next PPG Meeting will be on Tuesday, 19th January at 7.00 pm.