

# Patient Participation Group

## Minutes of the Full Meeting on 17th November 2020 Meeting held by Zoom; at 7.00 pm

**Leader:** David Wilkinson, **Minutes:** Graham Fothergill

- 1. Present:** Amanda Preedy, Rosie Chisnell, Graham Fothergill, Joy Hall, David Wilkinson, Ken Spooner, Wendy Heatley; (in part), Barry Hall, Angela Dormer, Brenda Davies, Robert Sprigge, Sally Elliott, Chrissy Cobbold, Ros Sherry, Penny Berry, Tony Dollimore, Kay Loveless, Jan Burt, Janet Bell, John Bell, Mike Pye, Pam Hill, Grahame Hill.

**Apologies:** Sharon Smith, John Townend, Tony Stowe

- 2. Declarations of Interest:** None.

- 3. Minutes and Matters Arising from Meeting held on 20th October**

*Minutes:* Agreed

*Matters Arising:* In response to an enquiry from Robert, Ken reported that there was now a long-Covid clinic available for referrals.

- 4. How to Engage with Younger Patients**

Wendy attended the Meeting to discuss the content of her proposed presentation at the next PPG Meeting, the alternatives being paediatric immunisations or contraception. It was agreed that she should decide which would be the most appropriate for the target audience. [Subsequent note: Wendy chose "contraception"]. The presentation, which will be advertised in her clinics and on Facebook, will include PowerPoint and will consist mainly of general information on the subject. Brenda suggested that one or two patient experiences might be included but this was generally felt to be unwise at this stage.

Jan suggested that the Practice Facebook should be promoted/advertised more widely since it seems to be one of the primary routes for communication with patients. Ken agreed to include it on the website.

Rosie reported that she had emailed C Whittle, Health and Wellbeing Manager at Carers in Herts, regarding the possibility of her providing information on Young Carers and those in the 18 to 30 age group; as yet Rosie has not received a reply.

- 5. Practice Update**

Ken provided considerable information on the plans for the Covid-19 vaccination project. It is to be delivered at PCN level at a site within or adjacent to one of the four Practices [PCN = Primary Care Network comprised of Knebworth and Marymead, Bedwell and Roebuck, King George and Shephall Practices]. The main reason for this is the need for the storage of large quantities of the vaccine under controlled temperature conditions. This will be further discussed at the next PCN Meeting.

Early December has been mooted for the start of the vaccination programme but Ken felt that it would probably be later; he was worried that it could even be near to, or over, the Christmas period, which would cause great concern to the Practice staff. Ken explained that whenever the programme starts, it will cause problems and disruptions to staffing, to the provision of clinical services and to appointments. The NHS is making £150M available for Practices to get additional capacity for the vaccinations. Chrissy asked if retired doctors and nurses would be recruited to assist; Ken said that this was being discussed but it would depend on the extent of their medico-legal cover. It has been suggested that St John's Ambulance staff might become involved in some part of the programme but Ken felt that military personnel were unlikely to be used.

Ken reported that the Practice's flu program had gone well so far, with an increased uptake (ca. 80%) compared with previous years in the "at risk" and 65+ groups. Supplies for the 50 - 64 group were expected before the end of the month; 1000 doses have been ordered and Ken is trying to negotiate for an additional 700 doses. Clinics for this cohort are being arranged for early December.

Ken reported that, because of the proximity of the surgery to the new pharmacy, some Lloyds customers felt that surgery staff should help with their pharmacy issues, in particular the non-response to phone calls to Lloyds. Ken explained that the three sections of the building (surgery, pharmacy and library) were separate entities, each with their own telephone system.

Ken was sorry to report that Dr Ng was terminating his partnership with the Practice because of travel problems which he was unable to overcome. Recruitment for a replacement will start after Christmas and, meanwhile, Dr Ng's shifts will be taken by locums.

Ken confirmed that the Practice was continuing to catch up with the backlog of work but reiterated that, because of the need to maintain a Covid-secure environment, all appointments take longer than previously. He asked that patients should understand about the very high stress levels of the Practice staff at this time; hospital staff are also under the same sort of pressures.

Joy asked about ECHO, the Lloyds free delivery system when this procedure is nominated by the patient. Ken explained that the Practice will not change the nominations, that would have to be done between the patient and the pharmacy. Joy said that vulnerable patients had been told that they should get free delivery of prescription medicines and Ken pointed out that these patients need to discuss this directly with their nominated pharmacy.

## **6. eConsult**

Ken reported that ideas for improvements in eConsult were being considered by the PCN. He explained that the Practice was now trialling an on-line system called Medlink to be used, initially, for asthma reviews. Graham mentioned that he would be attending the next PCN Meeting as our PPG representative, along with PPG members from the other four Practices. Ken reiterated his enthusiasm for PPG representation at PCN level.

## **7. Pharmacists Meeting - Feedback**

Graham briefly reported on the recent Pharmacists Meeting which was held by Zoom. The main items included pharmacy supplies for the flu vaccination programme, pharmacy delivery charges, and dosette boxes (refer November PPG newsletter on this item). The Pharmacists were very complimentary of the way that the Practice maintained communications during the enforced surgery shut-down.

## **8. Website Update**

Ken thanked Robert for his valuable contribution for the updating of the Practice website, but explained that the update would have to be on hold until after the Covid vaccination project. David noted that the Practice telephone numbers were not in an obvious place on the website, nor is there a clear indication of the email address.

## **9. Health Walks - Update**

Joy reported on problems in trying to get the Health Walks back on track. The leaders have undergone Covid-safety training but only two patients joined the first walk, probably as a result of the Draconian requirements for registration. No further walks can be arranged until the end of the current lockdown.

## **10. Plans for COC Presentations**

Mandy and Rosie confirmed that they were now ready to start their Zoom COC presentations and that they would like to do the first one at 7.00 pm on Tuesday, 24th November; Graham agreed to assist with some publicity for this. Other presentations are planned for 9th December at 1.30 pm and 16th January at 11.00 am. Jan agreed to publicise these dates and times on "Nextdoor Welwyn".

Ken reiterated the importance of the early detection and diagnosis of cancer which can lead to better outcomes and less aggressive treatment. He made the point that if patients detect anything unusual they should immediately get a face-to-face surgery appointment and will, if necessary, get a two-week referral to a consultant. Robert commented that prostate cancer in men has a higher death rate than Covid and, according to Ken, less than 75% of women go for breast screening when it is offered.

## **11. Speakers for Future PPG Meetings**

PPG members were requested to let the Officers know of any ideas for speakers at forthcoming Meetings. Jan mentioned that an Admiral Nurse would be able to give a presentation in the near future; the Officers will liaise with Jan on this.

## **12. Any Other Business**

Robert reported a good experience with Covid testing at the Stevenage site, with the result being received within 25 hours. The only problem was the poor directions to the site on Caxton Way.

In response to a question from Mike, Ken explained that flu vaccinations for housebound patients would be starting forthwith since this was now on the nurses' caseload.

Mike suggested that our Practice's membership of the PCN should be indicated on the PPG letterhead; this will be discussed at the next Officers Meeting.

Mandy was concerned about publicity and communications across the Practice and the PPG; this will be included on the Agenda of the next Officers Meeting.

*The Meeting closed at 8.30 pm.*

**The next PPG Meeting will be on Tuesday, 15th Decembr at 7.00 pm.**