

School Lane Surgery

Patient Participation Group (PPG)

(Condensed)

Thursday 18th July 2024

1. Welcome all

Natalie was unable to join us this evening, she is feeling a bit under the weather; get-well Natalie.

2. Previous minutes

The minutes for our previous meeting in May are approved.

3. Public Question & Answer Event

As we know, School Lane Surgery is planning to hold a public 'question & answer' event at which members of the public will be invited to put their questions to GPs and other members of staff from within the practice. Any questions will need to be concerned with this surgery only, as we cannot speak for Grove Lane; though partners from both practices have expressed an interest in being involved.

The plans are in the first stages and the event will not take place until the autumn, as there is much to consider. Who should be on the panel, GPs plus which other staff? Questions would be easier to answer perhaps, if they were submitted in advance so that staff could do any research required? It would afford those staff hosting the event a chance to give a more complete/comprehensive answer.

The whole business should be PPG led; as was said, if the surgery is seen to be the pushing the idea it might be seen as their opportunity to impose an agenda. Our Joint Chair, Steve, is keen to see the event go ahead and could be asked to chair it, with all advertising making it obvious that it is the patients of our surgery that are the No.1 priority in all of this. There will need to be some sort of promotion of the event, with various topics suggested on posters and the surgery web page? There is also Facebook, and of course, we can place a box in the waiting area at both School Lane and the HLC, which will be easiest for patients? The PPG will collate the submitted questions, and it is thought Meriel could give a talk on surgery matters, general and common issues that arise, while Marc gives a more general talk on how the NHS is run.

At this stage we are looking to hold the event at the end of September, but this is likely to be delayed if we meet obstacles, or people are not available. The library will be approached as it would seem the most suitable venue, being somewhat bigger than the surgery and having upstairs conference rooms and a lift.

The Healthy Living Centre could be considered, most probably in the main waiting area at the front of the building, and there is also the ease of parking on site. No final decisions have been made and feedback will decide matters, but it is generally thought that an evening meeting is probably best, with most people having to work or with other commitments in the daytime.

4. Colchester Elective Orthopaedic Centre

People may be wondering how the West Suffolk Hospital's plans to move around 15,000 orthopaedic operations each year to the Essex & Suffolk Elective Orthopaedic Centre in Colchester will affect the patients of Thetford, and by sheer coincidence it turns out that our own Maralyn has already attended. She thought it an excellent idea, but could see there might be problems for non-weightbearing patients and their visitors, as well as outpatients; Colchester is not a particularly easy place to drive to.

Despite any difficulty in reaching Colchester, the surgery believes it is worth the effort, and anything to reduce waiting times is welcomed. Following surgery, a patient is likely to be returned to from whence they came, usually their local hospital, for after-care.

5. PPG Tour of the Healthy Living Centre

Carly is to be asked for her preferred dates, but is currently on holiday. The signage is still to be done, and might it be a good idea to have a site plan by the main entrance? (as is the case in hospitals); some patients are likely to be scratching their heads, and taking up valuable reception time asking for direction.

The Community Health Partnership is the main tenant, and School Lane Surgery is a sub-tenant; with 9 rooms in total. West Suffolk Hospital will be moving into other rooms for outpatient clinics.

6. Practice Updates & News

The current pre-booked appointment system is disliked by both GP's and staff, who are chomping on the bit to get back to a two-week regime. Marc is working hard to get it done.

The number of compliments received by the surgery is increasing, which is most heartening, and Marc puts the nice things people have said on Facebook. The surgery wants to be seen as transparent so the full results of comments are seen, and the surgery receives generally positive feedback; we have nothing to hide so if something goes wrong, we will hold our hands up. There have been few complaints of late, but the surgery is always keen to learn from them, and none have been systemic in nature.

One patient had to be removed from the surgery, the safety of staff being paramount in the decision, and whilst this may not have been a particularly big issue, such bad behaviour cannot be tolerated.

Nayla will be joining the surgery for two months, as part of an Integrated Care Board scheme born out of volunteering during the Covid crisis; she is studying medicine and it will see her go from volunteer to fully employed. She will be helping out generally (laminating, cake sale etc), and is looking to develop her skills in primary care; but will not have access to patient records or computers.

7. Other Business

- a) It was decided a **WhatsApp group** would not be of much use to the PPG, as email seems to be doing the job well enough, and we don't really need use of an instant messaging service.
- b) The **Covid certificates** have now been distributed, and were well received.
- c) It was pointed out that patients cannot present their **blood pressure readings** online; neither can they be sent by email. Marc will speak to GP's about updating the system.
- d) A member asked if it would be possible to invite a **clinical pharmacist** to a PPG meeting, to talk about procedures and whether there has ever been a repeat medications cost review?

James will be asked to visit us; it makes sense that everybody should be seen to be trying to keep costs down for the NHS. Since Brexit, the availability of some medication has become much worse, and often you can get the same medication from a different manufacturer (but with a different name), only cheaper!

- e) There is to be a **Bake a Cake Sale** on Thursday August 1st at the Healthy Living Centre, between 10:30 AM and 3 PM. Any help from the PPG would be much appreciated, and do we have any bakers among us? Should we have whole cakes only or individually wrapped slices too? The initial response is whole cakes only, which should not contain nuts. There will be no drinks offered.
- f) The **Cardio Risk in the Young** clinic has proved very popular, with all Saturday slots now taken. Some Sunday slots are still available.
- g) Karen Norcott, Research Manager/Consultant of the Breckland Alliance, would like to attend our meeting in November to discuss current work/studies in the area, and she will be most welcome.
- h) We were asked if the surgery should prepare a welcome pack for new PPG members?

8. Future Meeting Dates

Thursday 19th September

Thursday 21st November

NEXT MEETING: Thursday 19th September, 7 pm at School Lane Surgery