

**School Lane Surgery**  
**Patient Participation Group (PPG)**  
(Condensed)

Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2023

**THE AGENDA**

1. Previous minutes
2. Position of Chairperson(s)
3. Informal Catch-up
4. Terms of Reference
5. Friends & Family results
6. Practice Updates and News
7. Other Business

**Intro:**

Our meetings have become less well attended since our friend Keith passed away, and a further 3 members have either moved away from Thetford or have had to retire because other commitments were taking up so much of their time. It was decided there should be a minimum of 4 members at a meeting if business is to be decided, a quorum, and if less members are present then no decisions should be taken until further consultation has taken place, which could be via phone or email.

**1. Previous minutes**

The minutes for our previous meetings in both May and September were approved.

**2. Position of Chairperson(s)**

Chris and Stephen have volunteered to be Joint Chairpersons, and if one is unavailable for a meeting, we should still have the other available.

**3. Informal Catch-up**

It is always good to explore our thoughts and ideas as a group and share with the surgery, as we are all looking at the same horizon, and following an informal meeting with Chris at the surgery it was agreed the surgery website is not particularly user-friendly, and that the PPG should perhaps have more prominence.

The library is happy to host training sessions for patients to learn how to navigate the surgery website. Patients may, if they wish, ask to be referred to a different hospital. Others have expressed a wish to see a surgery email address where they can send in details of blood pressure test results etc. Some patients will try just about anything to get an appointment, which might leave this process open to abuse, and our Business Manager (Marc) should be approached for his opinion on this matter, and whether it is feasible to add such a facility to the website.

There was discussion on holding regular 'open access' meetings, where all patients would be invited to join in; Marc would host the meeting, and it could be recorded for the website? The About Thetford magazine would help to publicise any such event; we will discuss at our next meeting, in January.

Frank will contact Paula (our Portuguese 'virtual' PPG member) to help spread the word, as we have a large Polish and Portuguese (plus some others) element to our population and it is important everybody gets to have their say.

#### **4. Terms of Reference**

New members joining the PPG must be made aware of the Terms of Reference (ToR), especially in the way that we are all expected to conduct ourselves. There have been some well publicised incidents in the media since Covid first reared its ugly head, and we need people to understand that bad behaviour is not acceptable.

The latest version of the ToR (3.1) will be emailed to all and we will discuss further at our next meeting.

#### **5. Friends & Family Results**

Results from the Friends & Family questionnaire are anonymous but useful to the surgery, and the overwhelmingly positive impression of the surgery is very gratifying. It might be interesting if others could join us at our meetings via email or Zoom.

#### **6. Practice Updates and News**

The surgery is currently experiencing a significant issue with a shortfall in clinical staff, including GPs, and is running at around 50% of full strength. We have just one full-time GP, but recruitment is underway and we do not expect this situation to last for long.

The group was handed a printout that detailed staffing updates, compliments, complaints and significant events. All routine stuff, except for the one patient who has had to be removed from the practice list through their behaviour; the first in a very long time. The surgery is loath to take such a drastic step, but sometimes there is no choice.

#### **7. Other Business**

- a) Our Joint Chair, Chris, has produced the manuscript for a book while she was undergoing treatment for breast cancer, entitled Hope, and said book is now printed and ready to be launched; at Thetford Library on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2023. Chris has an artistic bent and there are various portraits; we wish her every success with it.
- b) The Certificate of Appreciation, produced by Chris on behalf of the PPG, is to be presented (or posted, to those who have moved on from the surgery) to around 100 names. There seems to have been little in the way of thank you or recognition for the job done during the pandemic, and we hope this gesture will be something to cheer staff up... we think you're great!
- c) The phlebotomy department at the Healthy Living Centre is currently experiencing staffing issues and is running a walk-in service, rather than appointments. The clinic has had to be closed at short notice on a couple of occasions and this was announced on Facebook, but members are wondering if those who had booked an appointment were given notice? - Attempts were made, but not all were successful.
- d) The works currently being carried out to improve the facilities at the Healthy Living Centre are going well, they are on track and on budget. All work should be completed in the early part of 2024.
- e) There has been some complaint that the pharmacy at School Lane Surgery has been slow to deliver, to those who are unable to get to the surgery: van / driver issues!
- f) Members have asked if the surgery could provide a list of preliminary dates for meetings during the year, so that calendars can be marked. Any dates will not be set in stone however, but they will be a guide at least.

**NEXT MEETING: Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> January, 7 pm at School Lane Surgery**