

School Lane Surgery

Patient Participation Group (PPG)

(Condensed)

Thursday 21st November 2024

1. Welcome

This evening, we welcomed Rachel to the PPG. Rachel has done more than her share of volunteering in the community and will bring a fresh perspective to our discussions.

2. Previous minutes

The minutes for our previous meeting in September are approved.

Action Points: it was agreed a PPG Welcome Pack should be produced for new members, and perhaps an initial get-together could take place so that new members get to know who and what we are about.

3. 'Your Surgery, Your Voice' Event – November 12th in the Library

The Chair expressed his thanks to everybody, it was good to see so many bodies there from the PPG. We can make this idea grow, and the public does seem to be interested; though there will, of course, be the inevitable response from the keyboard warriors of Facebook! Some people have nothing better to do and perhaps the surgery should turn off the option to leave a comment? Marc will add relevant posts to the surgery forum, again being mindful of the opportunity for inappropriate feedback.

Following on from the event, we discussed whether the PPG should put in a regular appearance at the surgery and Healthy Living Centre to talk to patients, or would this be too personal? Support groups are probably the best solution for most patients, if available. The surgery would be happy for the PPG to be there, as all feedback is considered useful. Patients need to know that they can talk to somebody, even the PPG, so perhaps we should experiment?

4. Healthy Living Centre Update

Musculoskeletal Therapy Services has no more contact cards. The surgery received a letter to confirm the end of supply, which stated the initial delivery was to be seen as a one-off.

Following PPG feedback, a very helpful Transformation Manager at the West Suffolk Hospital, has amended the address they use in their letters to the Healthy Living Centre. This will now read: First Floor, Thetford Healthy Living Centre, Croxton Road, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 1JD.

5. Practice Updates & News

Adverts are now out, in the attempt to attract nurses to the practice, and GP interviews are soon to take place. Primary Care costs money and the government must step up, if current and new treatments are to be maintained.

6. Other Business

- a) As a matter of interest, the annual **government funding** of the surgery amounts to £112 per patient. This amount is insufficient and means the annual wages bill for all staff at the surgery, which can number up to 60 (though not always all at the same time), is a whopping £170,000 short of what is required to pay salaries. The practice can earn up to 10% of funding from private treatments, but anything above that will see government funding reduced.

The Darzi Report of July 2024 made plain the financial burden being placed on NHS services, and the surgery must try to find a further £100,000 just for staff numbers and services to remain as they are.

There has been no response from the government (at Department level) to the Darzi Report, it is currently being digested. The government favours localism when it comes to health provision, and there is no mechanism for feedback to go “back up the waterfall.” Healthwatch Norfolk are the people to talk to about this issue.

- b) **Kingsfleet** development is plodding along, with no real indication yet of the likely impact on School Lane Surgery; but the surgery is in constant discussion with the interested parties.

The setting up of a hub is being considered for Riverside, which would involve School Lane Surgery and others. There is currently no additional capacity for Kingsfleet.

- c) There is much in the media about the latest **obesity drugs**, but this is not a matter for the GP Practice, it being the responsibility of hospital weight management clinics. Now some people are obtaining the drugs and then making a private appointment with a GP, to ascertain whether they have a condition that would prevent them from taking it.
- d) **District Nurses** are not employed by the Practice, but Norfolk Community Health & Care Trust, and a general lack of funding means they are currently understaffed.
- e) **Fundraising:** Chapter 15 is a support group for the homeless, and is the surgery’s chosen charity of the year appeal. Others supported by the surgery are dementia support and the food bank etc.

The Chair would like to know how members of the PPG feel about getting involved in fundraising?

- f) **Hospital Transport:** is a bit of a nightmare at the best of times, with different counties and hospitals tending to have their own system in place. The surgery would be more than happy if the PPG could pull together any information they find regarding this issue.
- g) **Car Parking:** Thetford, along with other towns in Norfolk will be introducing car parking charges from November 2025, and our town councillor’s report that we will be paying the most. The initial daily charge will be £3.80, which for a full-time worker who must drive into the middle of town, will amount to the best part of £1,000 per year. The consultation for the above will end in April, with charges applying from November.
- h) **Pre-bookable appointments** have been re-introduced at the surgery, the system our GPs prefer.
- i) The surgery has asked if we would be happy for our meetings to be held earlier in the day? We will talk to staff about the options open to us.
- j) Our MP, Terry Jermy (Labour), has been asked about assisted dying and is minded to support it, he says.

7. Future Meeting Dates (2025)

Thursday 6th February

Thursday 20th March

Thursday 15th May

Thursday 17th July

Thursday 18th September

Thursday 20th November

At this point everybody was thanked for attending, and the meeting was closed.

NEXT MEETING: Thursday 6th February, 7 pm