

# **FRIENDS OF THE FAMILY PRACTICE**

## **Minutes of meeting on 19 January 2022**

Present (via Zoom) : Mike Rudd (Chair), Barbara Britten, Judy Chappell, Graham Cundy, Hilary Gower, Malcolm Jefferies, Lynn McGrady, Sandra Shaw, Dr Chris Richards, Jill Keen (Practice Manager)

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

No apologies were received.

### **2. Election of Chair**

At this point Mike stepped down from the position of Chair and Graham took over the meeting by asking those present for nominations for the post for the next two year period. Mike was proposed by Sandra and seconded by Barbara. Being the only nominee, Mike was duly re-elected and took back control of the meeting.

### **3. Minutes of the last meeting held on 20 October 2021**

The minutes were agreed.

### **4. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

### **5. Health Centre Update**

#### **a) Organisation and procedural changes**

There is still a strong desire to minimise Covid risks in the Practice. Accordingly, the triage system whereby patients' requests for appointments are reviewed by Reception staff and GPs is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. However, there are now more face to face appointments as the threat of serious Covid infections appears to be receding. Reception staff have been given guidance on when face to face appointments can be assumed to be necessary.

During the Covid pandemic the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) commissioned 'hot clinics' whereby patients with fevers were diverted to a Woking centre where appropriate PPE equipment and deep cleaning services were in place. This was considered to be a successful initiative as it reduces risks to individual practices and is still in operation.

At its last meeting this group supported the new procedures including the triage system and anecdotal evidence indicates that patients are relatively happy with this arrangement. However there was some concern within the group that although urgent cases appear to be receiving attention (by appointments or referral for blood tests etc), it is difficult to obtain an appointment for less urgent conditions and monitoring. It's rarely possible to book ahead for an appointment on the website. This was acknowledged by the Practice team but given limited appointments, potentially serious conditions are inevitably given priority. Dr Richards suggested that patients with non-urgent conditions should complete the on-line form giving details and their particular concerns, from which the GP can then make an informed decision as to whether an appointment, blood test or other monitoring is required at this stage. It's accepted that although the on-line system (Footfall) is appreciated by many patients, there are still many others who do not have internet access and need to use the phone lines.

## b) Staff Changes

Two nurses – Amy and Sam - commenced with the Practice in November and are currently undertaking the appropriate courses as they become available. Andrew has been appointed as a Health Care Assistant and will be undertaking patients' blood tests and blood pressure monitoring etc. Kay is retiring and will be replaced by Rebecca, whose previous experience includes elderly patient care. The Practice is currently advertising a senior administrative post following Lucy's departure after eight years in the team.

The Practice currently has a full complement of GPs, although Dr Chris Richards is moving to another area of the country and will leave in June, after 11 years with the Practice. Arrangements will be made to seek another GP in due course. Dr Richards has played a key role in this group so his leaving represents a significant loss. The hope is that his replacement will have the same level of interest and commitment to the patient group.

## 6. Ashford & St. Peter's Hospital (ASPH) Transport

The group remains concerned that the transfer of many outpatient appointments from St. Peter's to Ashford Hospital creates transport challenges for patients in our area, particularly those reliant on public transport. The Hoppa bus which previously ran between the two hospitals is now only available for staff and public transport from west Woking requires several bus changes. There has been considerable correspondence on this issue with Woking Council, Surrey County Council (SCC), Woking Community Transport and Jonathan Lord MP.

More recently Jonathan Lord has agreed to write to the Chief Executive of the Ashford & St. Peter's Trust asking for patient access to the hospital's bus link and as Covid recedes, to reintroduce the public bus link. It is understood that the direct bus route is reliant on government funding – so is unlikely to be available in the short term.

Judy is aware of a number of volunteer run transport schemes that may be able to provide transport for patients in their area who due to age, disability or temporary mobility issues have difficulty getting to hospital. The patient pays a donation to cover operating costs. Judy will arrange to have a poster put up in the Practice. The phone numbers for these groups, which are manned from 10am – 12 noon on weekdays, are as follows:

St John's Care	01483 476223 or 07717 597721
Goldsworth Care	07751 801587
Knaphill Care	07792 514166
Horsell Care	01483 730740

## 7. Any Other Business

- There was uncertainty within the group regarding if and when further Covid vaccinations will be required after the 3<sup>rd</sup> (Booster) jab. Discussions appear to be ongoing on this issue but Jill is able to advise that following guidance provided by Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), NHS Digital has been commissioned by NHS England and Improvement to identify patients who are severely immunocompromised (SI) and therefore eligible for a third primary dose of a COVID-19 vaccination. The patient list was created and shared with GP practices to supplement local patient lists.

- The group would like to do another survey to seek patients' views about the Practice, but face to face surveys with patients attending the surgery would not be representative during this current period of restricted access. Other mechanisms are therefore necessary, however these must ensure patient confidentiality. This issue will be discussed at the next meeting.
- There has been some confusion regarding access to appointments via the telephone, with a patient calling for an appointment from their car told they could only make an appointment via an on-line request. This was unfortunate as the intention is that Reception staff will complete forms on behalf of patients with no internet access. New staff are being trained in these procedures.
- A recent ultrasound clinic, organised by an outside diagnostic team using a room in the Practice, had been cancelled at very short notice. Although this clinic was not managed by the Practice, its cancellation at less than one hour's notice impacts adversely on the reputation of the Practice as patients turned up to closed doors.
- The minutes of these group meetings will be held on the website on a rolling one year basis.
- The gutters above the offices appear to be blocked, with weeds growing out of them in areas. This will be notified to the team responsible for maintaining the site, but all such work is chargeable to the Practice.

#### **8. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be at 11:30am on Wednesday 27 April 2022 via Zoom.