

St George's Medical Centre, Littleport
Patient Participation Group
Annual General Meeting - July 15th 2013

The second Annual General Meeting of the St George's Patient Participation Group was held at the Medical Centre on the evening of Monday, July 15th 2013. The AGM was attended by approximately 30 patients and Practice staff. Apologies were received from Paul Price, Marion Arnold, Monica and David Devey, Elizabeth Wilkinson and Walter Cornwell.

The meeting commenced at 7.00pm with a short welcome from the Acting Vice-Chair, Rose Edgson. Gary Shepherd, Practice Manager, introduced members of the Practice staff present and then handed over to Sally Graham, Assistant Practice Manager, who presented a "Virtual Tour of St George's" highlighting the work of the large number of departments and services behind the scenes at the Parsons Lane site. Throughout the presentation there was informal discussion on a range of topics:

- new developments and services planned at the Medical Centre, including an updated website
- waiting room improvements to be undertaken after the re-location of the Pharmacy
- the Summary Care Records initiative whereby a summary of the patient health record is stored nationally so that authorised medical staff can access the record to treat patients presenting for emergency care away from their own Practice
- computerised health care systems used locally and nationally
- the Out of Hours Service in Cambridgeshire
- hospital discharge summaries and the communication channels between acute hospitals and GP Practices
- Accident and Emergency services and Minor Injury Units as at the Princess of Wales Hospital
- the appointment system at St George's and the high number of patients (Did Not Attend) who do not arrive for their appointments but have forgotten to cancel. These wasted appointments, totalling 167 in the month of June, severely reduce the number of available appointment slots for other patients.
- the need to make patients more aware of the option to have a telephone consultation with GPs and nurses instead of making an appointment, for example for advice and for medication issues

Dr Bolina described the long hours and the varied workload of a typical "day in the life of a GP" and further discussion centred on the new NHS commissioning structures from April 2013 and the impact on GP Practices.

The new St George's Medical Centre Newsletter was launched during the AGM. This is a joint venture between the Practice and the Patient Group and will be a quarterly publication, also available on the Practice website.

A raffle took place as the first stage of a small fundraising drive by the Patient Group towards extras for the future Waiting Room refurbishment.

The formal business agenda of the AGM commenced with the PPG Annual Report presented by Rose Edgson.

Chair's Annual Report for 2012/13

Mrs Edgson started her Annual Report by referring back to how last Year's Chair had described the purpose of a Patient Group. "Nearly all GP Practices in the UK now have Patient Groups. Each is uniquely evolved to meet local needs. They work with their Practices to offer the patient perspective on services provided, to help to improve communication, to encourage patients to take more responsibility for their own health and to provide practical support plus helping to obtain feedback from patients to implement change".

The PPG is a group of patients who have volunteered to assist the Practice in all of these things. The St George's PPG started in July 2011 and throughout 2012 / 2013 the organisation of the PPG has been led by a very strong Committee of 16 active patients.

Mrs Edgson said that the PPG acts as a bridge between patients and the Practice on matters of general patient concern and the Committee meetings have been used to share those general issues with the Practice Manager and the GPs. However, it has to be remembered that the PPG is not able to deal with any individual personal problems or complaints. These should be taken directly to the Practice Manager.

The PPG has met as a formal Committee every two months but has also been working behind the scenes through three small working groups, the Southery Working Group, the Practice Survey Working Group and the Communications Working Group.

The Southery Working Group was set up following the 2012 AGM when a group of patients raised concerns about the closure, two years previously, of Southery village's outreach surgery. Three PPG Committee members who are residents of Southery worked together to explore the issues raised, liaising with the Practice management, the Southery Parish Council, the Southery Village Newsletter, the Southery fundraising Group, SWISH, as well as Cambridgeshire and Norfolk's Community Transport organisations.

Articles were placed in the Southery Village Newsletter explaining the reasons why the Practice could no longer provide an outreach surgery. Contact details of the PPG committee members were provided for any patients who wished to make known any problems they had in accessing the surgery at Littleport. None of the committee members received any response from Southery residents. It was

therefore agreed with the Practice management at a full PPG committee meeting that there was no further action to be taken at the present time.

The second Annual Practice Survey took place in January 2013 and members of the PPG formed a small Survey Working Group to assist the Practice with the development of the questionnaire, its distribution, analysis and reports. The PPG undertook Pre-Survey work during the Flu Clinic sessions in the Autumn and had an excellent response from patients about which were the top priorities for inclusion in the Survey questionnaire. The PPG also assisted the Practice to create a separate smaller Survey specifically aimed at the managers of care homes in Littleport asking them to complete a questionnaire on behalf of their residents.

The majority of people completing the general Patient Survey expressed satisfaction with services at the Medical Centre. However, the large number of additional comments from patients had highlighted key themes for potential improvement in 2013/14. These were:

- Appointments availability
- Reception services and Waiting Room improvements
- Increased awareness and information for patients in order to access appointments and practice services
- Increased opportunities for health information and promotion

The PPG worked with the Practice Manager to analyse and collate all the patient comments so that none of this valuable information was lost. This has enabled the Practice to develop an Action Plan for 2013/14 to address many of the issues patients raised.

The Communications Working Group has been extremely busy this year

- creating new leaflets and poster to encourage more patients to join the PPG
- writing articles for local magazines and websites
- working with the Practice to create a quarterly joint Newsletter
- producing regular displays in the Waiting Room focusing on health topics and issues which affect the general population.

One of the 2013 highlights was joining other health colleagues on the Healthy Living stand at the Littleport Leisure Centre Fun Day on June 9th. This was a joint venture between Adam Peacock, the local Health Trainer based at St George's Medical Centre, staff from Queen Elizabeth Hospital, King's Lynn and PPG members. The day was spent promoting healthy lifestyles, highlighting services available at St George's and also gathering people's views on how the Waiting Room facilities could be improved, which the Practice is planning to do later this year after the Pharmacy is re-located.

Mrs Edgson reported that nationally there had been many changes in the past year especially with new NHS structures from April 2013. These changes have brought the majority of the health budgets down to the Practice level, giving GPs more involvement and responsibility in the decision-making about your local health services. There has been a structural problem with the Cambridgeshire Community Services NHS Trust not being granted Foundation Status. This is expected to be resolved during this year 2013/14 with a new structure in place for April 2014.

Locally, Welney Ward at the Princess of Wales Hospital was closed due to staff shortages at the beginning of the year. This gave many people great concern that it would not re-open again. Following a concentrated recruitment drive, the ward did re-open, which does ensure that local people requiring post-acute care can be rehabilitated nearer to their homes and families.

The PPG now has formal links into the new NHS structures. A PPG member attends the Isle of Ely Patients' Forum with the other 9 GP Practices in the Isle of Ely area. The Forum's Chair is a voting member of the new Isle of Ely Clinical Commissioning Group Board. This means that the views of the PPG and local patients now have a formal channel of communication to the Board which is making decisions about current and future services in the Isle of Ely area.

This will be another busy year ahead for the PPG and Mrs Edgson encouraged new members to join the Patient Group either as Committee members for those who like attending meetings and organising events, or if patients just want to get views across, to join as a "Virtual Group" member by leaving contact details so that the PPG can keep in touch with news and occasional surveys.

Mrs Edgson ended the Annual Report by thanking all PPG members and Gary Shepherd and Sally Graham for their support, also for the funding by the Practice of PPG overheads, such as stationery, providing meeting rooms and light refreshments.

Amendment to the PPG Constitution

The next item on the AGM business agenda related to a proposed amendment to the PPG Constitution, originally adopted in September 2011 and updated at the July 2012 AGM.

PPG Officers are elected for a period of 12 months at each July Annual General Meeting. At recent PPG Committees, there has been considerable discussion about the election of Officers for the forthcoming 12 months, particularly as four of the original PPG Committee members are stepping down from the Committee.

The next year is likely to be a busy and important year for patient groups as pressures increase on GP Practices and the new NHS changes take effect. It was felt that the adoption of a team approach to the Officer functions, with shared roles as appropriate, would provide more continuity and would meet the future needs of the PPG, its Committee members and also the needs of the Practice.

It was agreed to amend Paragraph 5.4. of the current PPG Constitution to enable the PPG to move forward in a strong, flexible and supportive manner.

(The text of the original Constitution is shown in italics and the agreed amendment is shown in underlined bold type)

*5.4. In order to ensure continuity and sustainability for the future, **shared Officer positions** and Assistant Officer positions shall be considered as required and co-options agreed by the PPG Committee. This may include members undertaking “shadow officer positions” and the co-option of additional individuals for specific purposes and time periods. **Where appropriate, a team approach across the Officer functions, sharing positions as necessary, may be adopted so that the future of the PPG Committee shall be strengthened, ensuring that all Officers receive increased support, as well as gaining more experience in their roles and responsibilities.***

Election of PPG Committee Officers for 2013/2014

It has been agreed that a team approach to the Officer functions will provide sustainability for the future. The following Committee members have been nominated to undertake PPG Officer Roles:

Kate Massey as Chair also retaining some of her current organisational and secretarial functions

Supported by rota of **Assistant Secretaries** – note taking at Committee meetings plus administrative support as required.

Chair supported by shared role of **two Vice-Chairs – Elizabeth Wilkinson and Steve Orchard**

The above Officers were duly elected for a 12 month period until the 2014 AGM.

Rose Edgson wished all Officers every success in their new roles and thanked Kate Massey for her work as Secretary during the past 12 months.

In addition to the above Officers, the following existing **PPG Committee members** have agreed to stand for a further 12 months during 2013 / 2014:

Marion Arnold
Walter Cornwell
Monica Dennis
David Devey
Monica Devey
Jean McNeill
Helen Mould
Ena Puddefoot
Carol Swain

Four Committee members have retired from the PPG Committee with effect from July 2013 - Rose Edgson, Paul Price, Diana Le Brecht and Jack Le Brecht

As incoming Chair, Kate Massey proposed a vote of thanks to the four retiring Committee members. All four had been there from the beginning of the Patient Group in 2011 and had taken on important Officer roles as Secretary, Chair and Vice-Chair, enabling the Patient Group to grow into what it is today.

Kate Massey also read a message from Paul Price, the retiring Acting Chair who unfortunately had sent his apologies. "I am very proud of what the members of the PPG, together with help from the St George's management team and our wonderful doctors, have achieved since the PPG started. It is without doubt a model of what a PPG should be."

Rose Edgson and Kate Massey thanked everyone for attending the AGM and closed the meeting at 8.50pm.
