MINUTES OF PPG MEETING

HELD AT HEATH LANE MEDICAL CENTRE

TUESDAY 17TH MAY 2022

**In Attendance:**

Dr Zoe Thompson-Shaw (ZT)

Katherine Jones (KJ)

Greg Yates (GY)

Marian Fellows (MF)

Jane Bignall (JB)

Ian Gould (IG)

1. **Apologies and Welcome**

Apologies received from Rob Beacham and Fiona Paton. GY welcomed all to the first face to face PPG meeting since February 2020. All congratulated KJ on her recent marriage.

1. **Minutes of the ‘Virtual Meeting’ 1st February 2022**

Approved as a correct record

1. **Matters Arising from the Minutes**

KJ informed the Group that the Practice was not involved in the Covid Spring Booster programme but may be asked to help with further vaccination programmes later in the year. Booster vaccinations for housebound patients were being carried out by an external contractor.

1. **Updates from Heath Lane Medical Centre**

**Staffing Matters** – KJ briefed on a number of organisational and staff changes and explained these by reference to an Organisational Flow Chart (copy attached). The main organisational development was the creation of new Clinical Lead and Nurse Lead posts for their respective teams. The former was planned to include a new Paramedic appointment in accordance with NHS England proposals to help address the chronic national shortage of GP’s. This post would be equivalent in function to Nurse Practitioner but could undertake other duties, possibly including some urgent home visits. ZT and KJ explained that, although theoretically a logical idea, there was a difficulty in attracting suitably qualified Paramedics to make the career move into GP practices.

The Patient Services team had been severely depleted in recent weeks, currently running at around 19% capacity for various reasons. Two new staff members had now been recruited to ease the situation and there was also the intention to appoint an apprentice to the team. KJ reported however that neither of the 2 candidates recently invited for interview had actually attended!

**New System of Appointment Booking** – ZT explained the background to this change which was essentially made in response to Patient concerns about delays in being able to see a clinician. In essence, the change had been made to the appointment system to replace the previous 2 week window for appointment booking to 48 hours. The Group discussed this change, in particular the way that it was being communicated to Patients via the Practice newsletter which was felt made it difficult to understand. ZT said that the change seemed to have been understood by most Patients when they telephoned for appointments and, apart for some teething problems, appeared to be working well in practice. Agreed that no further written explanation was necessary.

**Extended Hours Feasibility Study -** KJ explained that this was being done in response to a directive from NHS England to increase the hours of Primary Care service availability to Patients. The Practice had been given the task of leading on this on behalf of the local Primary Care Network (PCN). The concept was that the Practices in the PCN should work together to offer a range of services between the hours of 7 am to 8 pm Monday to Friday and 9 am to 5 pm on Saturday. Sunday and Bank Holiday cover would continue to be delivered by an external provider. For Heath Lane, this would mean delivering around 6 hours extra per week. The Practice had asked the PPG to formulate some questions to Patients about the potential demand for extended hours availability and the range of services that might be provided. GY explained the difficulty the Group had in providing a meaningful response. IG commented that he had asked questions about this in previous face to face consultations with Patients and it did not seem to be a burning issue. KJ expressed her gratitude for GY’s response to this and would use the questions suggested in the proposed Patient Survey (copy now attached).

**5. Chairman’s Updates** – GY briefed on his recent contact with other PPG Chairs which had been limited to on line meetings and also on the Cheshire East Community Engagement Planning Group to which it was felt that neither he nor IG could make a useful contribution. KJ confirmed that the Practice was also not actively involved in the latter initiative. The chairs’ group had recently carried out a survey of PPG group activity across practices in West Cheshire. There were wide variations; our PPG had fewer members than the average, but was above average in the engagement and support from the practice.

**6. Future of PPG** – GY raised the difficulty of PPG being involved in major projects on behalf of the Practice because of lack of members. This problem was also faced by other PPG’s, particularly the difficulty in attracting a wider demographic base of membership. Ideas were floated on ways to encourage more Patients to join the Group but there was no obvious solution to this, beyond what was already in place. ZT and KJ reiterated the commitment of the Practice to retain the PPG and how much its work was valued. KJ said that the Covid pandemic had resulted in much of the type of work with which the PPG could be involved being put on hold but that more potential projects were likely to emerge later this year in which the PPG’s input would be appreciated. GY suggested that he would like to engage with the two local parish councils to see if they could provide potential new members and useful information links. He had just made useful contact with the Boughton two years ago when things had to be put on hold after the covid pandemic arrived..

**7. Any Other Business** – None.

**8. Date of Next Meeting** –

**Tuesday 23rd August 2022 at 4.00 pm (PPG pre-meeting at 3.30)**