MINUTES OF PPG MEETING

HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

ON 1ST FEBRUARY 2022

**In Attendance:**

Dr Zoe Thompson-Shaw (ZT)

Katherine McClay (KM)

Greg Yates (GY)

Jane Bignall (JB)

Rob Beacham (RB)

Ian Gould (IG)

1. **Welcome and Introductions**

GY introduced PPG members and welcomed ZT to her first formal meeting.

1. **Apologies for Absence**

IG reported apologies from Marion Fellows. Nothing heard from other members.

1. **PPG Update**

GY said there was little to report on PPG activity generally, owing to the Covid pandemic. Some Groups had ceased altogether and the only notable area of current interest locally was the Cheshire East Community Innovation Fund working group. Essentially this is a multi-agency group looking at ways of using the £21,000 fund on initiatives to tackle local healthcare priorities.

This PPG had only participated marginally in the working group owing to lack of resources. KM confirmed that the Practice had also had little direct involvement and it was hard to know how it could become more meaningfully engaged.

Agreed that no further action should be taken at this stage.

PPG members recorded their appreciation of the efforts the Practice had made to cope with the Covid crisis. From the (albeit limited) experience of those present, their family and friends, the service received from the Practice had been good.

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

KM briefed on the recent staff changes in the Practice. Following Dr Saunders’ retirement, Drs Fryar, Wall and Thompson-Shaw were now Partners and Dr Elwell had been appointed as salaried GP.

There were still two vacancies in the Nurse Practitioner team but one potential recruit had now been identified.

New staff included Richard (Office Manager) and Mike (Clinical Pharmacist). The latter role (assisted by Michelle as Medicines Manager) was proving to be effective in freeing up Clinician’s time in dealing with patient medicines reviews and this function was to be further strengthened by training Beth as a medicines technician.

The Practice was now undertaking a wider structural review to reflect the priorities of the new Partners. Initiatives being considered included practice-based physiotherapy and paramedic services. For Heath Lane at present, only an Advanced Paramedic Practitioner position is being considered. Other Practices in the Primary Care Network were basing recruitment on Physiotherapy Services, Pharmacy Technicians and Clinical Pharmacists.

The Covid pandemic had created major issues for the Practice but KM stressed that the Surgery had remained open for business throughout. She presented a number of key statistics for the period April to December 2021, including:

30,000+ face to face appointments

28,000 telephone consultations

25,000 referrals

228,000 medications issued

In addition, the Practice had continued with patients’ home and care home visits. Staff had also supported the Covid vaccination hub at St Columba’s Church and administered 1700 flu vaccinations. Covid vaccination of clinically vulnerable 5 – 11 year-olds had now started at the Surgery.

The Practice would no longer carry out ear syringing as this was not now regarded as a GP core service. Spirometry had also ceased temporarily because of Covid safety restrictions.

The blood pressure monitoring machine had now been placed in the waiting room with patients being encouraged to self-test.

Initiatives currently being worked on were weight management, ‘go greener’ inhalers and improving patient access to services.

On the latter, ZT said that the ‘triage’ system introduced during the pandemic was felt to be working effectively and would be continued for the time being. This meant that the initial patient consultation would be by telephone but with rapid face to face follow up with the most appropriate clinician whenever necessary.

The Covid ‘Hot Hub’ at the Countess of Chester Hospital would continue to operate until at least March 2022 for direct referral of patients with Covid symptoms.

1. **Questions from PPG Members**

JB asked who the Senior Partner is now. KM confirmed Dr Fryar.

Other questions raised and answered as they arose under previous item.

1. **Future Role of PPG**

ZT felt that there was not much the PPG could assist with while Covid restrictions remained, other than spreading the word about the Practice being fully open for business.

The Practice was keen, however, that the PPG continued and could see a number of areas where the Group might help with future projects and initiatives. These included obtaining feedback from Patients to help improve existing procedures, e.g. introducing a narrower time window for telephone consultations and developing changes to the appointment system.

There were plans to install a multi-functional monitoring machine for patient use. PPG could help by testing this when installed and then assisting patients to use it.

Feedback would also be vital in looking at improved and additional community based services tailored to local patient needs.

GY said that the PPG was very willing to help as ‘friends’ of the Practice but was restricted in what it could achieve by its very small size – only 6 active members.

RB felt that the existing Patient Newsletter could be used as an effective means of obtaining feedback using live links to simple survey questions. He would be willing to help the Practice set this up and PPG could also be involved in helping frame the questions. Agreed that this was worth developing further.

On the issue of lack of PPG resources and poor demographic representation, it was suggested that both the Newsletter and Facebook could be used more effectively to encourage potential members to come forward.

GY felt that the CCG could be more active in supporting the Practices in their area, particularly in countering some of the negative media coverage which had emerged during the Covid pandemic and in publicising efforts to return to normality. Agreed to continue press the CCG on this.

**7 Any Other Business**

None

**8 Date and Format of Next Meeting**

Agreed to plan to hold a face to face meeting at the Surgery on Tuesday 17th May 2022 at 4.00 pm.