

Minutes of A Special Meeting of the CDHC - Patient Participation Group (PPG)
Held at CDHC on 15th October 2012

Present: Ann Barrack, Dave Burnage, Caroline Custard, Michael H Ford, Florrie Grimwood, Eve Rowat, Molly Tavani, Dennis Teesdale and Liz Wigzell

Apologies: None

The meeting opened at 7.00pm with Dennis Teesdale explaining the he and Liz Wigzell had called the meeting in order to get the Group, which had been on the stocks since 2011, up and running. Together they had formulated an outline agenda which had been split into two separate parts: Housekeeping and Business. He would lead the meeting through the first part after which, hopefully, the PPG would have a Chairman or woman who would take over the Business part of the agenda. An Attendance List was being passed round and those present were asked to supply their name, phone number and email address. **It was agreed that members would share their details among the membership.**

Tent Cards had been provided and members were asked to show theirs as a means of identification.

1. HOUSEKEEPING

The following Housekeeping items were proposed and seconded jointly by Dennis Teesdale and Liz Wigzell.

It was agreed that:

- a) The purpose of the PPG is to encourage the free exchange of ideas and views between the Practice and patients in order to improve the service provided.
- b) Membership of the PPG is open to patients registered with the CDHC.
- c) The Group is to be run on democratic lines with a Proposer, a Seconder and a majority vote required to approve any action. In the event of a tied vote, the Chairman is to have an additional, casting vote.
- d) The Group is to meet at CDHC on the first Monday of every second month between 7.00 and 9.00pm. (In the event that the first Monday in the month falls on a Bank Holiday, the meeting to be held on the second Monday.)
- e) A Quorum (the number of members attending a meeting to validate decisions) is to be five members.
- f) A Sub-committee may consist of one or more members and may co-opt non-members for special purposes. A Sub-committee may be appointed through normal procedures at Group meetings. At other times, the Chairman plus one other member may set up a Sub-committee, but such a Sub-committee must be ratified at the next Group meeting. Progress reports will be required from Sub-committees at all Group meetings until the Sub-committee is disbanded.
- g) Appointment of Officers — only a Chairman and Secretary are to be appointed, there being no requirement for a Treasurer at this time. Each to stand for twelve months from the date of election, except that in order to provide continuity, the first Chairman will stand for an eighteen month period and thereafter for twelve months.
ALL OF THE ABOVE RECEIVED THE UNANIMOUS SUPPORT OF THE MEETING
- h) Michael H Ford being willing to stand as Chairman, was elected unanimously. (Proposer Dave Burnage, Seconder Florrie Grimwood). He was elected for eighteen months.
- k) Dennis Teesdale being willing to stand as Secretary, was elected unanimously. (Proposer Caroline Custard, Seconder Liz Wigzell). He was elected for twelve months.

The Housekeeping part of the agenda being complete, the meeting was handed over to the new Chairman, Michael H Ford at 7.20pm.

2. BUSINESS AGENDA: Mr Michael H Ford in the Chair

a) Triage System Progress — Florrie Grimwood, who keeps an eye on the caravan park at Turners Hill, reported she had put together a short leaflet on the Triage System and had hand delivered 2 to 300 hundred copies to doors in her area. She advised there were a large number of people in their 80s and 90s in the area and they needed a bit of care and help at times. One result had been a letter from a disgruntled resident which did much to encapsulate the general thoughts on the subject. She passed the letter to the Chairman who read it out.

The writer complained of unhelpful information from receptionists, and subsequent confusion between receptionists' responses and the Triage Nurse who had called back. On one occasion, when attempting to make an appointment in person at the Health Centre, the writer objected to having to explain their medical condition with anyone other than a doctor, and certainly not in front of others casually waiting in the reception area.

Members generally agreed there seemed to be a too frequent change of face on the reception desk but had sympathy with changes in staffing that came about before thorough training could be completed.

Ann Barrack, from her background in hotel keeping, pointed out the value of a well-trained receptionist. As the first point of contact with the public, the receptionist's attitude, demeanour, manner and sympathy in dealing with queries was the basis of how any facility was perceived. She understood the complications caused when trained staff moved on, but felt the Health Centre's problems needed sorting out. A simple expedient was to have a 'buddy' always at the side of trainees in her experience.

Florrie Grimwood also raised the point that waiting time for a 'normal' appointment now seemed to have reached five weeks. She had sought an appointment on September 5th and was offered one on October 10th.

It was proposed by Mike Ford, seconded by Dennis Teesdale, that Chairman attend a meeting at the caravan park as soon as feasible, preferably with supporters from the Health Centre (Doctor, Triage Nurse, etc.) to discuss the matter and answer questions.

In the same context, the Chairman would seek an early appointment with the Practice Manager and Doctors with a view to resolving the matter once and for all. He would report back at next meeting.

b) **Feedback on visit to Dolphin PPG by Caroline Custard** — Caroline described her visit as helpful and tabled her Notes on Meeting held at Dolphin Practice, Haywards Heath regarding NHS Reforms (*a scan of these notes is attached in Portable Document Format*). She went on to describe the helpful advice received from several of the speakers. To a later question she replied there had been about 35 at the meeting with the Mayor opening the event.

One particularly significant statistic which had stuck in her mind was that in West Sussex some 38% were over retirement age whereas the average for the rest of the country was just 14%. She had ascertained that one or two of the speakers at Haywards Heath might not be averse to speaking to a Crawley Down meeting. One particular phrase had stuck in her mind, 'Health Care is not means tested — Social Care is'.

On the forthcoming NHS Reforms, Molly Tavani worried that each set of doctors would form their own opinions on how to deal with the situation and could lead to fewer doctors being available. Caroline Custard agreed that that seemed likely to happen under the new system.

Caroline also suggested she might keep in touch with those she had already had contact and the Chairman felt this would be an excellent idea. It was proposed by Dennis Teesdale and Seconded by Molly Tavani that Caroline be appointed to keep an eye on the situation. This was accepted unanimously.

[Sub-committee 1: Maintain Contact with Dolphin PPG — Watch Over Projected NHS Reforms]

c) **Failure to Keep Appointments — Liz Wigzell** Liz reported she had sought information from the Practice Manager regarding patients who persistently failed to attend for appointments. It had previously been suggested that some form of prompt to be developed, possibly by sending a warning text message or call to patients. This had been discounted by the Health Centre on the grounds of expense: £200/year running costs plus installation fee of £150 plus VAT for texting service alone.

Questioned by the Chairman, Liz believed there were some 50 persistent offenders and Ann Barrack interjected that this showed on the waiting room Call Board as some 1095 minutes lost! Chairman voiced the opinion of many patients when he said they were beginning to regard the Call Board as an annoying waste of space. Caroline Custard made the point that the frequently heard comeback was: 'What about me? I've been sitting here waiting for over thirty minutes past my appointment time!' Dave Burnage on the other hand said he'd never had a problem with late appointments, he was always grateful for the time he got.

Chairman felt some other way must be found to address the problem. Perhaps a polite word could be sent to offenders reminding them of their obligations. Eve Rowat wondered if a letter could carry some sort of warning on the lines of 'three strikes and your out!' Chairman rejected that outright! Eve persisted that everyone could make a mistake, but some way of pointing out the time wasted had to be found. What about imposing a charge on offenders? Chairman made it clear that cannot be done either.

Molly Tavani suggested it could not be beyond the ingenuity of the IT staff to arrange for a 'red flag' to appear on persistent offenders' notes and it could then be up to the Doctor to make the point very firmly with the patient at the end of their next appointment. 'After all' she remarked, 'appointments are like gold dust!' Chairman wondered if a Reminder Slip, similar to those used by the Queen Vic, might not be passed to patients at the end of appointments.

Someone Unidentified surmised that missed appointments were often no more than the patient feeling better and no longer needing to attend, failing to understand they were wasting time by not advising the Health Centre the appointment was no longer needed. However, Florrie Grimwood responded by pointing out that it was almost impossible to get through to reception at times. She had tried to cancel one appointment and it had taken 25 minutes of repeated attempts to get through before she gave up!

Dennis Teesdale recalled that at the last meeting, Eve Rowat had suggested setting up some sort 'Volunteers Group' or 'Friends of CDHC' similar to those operated elsewhere, who might provide a rota for calling people with appointments 48 hours before the appointed time. There were rumblings of 'Confidentiality, confidentiality', but Eve persisted with the proposal. It would just be a call, generally by landline and free, to say e.g. 'Is that Mrs A? I'm calling on behalf of the Health Centre to remind you that you have an appointment with the doctor/ nurse/HCA, the day after tomorrow say, at 10.30 in the morning. Do you still require it? Or can we make it available to someone else?' The consensus was that this should not offend and might be worth looking into. It was Proposed by Dennis Teesdale, Seconded by Mike Ford that Eve Rowat take on the task of looking into this whole matter further with the Practice Manager. This was agreed unanimously.

[Sub-committee 2: Explore the Setting up of a Volunteers Group]

Chairman raised another matter which had come to his notice. It had recently become the habit for anyone calling back from the Health Centre to use the 'Caller Withheld' service that many phones provide. He objected to this strenuously on the grounds that, like many others feel today, answering a 'Caller Withheld' message was tantamount to being mobbed by people selling everything imaginable. He was certainly not going to answer and most felt the same. He suggested the Health Centre should be advised that the practice of withholding caller name when calling patients be abandoned.

d) **PR Information published by the Surgery** — Dennis Teesdale reminded everyone that at the last meeting he had questioned Dr Jefferies whether a periodic newsletter was still produced. It appeared it was not. He believed it would be a valuable tool for the Practice if a newsletter were to be produced every month or so at a cost of no more than the price of the paper. It could air such matters as the Triage System, Failed appointments, Calls for Flu jabs say, and be left in waiting rooms for patients to pick up. Molly Tavani felt such a publication would also be of value to newcomers to the area. A mock-up of a simple newsletter was passed round the table. Chairman and Dennis Teesdale were to liaise on the production of leaflets, newsletters, etc.

e) **Any Other Business** — Caroline Custard asked for views on how the admin side of the Practice was run and how it might fit in with the running of the PPG. Was admin separate from the doctors? Would the PPG treat admin and doctors separately? Chairman felt this was something else to be explored and would take it up when he met the Practice Manager. This provoked the question as to why the Practice Manager was not at the meeting. It was felt generally that all these questions needed to be answered when Chairman met the Practice Manager. It was agreed that once armed with the minutes, Chairman could deal with the various questions that had come up tonight at such a meeting.

The question of who should receive copies of the minutes was raised. If everyone who had ever been addressed in the various email trails rather than those present tonight were to be sent a copy, it might stimulate more interest. However, this also might result in more people attending than could be catered for. This prompted the question of what would happen if 100 people turned up for a meeting. It was decided for the time being to send minutes only to those present tonight.

Chairman questioned whether there was still a Welcome system for newcomers to the village. With the planned growth of the area he wondered whether King & Chasemore and Connells provided any such facility which might be tapped. Molly Tavani commented that surely newcomers would mean more patients for the CDHC practice. Chairman felt access to newcomers might also be via Church & Village newsletter.

It was noted that some 8000 patients suggested over 3000 properties to cater for. The production of publicity materials for such numbers would be expensive. Dennis Teesdale mentioned that some years ago Crawley Down Residents Association had published a newsletter. Just to produce 500 had cost almost £500. Already, a large number of villagers worked away from the area. Their families used the school and some went to village events but not in large numbers. Once a year many did go to the Village Fayre on the green, but much of the rest of the time, their interests were elsewhere.

Molly Tavani cautioned the PPG had to be careful or it could simply degenerate into a committee within a committee. Chairman advised that he had let things run a bit this time since he had not come prepared to take the chair and had subsequently wanted to get the feel of the meeting.

Chairman reiterated he would be replying to the writer of the letter tabled by Florry Grimwood. And would be making an early appointment to discuss the PPG with the Practice Manager.

Although the **next meeting** of the PPG was set for December 3rd, an interim meeting was called for in November, but because the first Monday fell on Guy Fawkes Day, it would be moved to **November 12th at 7.00pm at CDHC.**

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.45pm.

Dennis Teesdale, Secretary — 15 October 2012