

# THE TOLLGATE PRACTICE

## PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 19<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2024 AT 1.00PM

### ATTENDEES

Surgery/ NHS Staff: Dr E.Bopitiya (Dr.EB) Lisa Maddox (LM) Diane Balcombe (DB)

Patient Members: Chairman -David Mills (DM) Secretary - Michael Vass (MV) Christopher Dowsett (CD) Rosemary James (RJ) Lorraine Feakes (LF) Susan Spice (SS) Pamela Hurcomb (PH) Karen Drake (KD)

1. **Welcome.** DM welcomed everyone to the meeting including Diane Balcombe, a Primary Care Support Manager, Dr.Bopitiya, who would be joining the Group as soon as she had finished with a patient and Karen Drake who was attending her first meeting.
2. **Apologies.** MV reported that apologies had been received from Angela Young and Peter Walker.
3. **Minutes of the last meeting** held on the 21<sup>st</sup> Feb.2024 were unanimously approved.
4. **Matters Arising.** Nothing not covered by the agenda – the order of which was being changed while waiting for Dr Bopitiya to arrive.
5. **Surgery Website.** MV queried why the minutes of the last PPG Meeting were still missing from the surgery website as he had raised this with LM some weeks ago. LM apologised for the extended delay which was partly due to other pressures and both DB and LM also explained that making changes/additions to the site was more complicated than it might appear as they needed to be actioned by an external provider. Both promised this would be rectified.
6. **Monthly Statistics.** When MV raised this issue LM/DB were unclear about the scope of the information. To provide clarity RJ handed them a copy of the summary that MV previously prepared for the PPG from information supplied to him by Jason Crouch - when he was employed as the Assistant Practice Manager. It was felt that this information provided the PPG with a useful overview of the Practice.
7. **General Practice News.** LM and DB informed the meeting of several developments –
  - a) **Telephone System/ Appointment Booking** The surgery is looking at improvements to the telephone system including being able to inform patients of their position in the telephone queue when calling for an urgent appointment and also when all the current days appointments have been taken.
  - b) **Pharmacy First** It was explained that the Surgery would be encouraging patients to make use of the recent relaxation in rules which allows pharmacies to prescribe for a number of minor ailments thus allowing Doctors additional time to deal with more serious illness and medical complaints
  - c) **Appointment Audit.** As soon as pressure permits the surgery intend undertaking an “appointment audit” with a view to encouraging the use of the “Pharmacy First” initiative and thus freeing up more urgent and pre bookable appointments.

Dr Bopitiya joined the meeting.

**8. Practice Partners Update.** MV explained that the following agenda items had been included in response to concerns within the committee and externally about the sudden departure of Senior Admin and Other Staff. DM said he was particularly concerned that exodus had happened so soon after he and other PPG members had praised the Practice during a meeting with the CQC who had gone on to give the Practice a “Good” rating assessment - including encouraging comments about staff relationships.

- a) **Senior Staff Resignations.** Dr.EB said that the departure of Annette Bloomfield and Jason Crouch was difficult to explain and whilst it would be inappropriate to go into detail, she wanted to make it clear that with the help of DB, efforts had been made to mediate issues before they eventually left. The departures had left a large gap in resources at a senior level but Dr.EB was pleased to confirm that LM had recently been offered the Practice Manager position and that she was hoping it would be accepted. It was also confirmed that DB would be providing the surgery and LM with ongoing additional support on a one day a week basis and that Dr Abeyundara would soon be returning to work.
- b) **Other Staff Departures/ Recruitment.** Dr.EB confirmed that the departure of Annette and Jason had resulted in a drop in staff moral and that there had been a number of other departures. However, there was some good news on recruitment and a new ANP (Advanced Nurse Practitioner) would be starting in June. Also action had already been taken to improve general recruitment (in a difficult market) with better training for new joiners who needed to understand the “System One” used by the surgery
- c) **Future Plans for the Practice.** Both Dr.EB and DB expressed hope that the steps already taken and planned would enable the Practice to overcome recent difficulties. Further, with a view to improving efficiency the possibility of moving the reception and integrating it with the main office was again being considered.

## 9. AOB

- a) **Facebook Complaints.** DB commented on a recent complaint about the surgery that she had seen on Facebook on a Stanway Forum which she felt was both unfair and disrespectful. In general discussion it was agreed that in the first instance it was better for all concerned if a complaint is raised with the Surgery including, if need be, with the Practice Manager. Reference was also made to the NHS website which allows patients to “rate” their GP.
- b) **Compliments.** CD and SS both wished to thank the surgery for the kindness, efficiency and help they and their partners had received during recent illness.
- c) **Surgery Garden.** DB said that the surgery was still looking for someone to renovate the garden which in future might include a small private area for staff use only.
- d) **Flue & Covid Injections** It was planned that the Flu clinics would take place in September. Currently there were no plans for the surgery to undertake any “Over 75 Spring” Covid clinics.

## 10 AGM

- a) **Chair & Secretary’s Report.** The report was accepted without comment.
- b) **Election of Officers.** After DM had made it clear that both he and MV would be very happy to stand down – DM and MV were unanimously re-elected as Chair & Sec.

**11. Next Meeting.** Will be held on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> July at 1.00pm at the surgery.