

**THE TOLLGATE PRACTICE**  
**PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP**

**MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 19<sup>th</sup> JULY 2024 AT 1.20 PM**

**ATTENDEES**

Surgery/ NHS Staff: Diane Balcombe (DB)

Patient Members: Chairman -David Mills (DM) Secretary - Michael Vass (MV) Christopher Dowsett (CD) Rosemary James (RJ) Pamela Hurcomb (PH) Peter Walker (PW)

- 1. Welcome.** DM apologised for the delayed start to the meeting and welcomed everyone, in particular DB, who at short notice was going to stand in for the surgery in the absence of Lisa Maddox (Practice Manager).  
MV explained that having spoken with the reception staff (and received subsequent confirmation from DB) it appeared that Lisa had informed them that she had contacted him to cancel the meeting as she was unable to attend. MV explained that he had no record of any such communication (including a further check to see it had not gone into "Spam"). DM was unable to provide any details of when the message was sent or its contents. MV expressed his personal disappointment about the breakdown in communication given the potential inconvenience to members attending – particularly as he had sent three e mails to the surgery regarding the meeting over the last three weeks. After adding his thanks to DB for standing in he requested that Lisa be asked to send him a copy and details (date & time) of when her message was sent.
- 2. Apologies.** MV reported that apologies had been received from Lorraine Feakes.
- 3. Minutes of the last meeting** held on the 19<sup>th</sup> April 2024 were unanimously approved.
- 4. Matters Arising.** Nothing not covered by the agenda.
- 5. Practice News.** DB explained that she would be unable to provide a full update but would assist the meeting as far as possible.
  - a) Staffing.** Since the last meeting four support staff had been recruited. In brief they were as follows; Amanda Green (Advanced Nurse Practitioner), Laura Watterson (Nurse Practitioner -just finalising qualification training), Rebecca Bexley (Diabetes Nurse), Sharon Walters (Healthcare Assistant). Responding to PW question about the administration staffing situation DB said that a new secretary had been recruited and that a lady called Melanie Williams had recently joined the surgery as Deputy Practice Manager. DB confirmed that she was still providing support for the surgery on a one day per week basis. There had been no change in the number of GP's (8) employed by the practice and that normally three were in attendance on most days.
  - b) Reception & Main Office.** Work was ongoing on plans to separate the Admin and Reception Staff with a view to improving efficiency and job satisfaction. The location of Reception was unlikely to change in the near future.
  - c) Other Plans.** There had been no change yet to the telephone / appointment booking systems but both were still under review. Work had commenced on improving the garden.
  - d) Queries.** During the discussion on Practice News DM queried how Blood Test results were communicated to patients. DB indicated that patients were only contacted if

the test revealed a need for further action. It was also mentioned that test results could be accessed on the NHS App. which led to RJ saying that she did not understand how to use this application. DB promised to look into the possibility of arranging a training session to assist patients struggling with this new technology.

6. **Mental Health Support.** PW requested information on what support the surgery was providing to patients with mental health issues. DB explained that the practice operated within a layered approach system – in addition to the GP's the surgery had a dedicated nurse and that more complex cases were referred to specialist services within the wider Essex region. After further discussion it was agreed that LM would be asked to provide a more detailed response/clarification at the next meeting
7. **Surgery Website – PPG Minutes.** MV said that despite raising this at the last meeting the PPG Minutes were still not being uploaded to the website in a timely manner – the 19<sup>th</sup> April 2024 were still missing some three months after they were available. DB noted the point and said she could see no reason why this should be happening.
8. **AOB**
  - a) **Carpark.** RJ said that she was pleased to see that the parking lines had been repainted.
  - b) **Appointments.** PH expressed her frustration that despite being told (following tests) that she needed to see a GP she was having to wait for eight weeks for a pre-booked appointment.
  - c) **Thanks.** CD again thanked the surgery for the support he had recently received from the surgery, in particular from Ruth Yates in her new role as the Social Prescriber. It was agreed that posters should be displayed regarding Ruth's role.
  - d) **Patient Satisfaction.** DB informed the group that Tollgate had been rated high in a recent Patient Satisfaction Survey.
  - e) **Flue Injections** Likely to take place in September. Members offered their help if needed. (LM to inform group regarding dates when known)
9. **Next Meeting.** Will be held on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> November at 1.00pm at the surgery.  
(Subsequently changed to THURSDAY 31<sup>st</sup> OCTOBER at 1.00pm)