

THE TOLLGATE PRACTICE

PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 21st FEB. 2024 AT 1.00PM

ATTENDEES

Surgery Staff: Lisa Maddox (LM)

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

1. **Welcome.** DM welcomed everyone to the meeting including the new Interim Practice Manager, Lisa Maddox. In response, Lisa provided a brief overview of her previous career with the NHS and DM then asked all the members to introduce themselves to Lisa.
2. **Apologies.** MV reported that apologies had been received from Angela Young. (Subsequent to the meeting MV also received apologies from Keith Tucker & Jane Phillips)
3. **Minutes of the last meeting** held on the 14th July 2023 were unanimously approved.
4. **Matters Arising.** Nothing not covered by the agenda.
5. **Practice News**
 - a) **Resignations of A.Bloomfield & J. Crouch.** MV confirmed that emails from both Annette and Jason had been received informing the Group that they had resigned their positions as Practice Manager and Deputy Practice Manager respectively due to “significant issues with the Partners”. It was also noted that Paul Kusel Baum, the Administration Manager had also left the Practice. No further information regarding the departures was available.
 - b) **Initial Support Arrangements.** DM and MV informed the meeting that in the process of arranging today’s meeting that they had met with Diane Balcombe (a Primary Care Support Manager) who, following the resignations, had been supporting the Surgery. She would be continuing to provide support for LM- who only joined the Surgery three weeks ago. The meeting appreciated that given her very recent arrival LM’s contribution to the meeting would be limited.
 - c) **Current Staffing Situation.** In addition to the loss of administration staff several members commented on nursing staff departures and doctor absences. DM told the meeting that she was not yet in a position to provide a comprehensive review of the situation but did say that earlier in the week the admin team had been strengthened with a new recruit; interviews were currently taking place to recruit an Advanced Nurse Practitioner and a Paramedic; and that applications for the Practice Manager post had been invited. When RJ asked LM if she would be applying, she said yes but that the appointment would ultimately depend on the experience etc of the applications received. In general terms she was happy with the staffing situation.
 - d) **Doctors.** In respect of the doctors LM indicated that there was at least three doctors in the surgery every day and that Dr Bopitiya (a Partner) was currently dealing with

scheduling surgeries and obtaining temporary doctor replacements were necessary. In further discussion it appeared that at present both Partners were holding limited surgeries. Dr Abeyundara had been absent for several months (possibly due to illness) and Dr Bopitiya was in the main attending visits to Care Homes and providing surgery cover for doctor absences and holidays.

- e) **Issues Raised by Members.** The matters already noted under Practice News gave rise to a wide-ranging discussion. The main issues raised were as follows. PW said that whilst he was pleased to hear that LM was positive about the staffing situation, he had serious concerns and felt that having just received a CQC “Good” report the Practice was in danger of going backwards – his concern was widely supported by the rest of the Group. Recent examples shared by committee members were mixed – some had been able to contact the surgery and obtain timely appointments without difficulty others had the opposite experience. SS also commented on the problems caused by the lack of continuity and RJ on the difficulty of using the telephone 111 service. There was also a discussion about patient information disappearing from the NHS App and System One (it seems a requests at Reception will correct this). Finally, LM said that the surgery had recently undertaken an audit of doctor appointments to identify how many could have been dealt with by an Advanced Nurse Practitioner thus freeing up doctors to deal with more serious issues.
 - f) **CQC Inspection.** Echoing the comments made by PW earlier MV questioned how it was possible for a CQC inspection carried out in September (report issued in December) to give the Practice a “Good” rating with favourable comments on staff relationships and moral etc to experience the upheaval now being experienced. LM understood the concern and confirmed that the CQC together with the ICB (Suffolk & North East Essex Integrated Care Board) and NHS England were all aware of the situation and were providing help as was possible.
 - g) **Monthly Statistics.** Due to the staffing situation, it has not been possible to issue the PPG statistics record sheet. MV will consult with LM before the next meeting to see if the information is still available – if so he will update the records
6. **AOB**
- a) **Colchester Hospital.** It was noted that a new Orthopaedic Unit had been opened at the hospital. RJ commented that even before this new addition there was a desperate need for extra hospital parking. DM commented on the excellent treatment he had received whilst having a knee replaced.
7. **Next Meeting.** The next meeting will be held on Friday 19th April 2024 at 1.00pm at the surgery and will include the AGM.

The meeting closed at 1.55pm