

THE TOLLGATE PRACTICE
PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 15th APRIL 2026 AT 1.00 PM

ATTENDEES

Surgery/ NHS Staff: Nicky Young (NY)

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

Welcome. DM welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. **Apologies.** MV reported that no apologies had been received.
2. **Minutes of the last meeting** held on the 14th January 2026 were approved.
3. **Matters Arising.** There were no matters arising not covered by the agenda.
4. **PPG Membership** MV informed the meeting that Angela Young had notified him that she would be leaving the committee. He had responded by thanking Angela for her support over many years and wishing her well for the future. He had also been in touch with Jane Phillips regarding her continuing membership and having received no response removed her from the mailing list. The two departures highlight the need for one or two new members.
5. **Practice Statistics / Blood Results**
 - a) **General** Following an earlier meeting and request from MV Nicky distributed a statistical schedule which contained much of the information that had previously been made available to the committee. On behalf of the staff that had prepared the schedule Nicky was thanked for the work undertaken and in future MV would circulate the latest data with the meeting agenda. A brief discussion on some of the information took place including the level of DNA's and the difficulties of effectively and fairly dealing with them.
 - b) **Shortfall of Daily Appointments.** In response to PW Nicky explained the problems that the Practice was having in meeting the daily demand. A major effort was being made to improve the situation and during May the surgery was trialling a new approach to the triage system with additional doctor support. The outcome of the trial would be discussed at the next meeting.
 - c) **Urgent Blood Test Results** PW outlined the problem he had recently experienced in obtaining the results of a blood test in which calls to the surgery and resort to the NHS App failed to resolve. Nicky explained the normal procedures and could not explain why this had occurred – normally results are cleared by the doctors each day and could see little opportunity to improve the current arrangements. LF and SS suggested that in some circumstances blood results could be found on the “My Chart” app.

6. Mandatory Advice & Guidance Rules The Government/NHS have recently introduced a new mandatory rule that GP's must seek "advice and guidance" on 25% of the cases they would normally have directly referred for specialist investigation or treatment – MV asked for the Practice's view on this as he thought that this was a delaying tactic and effectively "kicking the can down the road". NY said that she could understand the concern but felt that it was appropriate in some cases for further advice to be sought and that no urgent referrals would be delayed.

7. Practice News & Staff Update

- a) **ICB Inspection** The ICB had undertaken an inspection on the 15th January 2026 and a subsequent review meeting was held on the 27th February which NY attended. The report/meeting minutes were very encouraging and highlighted the significant progress achieved. As a result, the Tollgate Surgery is no longer subject to Enhanced Surveillance but only Routine Oversight. MV will circulate a copy of the report with the minutes.
- b) **Contract Renewal** In response to a question NY told the meeting the Abbeyfield would need to re-tender for the Tollgate Surgery in the coming months which might be more difficult following the NHS reorganisation - our current ICB was being merged with the Essex ICB. The PPG expressed its strong support for Abbeyfield retaining the contract and asked NY to keep them informed as the committee would wish to make representations at the appropriate time.
- c) **QAF** This is an NHS reporting system which tracks surgeries performance in respect of numerous conditions and criteria. (NY) told the meeting that Tollgate had performed extremely well over the last twelve months.
- d) **Extra Nursing Staff** NY said that three new members of staff had been recruited, and the PPG expressed its sorrow on learning that Kathrine (Clinical Pharmacist) had recently died.
- e) **Social Prescribing** Following on from the last meeting there was a further discussion on "social prescribing" with several members saying how much they appreciated the help the surgery staff had given them.

8. AOB

- a) **Appointments.** CD asked if it might be possible to identify more clearly if an appointment was "in person" or by telephone or online. NY to investigate and she confirmed that it was not possible to book appointments three months in advance.
- b) **Discontinued Medicines** CD explained that he had recently found that one of his prescribed medicines had been discontinued. NY thought that this should have been flagged to the doctor and would follow this up.
- c) **NHS Hearing Aids** KD expressed her concerns about the lack of cleaning kits for NHS aids.

9. PPG AGM 15th April 2026

The Chair & Secretary's Report was noted. David Mills & Michael Vass were unanimously requested to continue as Chair and Secretary respectively.

10. Next Meeting . Wednesday 15th July 2026 at 1.00pm.

Meeting closed at 2.10 pm