



Chapel Row Surgery - Patient Participation Group

Meeting Held on Wednesday 12 February 2025 @ 7:30pm

Present:	Barry Dickens	Dr Lennox (GP)	
	Edgar Valentine	Paul Gomm (Practice Manager)	
	Michelle Walker	Fiona Worby - Healthwatch	
	Glen Higgins	Simon Shaw - Healthwatch	
	Julia Hunt	Rosemary Balsdon	

Action

APOLOGIES:

- Julia Baker sends her apologies as she is unable to attend this meeting
- Carol Gower sends her apologies as she is unable to attend this meeting
- Elaine Wells sent her apologies as she was unable to attend this meeting

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING:

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed to be a true representation of that meeting.

MATTERS ARISING:

There were no matters arising from the 28 January 2025 meeting minutes, which are not already covered by the meeting agenda.

AGENDA ITEMS:

Healthwatch:

- After formal introductions by all PPG attending members, Fiona Worby, Lead Officer for Healthwatch West Berkshire and Simon Shaw, Senior Engagement Officer for Healthwatch, introduced themselves to the meeting.

- Fiona Worby (FW) spoke about Healthwatch to provide some background information about the organisation:
- Healthwatch is a statutory body created by the government 11 years ago and funded in each local authority area, by the local council - in our case West Berkshire Council.
- Healthwatch is a public voice for all health and social services in the country and their officers can and do visit Patient Participation Groups, GP Practices, Hospitals and other healthcare providers.
- Healthwatch has a website which promotes their service, produces promotional information and engages in local projects, as requested by patient feedback to Healthwatch.
- The West Berks Healthwatch is FW and 2 additional staff and they operate from an office in Broadway House, Newbury.
- Healthwatch will intervene, on behalf of concerned patients, where a healthcare service falls short of expectations.
- One of the recent projects which West Berks Healthwatch was involved in is the setting up in each area of a Women's Health Hub - Healthwatch were invited to meetings and involved in the setting up of local Women's Health Hubs.
- FW talked about the difficulties she has experienced with funding from West Berkshire Council and Barry Dickens (BD) suggested FW contact Jeff Brooks the leader of the council to discuss concerns.
- Simon Shaw (SS) spoke briefly about his role in encouraging patient involvement with their local surgery PPG.

Chapel Row Surgery Update

- Dr Lennox advised that the GP Partners have today interviewed 4 potential candidates for the role of Practice Manager and this is progressing well.
- Dr Lennox advised that Dr Barnett is currently on long term sick leave and the practice has employed some long-term locums to provide cover while Dr Barnett is away.
- Dr Lennox also advised that Dr Wylie is pregnant and is planning to start her maternity leave in May / June 2005 and her absence from the practice will also be covered by the long-term Locum GPs the practice has recently employed.
- The employment of the extra Locum Doctors is allowing the 3 Partner GPs to work a more oversight role, which temporarily involves less clinical work, which is undertaken by the additional Locum GPs.
- The practice currently uses experienced GPs to undertake daily Triage work - this is where all incoming patient requests are considered and allocated to staff in the practice for action.
 - **Triage of patient requests** means that appropriate staff deal with patient enquiries, resulting in patients being seen by the most suitable person, first time.
 - For example, patient requests regarding chasing of an appointment in the practice or hospital will be directed to the secretaries and not a Doctor, so that the Doctor remains free to see patients with a more demanding clinical request.
 - For example, some patient clinical requests can be seen by our Paramedic, or a Nurse and do not need to be seen by a Doctor, which ensures the patient's request is dealt with a Doctors can focus on appropriate clinical problems.

- Dr Lennox explained that some GP Practices use other software triage systems, such as eConsult and Anima, but the Partners at Chapel Row Surgery are resisting this at the present time.
- Dr Lennox advised that our local commissioning organisation, BOB ICB (which is the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board) are currently reviewing the various Triage systems and it is expected that later in 2025, BOB ICB will only fund one of the systems for practices to use.
- As a result, Chapel Row Surgery may have to adopt the chosen funded system and so we may have to change how we triage in the future.
- Dr Lennox advised he will keep the PPG updated on such developments and the practice intends to maintain the system we have or adopt something better.
- BD advised he has received feedback from patients that the responses and action provided by the practice to patient requests, are very quick and efficient.
- Dr Lennox spoke about the NHS England expectation that full triage should be available throughout our core business hours of 8.00am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday.
- Currently, Chapel Row Surgery turns off the “Ask a Doctor a Question” facility on the practice website at 1.00pm each weekday. This allows the clinical staff time during each afternoon to deal with the 100+ patient enquiries we receive each day PLUS, telephone requests and patients calling into the surgery in person.
- Dr Lennox advised, if we had to keep the triage system open throughout the practice core hours, we would be quickly overwhelmed and unable to respond to all enquiries as quickly and efficiently as we currently do.
- Dr Lennox would like the PPG’s backing for our current operation if this were challenged by BOB ICB and the general consensus was that as the current service is very good, this would be endorsed by the PPG members if necessary.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

- BD thanked Paul Gomm, Practice Manager for his co-operation and assistance with the organisation and running of the PPG and for the production of timely and accurate meeting minutes for each meeting.

Meeting closed at 8.45pm

DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

To be agreed and advised

AGREED ACTION POINTS:

TOPIC	AGREED ACTION

END OF MEETING MINUTES