

**Launceston Medical Centre
Patient Participation Group (PPG)**

**Annual General Meeting
6:00 pm, on 29 September, 2020,
Via Microsoft Teams**

MINUTES

1. Chair's welcome and introductions

The meeting started at 6.11 because of technical issues. The chair, Joan Heaton, welcomed Dawn Rogers, Paul Ford, Janet Ford, Gill Brown, Liz L'Estrange-West, Maureen Amy, Andy Yardley (practice manager), and Susan and Nigel Hollingsworth (two new members). Les Whaley and Cym Downing joined during the course of the meeting.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from: Steve Dymond, Helen Price, Jo Keogh and Pam Davey.

3. Minutes of last AGM

The minutes of the 2019 AGM had been circulated to members. Maureen proposed that they be accepted as a true record of the meeting. Paul seconded and the minutes were approved unanimously.

4. Practice Manager's report

New build

Andy reported that the new building had opened for use on 4th September and since then staff had been busy moving into the new building and decamping from the south side of the building (everything from the waiting room down). Phase two of the building work had commenced with scheduled completion of the entire project in February 2021. The refurbishment phase was being planned with consideration being given to signage.

Flu clinics

All eligible patients would be offered the flu vaccination this year. Launceston college had offered use of its sports halls throughout the flu season, which enabled social distancing with plenty of open space. Patients would be contacted in order of priority, shielded patients first) with an invitation to attend one of the clinics.

Covid-19

The year had been dominated by efforts to manage COVID-19. Early on, the team at the medical centre was very concerned about the supply of PPE (or the lack of). Andy thanked the PPG for campaigning to ensure an adequate supply of PPE and local businesses and patients for their generous donations. The PPG also ensured patients using the medical centre were able to access PPE by purchasing a separate supply especially for that purpose. The practice had adapted during the pandemic and now operated a triage service along with new online consulting services such as e-consult and LIVI. He thanked everyone who had generously given to the practice or the PPG, and said he could not describe what it meant to have the support of the community.

Routine monitoring

He said the PPG has raised concerns relating to the lack of routine monitoring such as diabetic, asthma and COPD reviews, and this issue would become a priority for the practice in coming months.

Phone system

The new phone system had increased the number of inbound and outbound lines allowing staff to work remotely when needed.

New staff

Despite the pandemic, two new GPs, Dr Cate Hall and Dr Stella Uglow, had been recruited - quite an achievement given the national issue relating to GP recruitment. The practice also now had its own

social prescriber, Carol Gill, who was currently working with newly diagnosed diabetic and pre-diabetics.

Prescription delivery service

A successful prescription delivery service had been set up for the most vulnerable patients and currently delivered to 300 vulnerable patients. Fantastic feedback had been received from our grateful patients who welcome the visit from a familiar face with their medication.

Conclusion

Andy summed up: "Although this period has been the most challenging I have known, I am really pleased there are so many positive aspects to report".

5. Chair's review of the year

Because of the Covid-19 Pandemic, Launceston Medical Centre PPG has been unable to hold its AGM in the spring of 2020; instead it was holding an 'e-meeting' to keep members informed of events happening rapidly at Launceston Medical Centre.

PPG Priorities for 2019-20

The PPG had 3 key priorities last year:

- to support the Medical Centre during its expansion work
- to create a Directory to assist the Social Prescribing initiative
- to attract younger members

Supporting the medical centre

The PPG had conferred with the practice manager about plans to equip the new build and had contacted neighbours to ensure that they were not being inconvenienced by the building work. The builders, Pollards, had been very considerate.

The Rotary Club offered a grant of £5000 'in principle' to the PPG for dementia-friendly equipment for the new medical centre which was most gratefully accepted. The practice manager would consult with Cym Downing, the PPG member who runs Launceston Memory Cafe, on appropriate equipment. Cym was the recipient of a '60 Over 60' award from Cornwall Council for her community work. The PPG was assisting Cym to lobby for a dedicated dementia professional to serve Launceston.

The East Cornwall Primary Care Network donated £5000 to the PPG from their Patient Access Improvement Fund. This was intended to assist patients access services at the Medical Centre and will be spent on appropriate equipment in the new build.

Social Prescribing Directory

The PPG received a grant of £250 from East Cornwall PPG Enabling Grant Fund to assist in creating a self-help directory for use by the medical professionals in social prescribing, and to support digital health champions. The PPG compiled a directory which is available in the medical practice and on the website. The PPG would pursue Digital Health Champions when we can meet again safely.

Attracting Younger Members

The PPG had approached Launceston College and invited students with an interest in a medical career to join the PPG. A student interested in a career in neurosciences and two student nurses at Plymouth University had attended meetings. We hope that our students can attend again when we resume. It was hoped the young people would return when it was safe to hold meetings again.

Activities during the year

The PPG was invited to give a presentation at the PPG Conference in Bodmin and two PPG members presented a slide show and conducted workshops.

The PPG reviewed its constitution to clarify the handling of confidential matters that might arise in a meeting and reported to the 2019 AGM. Members would be free to discuss the contents of meetings only after the minutes had been circulated.

East Cornwall Primary Care Network, a group of 9 GP Practices including Launceston Medical Centre, qualified to apply for NHS funding for additional projects such as paramedics and social prescribers.

The network adopted a software system called LIVY which could be accessed through computers and mobile phones and enable patients to have a virtual consultation with a GP.

CAP (Citizen's Advisory Panel - NHS Kernow) asked members to find out who was responsible for 'safeguarding' at their surgery. The lead at Launceston Medical Centre is Dr Parkinson.

The PPG purchased two MP3 players for the surgery after a talk to PPG members by Jane Moore of

Purple Angels, an organisation which spreads awareness of dementia. There was evidence that music had a positive effect on those with dementia, relieving anxiety and evoking happy memories. During the year, the PPG had a number of interesting speakers.

Support for the medical centre during Covid-19

The PPG had actively supported the centre throughout the pandemic. The PPG produced a list of organisations to contact for information while patients were isolating at home. This was posted on the Medical Centre Website and various Launceston public notice boards.

Appeals for emergency medical premises and PPE (personal protection equipment) resulted in an avalanche of offers of help from organisations, businesses and individuals throughout the CNA (Community Network Area). A detailed list has been compiled to acknowledge the donors.

Adapting to Covid-19 conditions

The PPG had held email meetings, enabled by our Secretary, and these have proved remarkably successful. Members have been able to email questions and have responses back.

At the Launceston Town Council Annual Meeting on 25 August, Joan was appointed as the PPG representative on the council and she said that communication throughout the communities would be of paramount importance as we worked through the Covid-19 pandemic.

The League of Friends had supported the PPG most generously this year and the PPG would like to acknowledge this.

Future activities

Joan suggested that it would be useful to invite the medical centre's social prescriber to attend PPG meetings because healthcare is changing rapidly and we needed to adapt to new ways of accessing healthcare and taking care of ourselves.

Conclusion

She ended with the hope that patients will be able to access their regular clinics soon in safety and she thanked the medical centre staff for working through adversity during 2020 to maintain our NHS services and PPG members for their commitment and support during a trying and difficult year.

6. Treasurer's report

The audited accounts for January-December 2019 showed income of £700 and expenditure of £24 (on Launceston Show tickets for members to man PPG stand). The closing balance was £676.00

7. Chair of building sub-group report

Les said he was impressed with his tour of the building on 28 of August; the building looked bright with lots of daylight and the lighting layout into a grid ceiling was smart and bright with clean lines which will be easy to maintain in the future. He was pleased to note dimming lighting controls in the rooms and a good emergency lighting coverage and hoped that lighting would be updated in the existing building. He suggested there should be some 13amp sockets with DSB outlets in the surgeries to charge mobile phones and iPads. He congratulated Peter, Andy and staff and Pollards on all that had been achieved.

8. Election of officers and committee

The secretary, Patty, took that chair for the election of chair. Joan was proposed by Paul, seconded by Gill and duly re-elected. Joan resumed the chair and the following officers were elected: deputy chair - Les, proposed by Gill, seconded by Pau; treasurer – Gill, proposed by Patty, seconded by Maureen; secretary – Janet, proposed by Liz, seconded by Gill.

Three committee members were standing down: Maureen, Pam and Jo. It was unanimously agreed to continue with the remaining five committee: Paul, Dawn, Cym, Rosemary and Steve.

9. Appointment of auditor(s)

Paul agreed to continue as auditor for another year.

10. Choose the key priorities for this PPG for the coming year.

Three priorities were identified:

- 1. To support the Medical Centre during preparations for/work on the extension, including fund-raising**

It was unanimously agreed that a first priority was to continue support the medical centre as the building work continued.

2. To develop the digital champions project and look at ways of using technology to attract more members, especially younger people

Maureen suggested that a way of attracting members of all ages would be through developing the PPG as a virtual forum. Liz welcomed that idea.

Gill said the PPG should consider how it could help the medical centre to communicate better with patients. She suggested that 2/3 members get together with Andy to discuss some of the communication issues confronting the medical centre. Andy welcomed the suggestion and, as an example, said he had received many emails with queries about diabetic and asthma reviews. It would also be helpful to advise patients when the phone lines were likely to be less busy; to that end he would undertake a statistical analysis of phone usage. Gill suggested that it might be possible to introduce something similar to the Google system in which restaurants showed their busy times.

ACTION – officers to get together with Andy to draw up a plan

3. To press for more dementia support in the Launceston area

There was unanimous support for Joan's proposal to try to get a specialist dementia nurse for the area and to find more ways of providing help to dementia sufferers and their carers.

11. AOB

Proposal for officers to approve urgent expenditure up to £200.

Les proposed that the officers of the PPG (being chair, vice chair, secretary and treasurer) be permitted to deal with any urgent purchase up to £200 from the PPG account, as long as all four officers agree, without having to contact all the PPG members at the time but to report to members at the next meeting about the purchase. Liz seconded the proposal. Treasurer Gill said she was not in favour of the proposal because, when the PPG had the ability to call a meeting at short notice, there was no need to put such responsibility on a small group. The proposal was not carried.

Proposal to make a donation to Launceston Voluntary First Aiders

Joan said she had received a request for a donation to support the First Aiders group which had been providing support to the medical centre during the pandemic and which, because fund-raising activities had been reduced, was in need of funds. Andy was in full agreement saying that the group had provided one of its units to the medical centre which was in use in the car park for patients who attended with covid-19 symptoms. The group had also provided volunteers to assist at the first flu clinics for priority patients. Gill said there were funds available that were not ring-fenced for specific medical centre or PPE support. Joan proposed that £200 be donated to the group. Patty seconded and the vote was unanimous in favour.

Letter of resignation from Cllr Dave Gordon (circulated to members)

In his letter of resignation, Cllr Gordon said: "Comments that were openly sent via e-mails from some of the PPG members since March were both ill judged & miss informed, & is in my opinion, unacceptable from Committee members of such a group. And it is for that reason, I no longer wish to be associated with the PPG."

Joan reported that she had acknowledged the letter and thanked Cllr Gordon for the work he had done for the PPG. Dawn said she had found the comments in Cllr Gordon's letter very hurtful and she did not like the tone of the letter. Gill felt that the letter was 'certainly getting at someone'. Paul said that the chair's response to the letter had been handled in the best possible way. No further action to be taken.

Communicating with the community

Paul said that he had been circulating, on social networks, general information received from Andy and asked if that was acceptable. Andy responded that any information of benefit to patients, that had

been cleared by him, could be widely communicated.

Feedback from patients about the medical centre

Andy said that he found the patient feedback reported by the PPG to be extremely useful and while he was pleased to be able to help with general enquiries/concerns he was not able to deal with personal cases through third parties unless he had the written consent of the patient. Maureen asked whether patients without access to/use of the internet could get a form. Andy assured her there was a pack on the front desk although, during the pandemic, he preferred to post them. He made the point that he was eager to deal with any complaints because they could initiate change and help the practice improve things.

Next meeting

Dawn proposed that the next virtual meeting should be a virtual meeting. This was agreed and the next meeting will be on October 27 at 6pm via Microsoft Teams.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.30pm