

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

**Minutes from Microsoft Teams Meeting
Tuesday, 24th August 2021 at 6pm**

Present: Joan Heaton (Chair), Janet Ford (Secretary & Treasurer), Paul Ford, Dawn Rogers, Andrew Yardley, (LMC Practice Manager), Cym Downing, Liz L'Estrange West, Bonnie Soanes, Helen Price, Helen Bailey, Sue Hollingsworth

Apologies: Jo Keogh, Les Whaley, Leighton Penhale, Jenny Woolley, Claire Symons, Steve Dymond

Joan opened the meeting welcoming the PPG members and reminded everyone of the confidentiality of the minutes until approved.

Joan briefly ran through her report and advised that Paul had sent her response to the Foundation Trust regarding the closure of the MIU at Launceston Hospital. Joan advised she has a meeting next week with Trudy Corsellis, deputy director of corporate governance at NHS Kernow, and David Wilson, Cornwall Partnership Foundation Trust. The MIU will be opened again by 1st October 2021.

Paul advised he attended the Chair's Brief for Cornwall Partnership Foundation Trust and he raised the situation of the MIU again and was told that staffing was a major problem with applicants not turning up and one reason given was applicants could not find somewhere to live in the county. Joan commented that housing is important to the NHS and that Launceston Community Development Trust had submitted a planning application to Cornwall Council for affordable housing at Prout's Corner, Launceston. This development is within walking distance of our health services complex and could prove beneficial to potential employees.

Joan had received a message from Jo Keogh as she wanted to thank LMC for all their support.

Paul advised he had nothing to add to his report but had been given some figures regarding the Covid situation – there are 15-16 people currently in hospital and 2 deaths. The 'virtual wards' (i.e. patients being cared for at home) were filled to capacity and most of the patients are young. Paul added that current statistics show a 10% decrease in deaths over the last 5 years despite the pandemic and felt this could be due to current infection control.

Andy asked if he could now go ahead and order the chairs for the waiting area and after a vote was taken **it was agreed approximately £3,119 (excluding VAT) can be used for this purpose out of the PPG funds.** Andy will send the PPG an invoice and a cheque will be raised. Andy did point out that the funds were to enable LMC to purchase upgraded chairs as he already had a budget for new chairs. Helen Bailey asked if the Practice is VAT registered and could therefore claim back VAT and Andy said they were and he would provide an invoice to the PPG less any claimable VAT.

Andy went on to report that the number of calls to the Practice are reducing and the dispensary was only 1 day behind now whereas during the last 18 months it was 5-6 days behind.

The Practice is currently recruiting – 2 new Patient Advisors. He also advised that Dr Haddon is leaving this coming Thursday but possibly a new female Doctor will be joining the practice. He will keep us updated.

Dawn asked if all the snagging etc. for the new Centre was going ok and Andy replied that everything was good but still waiting for the dementia signs to be installed and this should be within the next 3-4 weeks. As per PPG request a new 80cm long sign has been ordered for the car park to indicate more clearly the way out.

Bonnie advised he had sent in questions for Andy and as these were not received until mid afternoon before the meeting, they will be sent on to Andy to give his response.

The question of complaints and comments was raised and Andy advised that all patients can contact him direct either by telephone or letter or email if they have a complaint/comment. If his letters are marked “Strictly for the attention of the Practice Manager” these will be directed to Andy.

Liz asked if the Patient Advisors had training to deal with difficult patients over the phone and Andy said they do and calls will be monitored as to good/bad response so further training can be given if improvement was needed.

Bonnie asked about the staff and whether they stayed a long time, what age groups were employed. Andy advised that the age range is broad from 16 to 60/65 and that the Patient Advisors tended to be 45-60. He said there were at least 3 people over 70. The staff length of service is quite high.

Paul asked about the flu/booster jabs and when they may happen. Andy has booked the College for this but has no further information regarding the booster vaccines and whether they will be available at the time the flu jabs are administered. The first delivery of the flu jabs should arrive in early September and hope to start these in mid September/October and will keep us updated.

Cym told the members that the Memory Café is opening again on 11th September and she will provide posters and leaflets to Andy for the LMC.

After discussion, it was agreed that the LMC PPG AGM meeting would be held on **Tuesday, 5th October 2021 at the LMC and also via Microsoft Teams** for those who are not comfortable with attending a physical meeting.

The meeting ended at 7.11 pm.

Agenda for the Meeting on 24th August 2021 is attached below.

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AGENDA

1. Confidentiality reminder: all reports with this agenda are confidential until the minutes/notes of this e-meeting are distributed.
2. Chair's report: **attached**
3. Vice-chair's report: **attached**
4. Paul's update from the weekly Governors briefing from CPFT: **attached**
5. Treasurer's report: **attached**
6. Practice Manager's report: **at the meeting**
7. Any questions or comments

This is an opportunity for PPG members to ask questions of the practice manager or our officers on the reports contained with this agenda (just as you would at a normal PPG meeting in the surgery).

Responses to item 7 are also the opportunity for PPG members to add relevant comments/updates of their own.

Please send all questions by email to Joan and Janet only

I will do my best to collate the questions, answers and comments, along with the reports, into notes of the meeting and, once they have been signed off by Joan and Andy, circulate them to all members. Once the notes of the meeting have been circulated, members will be able to discuss the contents of our discussions with outside bodies. The notes will act as the basis for a press release.

2. PPG Chair's Report:

Launceston Hospital MIU remains closed until 1 October 2021.

A petition protesting the closure has been sent to Cornwall Council and Health System leads. 1800+ people signed the petition. There was no communication prior to closure - Launceston Medical Centre heard the news from the PPG. Our MP learned of the closure over social media, as stated in his email below.

Email 18 August 2021 from Scott Mann, MP, regarding the closure of Launceston Hospital

MIU

Dear Joan,

Thank you for making me aware of your petition. Like you, I was made aware of this closure with no prior warning via social media. I agree that this was simply not good enough and I made it quite clear to the Interim CEO I was not happy with the way in which the constituency was informed.

I then made two public statements on Launceston MIU, which I have included below.

Cornwall Live, The Post, ITV (w/o 26th July)

"The North Cornwall public has been incredibly supportive of the NHS and done everything they have been asked to do during this difficult time to support our health care system during the pandemic. However, the people of Launceston were not given advance warning of this temporary loss of one of their vital services nor were they given an explanation. I'm pleased that the management at Cornwall NHS partnership Trust recognised this was unacceptable and apologised. I have also been given an assurance that going forward, the North Cornwall community will be kept fully informed and I look forward to meeting with them to discuss the wider issue surrounding staffing at Launceston Hospital in the very near future."

The Post (3rd August)

"I have held a very constructive meeting with The Interim Chief Executive of Cornwall NHS Partnership Trust, and their Head of Communications. My team and I learned a lot about the challenges of staffing in a pandemic when the staff have already been flat out for months on end.

"As with many employers, there are no easy solutions to short term staffing problems like the ones they are facing. However, I made the case for increasing services at Launceston and Stratton in the medium term and offered my help with whatever they require from the Government to help support the health provision in Launceston at this tough time."
Along with these meetings, I also briefed colleagues in Westminster including the Minister.

The Interim CEO has confirmed that the MIU will re-open in October. While this is not ideal, I am glad I was able to secure a commitment to re-open in October, and also the commitment that the future of Launceston and Stratton Hospitals are secure.

I am also very pleased that Cornwall NHS Partnership Trust had confirmed that they will be investing £400k in new equipment at Launceston.

You can read more about it here:

<https://www.scottmann.org.uk/news/scott-mann-mp-welcomes-ps400000-investment-launceston-hospital>

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Once again, many thanks for contacting me. Please do keep in touch.

*Kind regards,
Oll an gwella*

*Scott Mann MP
Member of Parliament for North Cornwall*

From: Joan Heaton

Sent: 18 August 2021 16:56

To: Scott Mann MP

Subject: Re: Launceston Hospital MIU Closure 2021 (Case Ref: ZA42137)

Dear Scott

Thank you very much for your email and your intervention both locally and at Westminster on behalf of constituents in the Launceston area and indeed throughout North Cornwall.

While the news about our new X-ray machine and £400,000 for the housing is welcome and timely, the fact that 20,000+ citizens cannot access their MIU for another month and a half is extremely concerning.

Putting aside the unexplained lack of communication from the Cornwall NHS Foundation Trust to the users prior to the sudden closure, the Launceston area has had its MIU staff relocated to other units because of county emergency need and Launceston would like to know why. One can only assume that Launceston citizens are of less importance to the Trust than other areas of Cornwall. Surely all patients in Cornwall should be allocated services fairly and proportionately through good times and bad. Cutting off 20,000+ citizens from their MIU service is neither fair nor sensible. 111 calls will increase and the pressure on this fine service could be overwhelming.

If there is any further pressure you could bring to bear to reopen our MIU in Launceston before 1 October, we would be very grateful.

It was very nice to chat with you yesterday at the Mayor Choosing ceremony at Launceston Town Hall. Thank you for joining us and I hope that you enjoyed it.

Best wishes

Joan

Hopefully our MP can take this matter to Westminster. I impressed on him the need to open our MIU as soon as possible and not wait until October. He assured me that he would do what he could. We continue to make representations to Cornwall Council and NHS Kernow as well as the Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust to improve health services in Launceston. Launceston Town Council has received our petition and is fully supportive, as are our County Councillors.

Launceston Hospital will be getting a new X-ray machine and £400,000 to house it by next spring. This was welcome news.

Our thanks to Leanne Charnock, Reception Team Leader, for her explanation of the Patient Advisor role at Launceston Medical Centre.

Patients are still complaining about the difficulty of trying to get an appointment. The problem does not seem to be easing. Andrew Yardley, Practice Manager, has advised that the following email can be used to notify him of unresolved issues.

kccg.letterslaunceston@nhs.net

The Open Letter from Health Leaders in Cornwall goes some way to explaining the difficulties we are all facing in Cornwall at present. For those of us in East Cornwall, whose Acute Hospital is Derriford, we have the added complication of cross border healthcare.



LETTER FROM
HEALTH LEADERS IN
(left click twice)

The PPG has allocated substantial funds to purchase high backed and bariatric chairs for the newly refurbished waiting rooms. Our Divisional Member Cllr Conway has approved our application for £200 for another Dementia Friendly Clock from Cornwall Council's Community Chest.

We look forward to the return to using our wonderful new Medical Centre normally again and meeting staff face- to- face after the trials of the Covid Pandemic. Thank you to the Medical Centre and PPG members for your resilience and commitment to our community through these troubling times.

Joan Heaton
Chair, LMC PPG

3. Vice-Chair's Report:

There has been a lot of concern by people in and a round Launceston at the closing of Launceston MIU till the 1st of October, has the medical centre taken the matter up with NHS Kernow, we need more facilities for treatment at Launceston Hospital and not less and I hope the MIU open before the 1st of October and would like to see a meeting between our medical Centre the PPG and the Hospital in the coming weeks to see how more facilities can be brought into Launceston Hospital to reduce patients having to go to Derriford or Liskeard.

Phoning in to the medical centre is still a concern by patients .,one problem that seems to come up time and again is for patients trying to get results of Scans,Xrays etc ,some patients have been told when asking about results that they should phone Derriford, and being told by Derriford the the results were sent to the medical centre within days of the scan, can Andy please clarify how results are processed at the centre, patients need to know the results asap so they can see what the next step will be.

Also when a patients has spoken or been seen by a Doctor and being told to contact the same Doctor in 2/3 weeks the patients is being blocked in seeing the same Doctor when phoning in, one patient age 95 phoned to see a Doctor and was told to phone back another day or phone 111 ,the gent spoke with 111 and was told they would contact the medical centre for a Doctor to contact the patient, the gent had a call within the hour.

Training of Patient Advisors, when training away from the phones and the front desk and in a training room I think it would be helpful to both the centre and patients if one or two members of the PPG could have a slot in the meetings to put the views of the patients across.

Regarding the AGM in September I hope we will be able to use the meeting room at the centre, if this is not available then we should look to use a hall within Launceston, the PPG must make the meeting available to patients across Launceston, Team meetings are ok for PPG monthly meetings but not for an AGM as we are looking for more patients to put their views forward and join the committee.

With regards to the Tesco Prescription Electronic Service I understand Tesco have spoken to Andy about this, if there is no change in going Electronic for prescriptions to Tesco from the centre then the centre need to take prescription to the centre late afternoon as Tesco can only collect once a day and many afternoon prescriptions are left to the following mid day with can delay patients prescriptions by 24/36 hours being started by Tesco.

Les Whaley

PPG Vice Chair

4. Paul's update from the weekly Governors briefing from CPFT

It was decided to cancel all Committee meetings for August at CPFT because of the staff shortages due to sickness and the holiday season, this has allowed the "management" to assist wherever possible on the frontline in order to relieve some pressure on the hardworking and overstretched staff.

The hot topic of the moment is the closure of the Launceston MIU, I am not going to go over what has already been said, suffice it to say it was handled appallingly by Silver Command's communications team. The MIU will re-open as soon as possible and a date of October 1st 2021 has been given. The sum of £400,000.00 is being spent on a new X-Ray machine as well as some other enhancements to Launceston Hospital so there is NO intention to close it.

The COVID infection rate has soared, which is hardly surprising with the huge numbers of extra visitors coming to Cornwall, thankfully there have been very few deaths and admissions to hospital with COVID patients is thankfully very low. But there is a huge problem trying to get people out of hospital and either to home or to a care home, currently there are 180 people waiting to be discharged.

Keep safe and well.

Paul Ford – Elected Governor for the East Cornwall Constituency

5. Treasurer's Report

Income

There has been no further income since the last report. The current balance remains at £5,643.53.

Expenditure

There has been no further expenditure.

If you have any questions or queries, please feel free to ask me.

Janet Ford, Temporary Treasurer

6. Practice Manager's Report – at the meeting

7. Questions/comments from patients:

Any other business:

1. Date for the AGM to be set in September plus ask for nominations for roles of Chairman and Vice Chairman