

Minutes of Meeting
Longfield Patient Reference Group
held on Wednesday 17th May 2017 at 1.00pm
at Longfield Medical Centre

Present: Dr Linda Brown (GP), David Barker (Practice Manager), David Wilkin (Group Chairman) Don Benson, Adrian Brown, Jill Fullalove, Roy Harvey, Tracey Holroyd (Practice Secretary), Sue McIvor, Michael Miller, Tony Plumridge, John Salisbury, David Williams, Bev Wilkin, John Salisbury.

David Wilkin (DW) opened the meeting welcoming our new member, Don Benson and Carol Munt. DW also highlighted that meetings forthwith would be held on the Ground Floor in the Waiting Room in order to make them accessible to all patients. David gave the following apologies for absence.

Apologies for Absence: Chris Beckett, Albert Gable, Malcolm Mcleod and Michelle Olley

DW announced that the Practice had reached the 10% target for the SystemOnline sign-up and thanked Bev, John and Sue for their help in approaching patients and boosting the uptake. David Barker (DB) added that on-line appointment slots were gradually being increased where possible to meet demand.

DW confirmed that the amalgamation of our Patient Group with Blackwater Surgery was not now going ahead. Blackwater has made the decision to stay as a separate group, a decision which we have respected.

Discussion Points

Maldon Health Hub

DW and Adrian Brown (AB) attended a meeting recently; there are some documents which are to be circulated following this meeting. Arcadis has produced a document entitled Maldon Health Hub Project Brief – Update dated 25.04.17, which gives details of the preferred site for the Maldon Health Hub - North of Wyke Hill. This preference has concurred with the thinking of Maldon District Council but there is still a process to go through before this is finalised. The St Peter's Hospital site is no longer deemed a possibility in view of the decay of the building and infrastructure. It is felt that much disruption would ensue whilst repairs are undertaken and the hospital would have to be closed/services moved whilst building works are undertaken. Additionally, it is felt the building is worth very little in financial terms and can therefore only be developed for other purposes. There is still a lot of scepticism from Maldon residents because of previous experiences – public consultations had been held in the past with little regard for the views of the local people. Tony Plumridge (TP) added that there is also major concern as to how the project will be funded.

Heybridge Garden Suburb

This project will provide a health facility for the residents of Heybridge. This new medical facility will have GPs from both Longfield and Blackwater surgeries and there will be a dispensing service.

Maternity is now likely to move from Maldon to Broomfield Hospital with non-clinical ante and post natal clinics only to remain. Sue McIvor (SM) added that she felt the Maternity Unit in Maldon was very important and, although maybe only approximately 4 births per week were recorded, the Midwives at St Peter's ran many clinical sessions other than just providing a birthing place.

DW added that the new Home First initiative pursued by the CCG did not include Stroke recovery; he impressed that much evidence is needed to argue that inpatient services can be moved out of Maldon and this evidence has not been presented..

Longfield Volunteer Activities

SM and John Salisbury (JS) are coordinating the Volunteer Section of our Group and are compiling a list of volunteers.

The next project is Carbon Monoxide Testing. The volunteers for this project are – Roy Harvey, Michael Miller, Sue McIvor, Tony Plumridge, John Salisbury and Bev Wilkin. This project is primarily to test willing patients and encourage those with high readings to consider stopping smoking. Provide has supplied two such meters and any patient who scores 8+ will be given information on the Smoking Cessation Clinics which are held weekly on a Wednesday at the surgery. Non-smoking patients with a high reading will be encouraged to consider possible risks in their home/work environment and seek help/advice from their GP.

A training session for this project is being held on Wednesday 31st May between 10.00 and 11.00am at the surgery; if any other group members are interested, please contact John. It was agreed that following training, four consecutive sessions would follow for the month of June on a Wednesday morning (times to be confirmed). Dr Dowler's consulting room will be made available to the Patient Group on these sessions for any patients requiring privacy. Provide has sent some bunting and JS asked for the sessions to be advertised in advance.

RH asked for the objective to be clarified – the objective is to raise patient awareness of their Carbon Monoxide level - for those patients recording a high level, the patient group can inform patients of the Smoking Cessation Clinic and, if interested, how to register. Patient information and their level will not be recorded; it is purely a voluntary free service to willing participants.

DW asked DB for the 2017 flu clinic dates; DB will provide these shortly. The patient information screen in the waiting room is currently being updated with this information.

Any Other Business

The group had received an e-mail from Michelle Olley (MO) raising items of concern - DW invited Dr Linda Brown (LB) and DB to respond to these enquiries.

Car Parking – MO (via email) suggests that Medical Centre staff, including GPs (with the exception of on-call GP), park off-site. DB responded that all GPs undertake home visits and emergencies daily and therefore this would not be appropriate – equally there is a need for staff to travel between the Longfield and Heybridge sites in their working day and therefore it is not practical for staff to be parked off-site.

DB added that reception do randomly monitor the car park and notices are placed on any offending vehicles; after two hours has elapsed, a stronger-worded notice is placed on any cars remaining in the car park. These notices are not always well received and reception unfortunately has to deal with the brunt of complaints. With regards to the access road, this is a private road and employing an attendant is expensive and therefore not viable. Barriers and various other monitoring schemes have been exhausted over the years and are also not financially viable. It is acknowledged that parking at the surgery is difficult but will continue to be a problem in view of the lack of parking at Maldon District Council, the neighbouring surgery and especially now that Maldon Police are also relocating to the town offices.

Pharmacy Robot – in response to MO query regarding the ownership of this equipment, Dr Brown responded. The Pharmacy attached to Longfield Medical Centre is a private separately-run company. The medication dispensing robot is entirely owned by this private company and is not owned by the surgery, the CCG or the NHS. The robot is maintained by the private company and the GPs pay a small amount to the private company to ensure speedy dispensing of medication for our patients. The private company can remove/sell the robot at any time as it has no financial link to the surgery.

Communication – DW asked, in response to a query from MO, all present if they were receiving the Group's communications and Minutes and were satisfied with the process via the Patient Group e-mail address – those members present at the meeting reported no problem with communication.

A vote of thanks - Dr Linda Brown thanked David Wilkin and Adrian Brown for their continued commitment and excellent work in heading up the Patient Group.

NHS Nationally – TP informed that he was in touch with many people locally and nationally regarding the NHS. TP has viewed recent data which he has found very worrying; child deaths are the highest for 10 years, there is a rise in deaths of age 65+, life expectancy has fallen by four months, and the suicide rate is the highest it has been for over 70 years. TP finds these statistics deeply concerning.

Reconfiguration of Hospitals – TP feels that 'downgrading' certain hospitals will be damaging in that respected and experienced Consultants/Doctors will want to apply for posts that offer the more interesting jobs and downgrading a hospital will not attract such expertise. TP added that Basildon Hospital does not have facilities for the air ambulance and that Broomfield will be the hospital of choice for Accident and Emergency.

Heybridge Residents Association – Don Benson is a committee member of this association and has lived in Heybridge for 50 years. Don and this Association feel quite strongly that St Peter's Hospital is being overlooked in the new plans, although he feels they may not be fully aware of the infrastructure problems. Don is concerned at the possibility of some services no longer being available in Maldon. He understands and accepts the financial constraints and is

concerned at the cost of a new build and how this will be repaid. Don is under the impression from speaking with a surveyor that perhaps the work at St Peter's could be undertaken. DW added that there is no money to repair the building; St Peter's has not been maintained for many years and is in a very poor state of repair. DW added that the new facility will include a Minor Injuries Unit which will reinstate a facility that has been lost.

TP reported that there are currently beds and wards at St Peter's which are not being utilised; TP feels these could be used for people who are rehabilitating and free up the beds in the general hospitals.

DW reminded all that the next joint meeting with Blackwater is to be held at 6.30pm on 12th June; Martin Royal, Project Manager for the Maldon Health Hub is the guest speaker – DW implored all members to come along armed with questions!

Following the meeting, Tracey suggested perhaps organising a volunteer group to parole the car park to monitor activity and encourage responsible use of this facility – to be discussed at the next Longfield-only meeting.

**Date and Time of Next Joint Meeting with Blackwater Medical Centre:
Monday 12th June at 6.30pm**