

MINUTES OF THE LOUGHTON SURGERY PATIENTS PARTICPATION GROUP

Date: 29th January 2025

Location: Loughton Surgery, Room 7

Chair: Yvonne Collyer

Minutes: David Darwin

1) **Attendees from the Practice:** No attendees on this occasion

2) **Members in attendance:** Hazel Capal, Nigel Cushion, Barry Capal, June Nice, Stella Nolan, Michael Higgins and Val Raphael.

3) **Apologies:** Pat Bagshaw, Kieran Stuart and Frank McLaughlin

Yvonne informed the meeting that, unfortunately, Pat is currently unable to attend. Cataract surgery is pending and she is unable to drive in the current dark evenings. The committee will be sending a best wishes card to Pat.

4) **Minutes from the last meeting**

The minutes of the last meeting held on 30th October 2024 were reviewed and accepted.

5) **Matters Arising**

New Telephone System

The new telephone system is now operational and is generally well received by the Committee. As Dr Larh explained in the October 2024 Meeting, there are various menus to cater for typical reasons for calling, e.g. an appointment, requests for prescriptions etc. The call- back option is working well.

Telephoning for an Appointment – talking to Reception

Dr Larh had previously explained that a morning call for an afternoon

appointment can now be requested whereas previously an afternoon appointment could only be requested by a call from 2.00pm. The Committee were notified that some Reception staff did not appear to be aware of this “rule change” advising some callers to call back at 2.00pm. The Committee asks for all Reception Staff to be informed of this change to avoid confusion going forward.

Arising out of their discussion about Reception, the Committee all expressed the view that Anna, the Reception Manager, is very helpful, very approachable and would like its thanks to be passed to Anna for all the help she gives to patients.

Arranging a meeting with one of the Practice Managers

The Committee had previously been advised that when a patient has an issue with the Practice, the route is to e-mail or put in writing a request for a meeting with one of the two Practice Managers, Jas Larh and Viv Ward. Not everyone can e-mail and given the state of the postal service these days, a query is raised as to why a request by telephone would not be sufficient. We believe that a patient did telephone to request a meeting with a Practice Manager and understandably, the reception staff member asked the reason for the request, which can be awkward. Could it not be the case that if a request is made via an initial telephone call, one of the Practice Managers could call the patient for a brief synopsis and then make the appointment with the Patient if felt necessary?

Pharmacists at the Practice

Michael Higgins advised the Committee that he had had a telephone prescription review with one of the Pharmacists in the Practice. When

discussing his prescriptions, the pharmacist suggested that perhaps a number of the drugs should be removed from his list to make “cost savings”. He was surprised at the suggestion as he would have thought that a referral by the pharmacist to his GP would be more appropriate before suggesting a reduction in the number of drugs prescribed.

It was also noted that some patients were given face to face appointments rather than via the telephone.

It was noted that a Pharmacist had been due to advise the Committee as to the extent of their work in the Practice but this had unfortunately been cancelled. The Committee would value hearing about the Pharmacists’ work at their next meeting.

Blood Tests

Some confusion still exists around the locations for blood tests following the closure of The Forest Medical Centre near Loughton Station. Its closure has had a big impact on patients especially those without a car. Confusion exists in relation to The Drive not accepting our patients for blood tests. There is a telephone number for our patients to call in The Drive Practice if our patients attend there but it is unmanned and so not answered!

We are aware that Dr Larh had applied to undertake blood tests here at our Practice but this had been refused. However we understand that he is making another application this year. Could we be advised as to when the application will be made.

We understand that in some areas, blood tests are administered at home. Could this facility be offered to our Patients?

Video Appointments

Dr Larh had previously reported, when discussing the new telephone system, that the Provider, ITS Digital, may be able to facilitate video consultations with clinicians in the Practice. Is this being progressed?

Prescribed Exercise

Nigel mentioned that there is a system in place – “New GP Prescribed Exercises”. Are any of the GPs in the Practice using this?

Weekly Staff Meetings in the Practice

In view of the “misunderstanding” by some reception staff in relation to requesting afternoon telephone appointments at “8am”, the Committee is asking whether staff meetings take place whereby matters raised by the PPG can be addressed to relevant staff.

6) Future Topics

Pharmacist to explain their work

A presentation around Auto-Immune Systems

e.g. Diabetes, Cardiology

7) Date of Next Meeting – Wednesday 21 st May 2025, 5.30pm Loughton Surgery