

Patient Group Annual General Meeting 10 July 2019

Meeting Notes

Present: Patients – Roger Keyworth, Martin Shepherd; Patient Group Committee - Lynda Isaac, Janet MacCulloch, Pam Morris, Tony Morris (Chair), Phil Pritchard, Barbara Rogers, Liz Smith (Treasurer); Practice Manager - Amanda Oliver; GP Partners - Dr Zaid Almashta, Dr John Bisatt.

Welcome & apologies

Tony Morris welcomed those attending and said he was disappointed more patients had not attended. There were no apologies.

Brief update on past year

Tony Morris gave a brief report on the Patient Group Committee's activities since the 2018 Annual General Meeting (see page 2).

Financial Statement

Liz Smith reported that £2,340.10p had been raised during the year. Book sales had done particularly well and patient donations had significantly boosted the funds.

With the balance from the previous year the Patient Group had been able to buy three height adjustable couches for the treatment rooms at a cost of £2,555.58p. The remaining balance was £455.25.

Liz made several suggestions for future fund raising which will be discussed at the next committee meeting.

Appointment of Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and Committee members

Chair – Tony Morris, Secretary – no nomination, Treasurer - Liz Smith, Committee Members - Lynda Isaac, Janet MacCulloch, Phil Pritchard, and Barbara Rogers. Pam Morris, who has been a committee member since the Patient Group was formed, stood down and was thanked for her work. Martin Shepherd offered to join the committee but has since had to step down because of other commitments.

NHS Changes - Dr Bisatt & Dr Almashta

The Doctors outlined the changes that NHS England were making to the provision of GP services. The positives and possible negatives were outlined. A national shortage of GPs was a particular challenge. The local council's Southern Gateway plan and other developments will also impact the Practice and may eventually require a move to different premises.

Patients had several questions and voiced some concerns about the changes. Committee members said they had found the opportunity to hear about these changes very helpful and would welcome GP attendance at their meetings for further updates and discussion.

Question session

There were no additional questions and the meeting was closed.

Committee update on past year

This group's main objective is to improve relations between the practice and patients. To do this the committee does its best to reflect the views of patients. Although we are all patients, we can't hope to do that well if we only have our own experiences to go on. So, one of the main things we have done this year is to try and improve communication with all patients.

We have revamped the Patient Group pages on the website and the content on the noticeboard, updated the new patient leaflet, contributed to the practice's newsletter, suggested questions for the patient survey, and introduced the suggestion box in the waiting room. Things have begun to improve, but we do need more feedback from patients. Now the silence from the majority hopefully means that they are quite happy and feel no need to let us have their views, but it would be helpful to know if that is the case or if there is some other reason for the silence.

It was disappointing to read in the Chichester Observer of a poor "would you recommend" rating for the practice on the NHS Choices website. It did not reflect the practice's own survey rating or our experience. As well as voicing concern to the Observer about their unbalanced story, I also contacted NHS Choices. Not only did that establish their information was out of date and was from a smaller sample of patient responses, but they said they had decided to drop that question from future surveys.

Unfortunately, that has not stopped a couple of anonymous negative reviews on the NHS Choices website. Now I understand there will be times when things are not as patients would like, but why post a review on the internet, instead of raising the problems with the practice, or via the patient group? It must be very disheartening for the practice's dedicated and hardworking staff to read criticism, but not have an opportunity to properly understand the problem and investigate what may have gone wrong. So, I would urge patients to first speak to the Practice Manager about any problems. That offers the best chance of fixing any problems.

One of the things that comes up regularly at our meetings and has been the subject of suggestions in the red box, is missed appointments. Last year there were 2,206. That means over 2,000 patients, who needed to see a doctor or nurse, were unable to because someone had booked an appointment but then wasted it. This year more than half that number has been reached in the first six months, which does not bode well. We realise that sometimes last-minute problems mean it is unavoidable, but that cannot account for such a high number.

On the positive side, committee members helped run the flu clinics which, despite national supply problems, ran smoothly. We certainly avoided the long queues experienced by patients at Langley House surgery! We have discussed a range of issues from the practice's action plan to the appointment and telephone systems, from contingency plans to mobile phone disruption in the waiting room, and from extended appointment times to national NHS changes.

Finally, please support our health information sessions, fundraising events and keep in touch. This is your group and your involvement is crucial to our effectiveness. We would welcome more of you on the committee, but if you are not able to do that, please keep in touch, so we know what issues matter to you. You can sign up for email contact (on the sign-up sheet or via email) or use the suggestion box.

Tony Morris