**Notes from the PPG virtual meeting of 13th July, 2021 held at 2.00 PM via MS Teams from the practice.**

The virtual meeting was chaired by Bob Hackett and organised by the practice on MS Teams. These notes will be added to the practice website for all patients to read.

There were five patients present including the chair with several apologies. Also present were Dr Dhanjal, Dr Ward and Joanne McPhail, Deputy Practice Manager.

My thanks to all for attending and involved in this update.

**Topics discussed and replies provided by the practice:**

The questions which I detail below came from the PPG meeting of the 9th June.

1: Is Grainne (recently retired practice manager) to be replaced and if so by whom?

**Ans**: It is being advertised and interviews are taking place soon for applications already received.

2: For a practice of 18,000 patients do we have enough doctors, clinicians and support staff?

**Ans**: The practice has a full complement of doctors and clinical staff. It also has access to extra capability via the Primary Care Network such as Advanced Nurse Practitioner for Older People, Clinical Pharmacists, Care Co-ordinator and Social Prescriber. The practice is also confident that it will be able to manage the increase in patient numbers due to the increase in housing.

During the whole period of the epidemic the doctors have worked from the centre, not from home. They have also been seeing patients face to face during this time when clinically necessary. The practice has never been closed if patients needed to be seen clinically. It is therefore very important when ‘phoning to be ready to help yourself by explaining why you need to be seen so that clinical decision can be made as to who it would be most appropriate to speak to.

There is a daily review of appointment slots in order to make more available. There are still patients that do not turn up and fail to cancel. Where possible these can open up slots. Those that do not turn up are sent a text to remind them of the importance of freeing up slots.

It also needs to be noted that a very high level of abuse has been levelled at staff, both physical and verbal. This is completely unacceptable and, where necessary, action is taken. This also applies to social media.

There is a process for complaining which is available on the website, via the ‘phone and/or in writing (email to: laindon.healthcentre@nhs.net). ALL complaints are logged and seen by the doctors and acted upon.

3: In the last minutes (Item 4) you let us know how many had been vaccinated via the PCN. An excellent level of response. What of the difficult to get to people?

**Ans**: Extra effort via ‘phone calls and texts has been made to get in touch with those that have not responded, which are very few. The offer to physically visit such people by a patient member was declined due to confidentiality.

4: Why is the ‘phone line down so persistently? We never find out why. In this day and age it seems unbelievable that this could keeps happening?

Is our practice being restricted in support from CCG or PCN for funds? Is it linked to the fact that the new centre is delayed indefinitely?

**Ans**: In the last month or so there have been problems with the ‘phone system. This was brought about by a change in provider caused by decisions of the NHS. Since April of this year, the practice has been using a ‘phone system that was migrated from the old supplier to Arden and GEM (the I.T. supplier). This caused a major problem which has since been rectified. We have asked for an apology from them, via the practice and the CCG, since we were left in the dark about such a change. The new I.T. ‘phone processes are working much better and used by many in the NHS.

The website now has a number of options if the phone lines are down in future, with a back up number and 4 mobile ‘phones. Just in case! These can be found on the front page of the website after the Covid warning.

5: Is our practice being planned to close?? Under PCN’s rules is this the most likely outcome? What information can you share with patients at present, and if none, where can we find out? I know that Dr Pereira is involved at PCN level.

**Ans**: The practice is not closing!!! The new centre is still going ahead despite the suggestion in the letter from Swan Housing recently. This has also been confirmed to me by the CCG. Our practice will be taking 2 floors in the new building on a 20 year lease. They are in current talks with the people involved. It is hoped to have some constructive news by the end of this year with a view to moving in next year. Covid pressures have had an impact on the ability to meet people in a timely manner.

6: Can we advertise the PPG in the reception area by the lift? Previous ads for our PPG were on the PPG board in the main seating area on the far right.

Ans: This will be moved.

7: What are the plans for the Autumn booster for Covid? How will we know?

Ans: There are proposals to have booster jabs in the autumn along the lines of the original system where we visit hubs. Until the NHS have agreed on how the ‘flu vaccine will be administered it is too early to say how it will be operated. It may also involve pharmacies as in previous years.

A consideration will be the correct storage of the covid vaccine or any booster. It has to be very low storage temperatures.

8: One of our members highlighted the fact that, over many months, they have had excellent service and support from this practice and Basildon Hospital. A good news story.

9: A comment about activity during the pandemic by the practice:

Thank you, it is heartening to hear positive feedback.

Our staff had cancelled leave and worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic, often sacrificing their health and wellbeing.

We have maintained a covid secure building thereby protecting patients and staff.

Our infection control and prevention policies are rigorous which in turn prevented any outbreaks in spite of all staff working on site throughout.

We had the highest smear uptake rate ever last year and have continued to see patients face to face throughout.

Respiratory cases were sent to the respiratory hub, a CCG commissioned ‘Red Hub’ to protect staff and patients.

Front doors were opened on 17 May 2021 as per NHS England Standard Operating Procedure.

However, we still need to maintain infection control measures and social distancing; this is of paramount importance because of the emergence of variants of concern.

**Next meeting on Zoom will be TUESDAY, 14th September, 2021 at 2.30 PM via Zoom.**

**NB: No meeting August. I’m on holiday.**

Keep safe and well,

Bob Hackett

Chair, Laindon Medical Group PPG.