

Thaxted Surgery – Patient Participation Group

Minutes – 24 January 2019

Present: Bob Bass, , Sara Carruthers, Jo Curtis, Michael Delahooke, Diane Drury, Pam Gale, Joan Gray, Keith Isgar, Margaret Legg, Jane Lucas, Trina Mawer, Jessica Peck Jon Spencer, Rita Williams.

Apologies: Sue Bush, Dianne Claxton, Joan Greenfield, Sheila Roberts, Sheilah Rengert; Chris Rengert, Carol Skelton.

Fund raising update

The Christmas raffle raised £1,306. The PPG thanked all those who donated prizes and sold tickets. Jo noted that the turkey, kindly donated by Lindsell's farm in Great Sampford, had been won by a vegetarian who re-donated it asking if we could find someone who would benefit from it. The PPG agreed to offer it to Cutler's kitchen at Thaxted Day Centre.

PPG members also thanked the Rengerts for their great efforts and generosity in opening up their home for a party which raised £3,345, and Sue and Joan for their coffee morning and for sales at the church chat club.

The PPG fund raising account stands at £22,102 on 24 Jan 2019. In addition, Yardley's charity have given a grant of £10k on which we can draw. This should be more than sufficient to purchase the equipment for the new building, per our list.

The practice extended their thanks and appreciation to the PPG fund raisers and the wider patient population for the huge success of their fund raising efforts this year. PPG members reiterated that it reflects the good job that the surgery does, and their appreciation for the staff. Jon also noted thanks from the Parish Council and appreciation of the level of service the surgery provides for the Thaxted residents.

Sara noted that the practice would like to use any excess funding to redecorate those parts of the existing building that are not included in the refurbishment – namely the consulting room suite, so that it matches the new extension and the refurbished waiting room area. The PPG approved of this plan

Noted that the sponsored walk is still on the table. Agreed we would confirm this at next meeting, depending on what additional funding may or may not be needed for redecorating the existing building. Timing to be addressed as well, based on time line for opening the new extension and completing the refurbishment.

Sara confirmed that the sponsor a brick initiative was not going ahead, based on feedback from the PPG.

Building work and phasing plans

Update

Sara reported that the building work is now taking shape rapidly. Foundations are complete, which removes a lot of risk, and the steel frame is up. Some block work is already completed, and floors are imminent. The major uncertainty now is the possible impact of bad weather on the programme timescales. However, the builders are pushing forward very proactively and work continued over the Christmas period to capitalise on good weather.

Using the back door for access

Thaxted Surgery – Patient Participation Group

Minutes – 24 January 2019

The practice started using the backdoor as the main entry point on January 21st. This is because of increasing health and safety risks to patients as builders start work at first floor level just above the front door.

It is early days, but seems to be working reasonably smoothly. PPG members suggested:

- The practice ensure the duck boards outside the backdoor do not get slippery. Sara to make sure we grit it in cold weather, and brush it daily to avoid mud and mould accumulating. Mats are also a possibility if needed.
- There is a gap where the surgery's land meets the pavement. Sara to get it filled.
- The low wall at the left-hand side of the entrance could be a hazard to patient's shins. Sara to get yellow lines painted on it.

PPG members noted the builders, Huttons, are doing a good job of keeping pathways swept and clear of mud between the site and the site office.

PPG members also noted it wasn't entirely clear which reception window was for what. Sara agreed that the surgery staff are finding their way on this a bit, trying to balance the need to avoid queues around the door, and not sending patients through to the waiting room unnecessarily. We hope it will fall into place as we get more used to it.

PPG members will continue to give us any feedback as we adapt to using the backdoor.

Plans for refurbishment phase

From a patient perspective, the next major disruption comes in June, when the practice needs to start working from the new extension, and relinquish the existing building for refurbishment.

The practice will be working from fewer consulting rooms than usual, and have planned around this using a combination of rescheduling clinics throughout the week, sharing rooms for blood tests, sending some visiting clinics off-site temporarily (e.g. drugs and alcohol counselling, Healthy Minds counselling and baby clinic), and staff annual leave.

We have some choices to make re where patients wait and where they pick up drugs, options being to have a temporary waiting room upstairs in the new build, and portacabins in the car park. The PPG expressed a preference for a temporary waiting room upstairs, and suggested a rota of volunteers to help direct patients and get them down to consulting rooms at the right time.

The PPG also discussed the potential location of the dispensary, the choice being either the kitchen upstairs in the new build, or a portacabin. There are questions regarding security of drugs in a portacabin, and it may not be a real option. On the other hand, patients going upstairs to collect repeat prescriptions increases footfall substantially. Agreed to explore feasibility of a middle ground whereby dispensing occurs in the kitchen, but once dispensed, repeat medication is stored in locked cabinets in the portacabin and collected from there. Admin staff will need to be in the portacabin during the day, and the cabinets, portacabin and site would need to be secured at night.

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Minutes – 24 January 2019

AOB

Parking in Margaret Street

Parking in Margaret Street between the bend into Weaverhead Lane and the surgery is dangerous. The surgery has had signs up regarding this for a long time, and has also put polite requests in newsletters. Nevertheless, patients persist in pulling up here to “pop in” or drop off scripts.

The issue is long-standing, but particularly hazardous during building work. The builders are very active in directing traffic when there are cranes and deliveries in the vicinity. However, they cannot do this all the time. Bollards put out by the builders have been moved and/or ignored.

The PPG agreed the following:

- Surgery to text message regarding parking in Margaret street
- Surgery to look at relocating prescription post box to Margaret street car park
- Jon will discuss with the Parish council with a view to getting some big notices out.
- Campaign to get double yellow lines. Sara to email Parish Clerk in first instance, and Jon will follow through in Council meeting.

Defib in community

Jane noted that an Addenbrookes doctor is keen to come out to communities and train members of the public in how to use defibrillators. The PPG agreed that this was a great opportunity. The surgery would be very happy to offer new meeting room, when available. Sat am men’s breakfast also a possibility. Agreed Jane and Sara would get some potential dates/times from the doctor and then work out venue. Sara will include in a surgery newsletter along with a map of local defibs.

Waiting room light bulbs

Michael noted that some of the light bulbs in the waiting room are not working. Sara agreed that this was the case, but the issue relates to broken and obsolete fittings. Since this area is being refurbished, the practice proposed to leave it for now. PPG members agreed that this is reasonable.

PPG membership

We are still struggling to broaden the profile of our PPG membership. Agreed that:

- The practice would send out a targeted text request for new members
- The practice would put a request in local school newsletters

Dates for next meetings

- May 16th, 10am URC