

Port View Surgery PPG Meeting 6th September 2021 18:30

Attendees: Tina, Peter, Angie, Gail, Christina, Susan, Marilyn*

Apologies: Dave, Sally, Brenda*, Sarah, David, Julie*, Jeanne*
(* = new member via SaltFest)

Overview

This was the first face-to-face meeting since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and it was lovely to really see people again!

The later than usual start time of the meeting was so that we could meet in accordance with the current guidelines followed by the surgery. After normal hours, we held the meeting in the waiting room where we were able to maintain suitable distances between members. Hand sanitiser and masks were used as appropriate. Members were asked to remain masked unless actually speaking. This seemed to work well and hopefully we will be able to confidently schedule future meetings in this way.

Agenda

Introductions: We were delighted to welcome Marilyn who joined us following our representation at the SaltFest in July. All present introduced themselves anew and Peter explained that he and Angie had been maintaining the PPG presence during the pandemic by:

- having regular online meetings with Tina;
- publishing relevant updates on the PPG website pages;
- taking part in the Umbrella Group meetings, also online.

It was decided that only two topics would be discussed this time.

1. Surgery Update – Tina

Personnel

There have been several changes to personnel at Port View Surgery this year.

Dr. Charleton retired in March and Dr Sissons has also now left the practice.

Dr. Colley has joined the practice recently after qualifying and proving to be a great asset.

With regard to the nursing staff Joanne Silmon has left, but Katherine Page has joined the team.

We also have Sarah Didymus an Advanced Nurse Practitioner who is not only able to provide telephone consultations and clinics for many of the same things as the doctors, but is also qualified to train other nursing staff.

While the surgery has been open all the way through the pandemic, it has been necessary to limit the number of people visiting the premises to protect both patients and staff.

To this end, the telephone triage system has been crucial so that patients can be routed to the correct person/facility to help them. When a doctor has found it necessary to see a patient face-to-face they, not the patient advisors, have been able to agree the relevant appointment directly with the patient.

Tina confirmed that demand is still unusually high and that doctors can have up to 60 'patient contacts' in a single day, via phone and face-to-face appointments.

Flu Clinics

In line with what we are all hearing on the news on a daily basis, there are issues with planning the flu clinics this year owing to logistics, supplies and whether or not COVID boosters will be included. However, once resolved, there is a plan to use regional centres to provide these clinics in a similar way to the COVID vaccinations earlier in the year. The centre for Saltash will be the Football Club in Callington Road, but the start date is currently uncertain.

2. SaltFest Feedback – Peter and Angie

Following a successful day talking to many 'passers-by', both Port View and the Saltash Health Centre PPGs looked at the comments and survey responses they had collected when speaking to their own patients.

At Port View we found that there were trends in those responses that showed the efforts made by practice were much appreciated. However, there were also some queries for further consideration, which were discussed at this meeting.

(Click the link to [see the full PV survey report](#))

- **Ideas to take pressure off phone lines?**

Those of you who have contacted the surgery by phone recently may have noticed that there is now a 'call back' option included in the phone message. The idea being to avoid having to hold on the line waiting for your turn. Your place in the queue is maintained and the patient advisors will call you back.

- **Further clarification of the roles and capabilities of the Patient Advisers and if their role needs to be better prompted?**

Tina advised that the NHS Kernow communications team will be producing standard information to explain the role of the Patient Advisor and how it differs from the former receptionist role. When available this will be published on the surgery website.

- **Easier digital access to services?**

Owing to the current surgery access guidelines and reduced staffing/capacity, it has been necessary to rely on the Patient Advisors to organise the way patients access appointments. To this end, online appointment booking has been temporarily restricted to ensure that all appointments booked are necessary.

- **Bigger role for text messaging?**

Many patients seemed to like the way text messaging was used for booking COVID vaccinations and also for issuing appointment reminders. The practice will continue to use this method of communication when it is deemed suitable.

- **GPs enhancing the 'personal touch' at all times, e.g., clarification of expectations following hospital discharge, test results, etc.?**

It was recognised that this was an important aspect of the patient/GP relationship, but also that it is not always necessary for GPs to follow up on every patient contact personally. For example, texts confirming test results or requesting more information from the patient are often the quickest and most efficient way to proceed at that point in a consultation. Tina agreed that there may be amendments that could be made to provide a more definite acknowledgement by the surgery of the discharge process.

3. **AOB**

Owing to family pressures at present, Angie will be taking a step back from the PPG for a while, but will hopefully be back later in the year.

Next meeting: Tuesday, 26th October 2021. Further details will be sent nearer the time. We hope you will join us as we get to know each other again and discuss the way forward for our PPG.