**Minutes of Lower Gornal Patient Panel Group**

**Wednesday, 10th April 2024**

**Welcome from the Chair:** The Chair said he had been informed by Chris that Elaine Lloyd wished to step down as a member of the PPG as she was finding it extremely difficult to get to meetings. The Chair expressed his thanks to Elaine by sending a ‘Thank You’ card to her on behalf of the Panel.

**Present:** Russell Gardner (Practice Manager), Vikki Webb (Staff Rep.), David Gill (Chair), Chris Bate (Vice Chair), Helen Newton, Hayley Wright, Sue Smith, Barrie Bromley, Michael Bowen.

**Apologies**: Kate Kelly, Julie Pitt, Farzana Follows, Elizabeth Carrier, Jean Edwards, Donella Bullas,

**Approval of January’s Minutes:** The minutes had been sent round prior to the meeting for correction and they were duly approved.

**Matters Arising from Minutes:**  There were no issues arising that would not be covered elsewhere in the meeting.

**Practice Update from the Practice Manager.**

* Staffing: Dr Saka???, a trainee doctor finishes his time with us this month and we welcome Dr Henry Onno???, another trainee who has thus far acquitted himself very well. A reminder that Dr Malik is retiring at the end of August 2024. An offer has been made to replace Dr Malik with another male GP and contract negotiations are ongoing????
* NHS Contract: Each Practice has a contract with the NHS to provide a variety of front-line services. A new national contract was recently rejected by 99.6% of GPs. Although negotiations are in their early stages, if things are not resolved then there is the possibility of industrial action in the future.
* Friends and Family Survey: Russell reported that of the 206 patients who provided feedback from their appointment ………………….. satisfactory??????????????
* Pharmacy First: There have been problems with this scheme in recent weeks. Patients have been encouraged to go to their pharmacies for certain conditions, only to find there are insufficient staff to deal with their enquiry and frustratingly they end up back at the GP surgery. In some cases, it appears that the Medical Practice has been blamed for the failure in how the systems operates. The Practice Manager was encouraged to contact the pharmacist to see if the issue could be resolved.
* New Telephone System: This appears to be working well. Three staff are used to respond to phone calls from 8am. The system provides data which is important to the staff in their assessment of inter-action between staff and patients via the telephone.

**Reports from other meetings:**

* Primary Care Network (PCN): The Chair said that he and Chris had attended the latest PCN Meeting on Tuesday 9th April. Russell was also in attendance. A Community Development Worker had addressed the meeting and described her work and how she could provide support to PPGs in organising events. Chris Bate, our Vice Chair, said she had contacted Julie, the Development Worker, on previous occasions and found her to be very useful in giving practical support as well as pointing her in the direction of other support networks and contacts. The PCN will publish two newsletters each year and this was discussed at length with a focus on the type of content to be included. Ian, from the Ridgeway Practice will co-ordinate this and Sue has agreed to pass on relevant information from our newsletter to him for use in the PCN newsletter.

**PPG Newsletter/Website/Links with Gornal Library & Community:** The latest newsletter had been circulated to members. If members wish to suggest or write items for our PPG newsletter they should contact either the Chair ([davidgill332@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:davidgill332@hotmail.co.uk)) or Sue Smith ([ssdl28229@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:ssdl28229@blueyonder.co.uk)). Vikki said she would check to see if there is a link to the PPG facebook page on the Practice website and if there is no link then could that be updated. Chris said there is a health related event planned at the library ??????????????????????????

The Chair reminded the meeting that prior to covid several events had been organised by the PPG where invited speakers had been asked to talk and answer questions on themes such as dementia and heart failure. Springs Church has recently moved in to Zoar church building and is forging excellent and widespread contacts with the local community. The Chair suggested that we link up with Springs Church, using their newly refurbished hall as a venue as well as their contacts to advertise possible events. The Practice Manager thought this was an excellent idea and the rest of the meeting felt it should, at the very least followed up and reported on at our next meeting. Any ideas of possible themes for a health-related talk would be gratefully received. Please feel free to contact the Chair or Vice Chair.

**Any Other Business**

* Sue asked the PM if there had been any repercussions on our PCN because of the “inadequate” evaluation of Bath St. Practice. Russell said that the principal GP had left and it was being managed at present by The Ridgeway Practice. The same Practice Manager is looking after Bath Street, Coseley and Castle Meadows. It is possible a merger could happen in the near future. However, there is no negative reflection on the rest of the PCN and it does not affect funding.
* There was a discussion on whether or not it was a good use of time for the admin team to contact patients by phone when they had already received a reminder of an upcoming appointment via a text message. Vikki said that the phone calls were in response to a number of cancellations and DNAs, especially by patients with long term conditions. The Practice is convinced that the phone calls are an effective way of preventing time being wasted by our health professionals.
* The meeting discussed again the impact of the loss of funding for creating a new administrative area within the Practice as well as two new consultancy rooms. This is deeply regretted and reflects badly on NHS Property Services who have not, it is reported, been at all supportive in seeking to assist plans for improving services at Lower Gornal Medical Practice. It was suggested that the Chair write to the relevant local councillors and MP to see if progress can be made.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting finished at 7.20pm.

**Date of next meeting is to be Wednesday 10th July 2024 at 6pm**