**Minutes of Lower Gornal Patient Panel Group**

**Wednesday, 28th May 2025**

**Welcome from the Chair:** The Chair welcomed everyone and thanked them for their attendance.

**Present:** Russell Gardner (Practice Manager), Vikki Webb (staff member) David Gill (Chair), Chris Bate (Vice Chair), Sue Smith, Michael Bowen, Elizabeth Carrier, Amanda Bayliss, Helen Newton, Donella Bullas, Barrie Bromley

**Apologies**: Rowena Thomas

**Approval of Prior Minutes:** The minutes had been sent round prior to the meeting for correction. Barrie reminded the meeting that he had been present at the last meeting but apart from that amendment the draft minutes were approved.

**Matters Arising from Minutes:**

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

**Practice Update from the Practice Manager.**

* **Staffing:** Dr Aramapathy joins as a PCN appointed GP doing 1.5 days from 2nd June and this appointment is shared with the Northway Practice. The partners have decided to keep Dr Garrick’s sessions the same (Monday, Wednesday, Friday) as they were expected to be reduced to accommodate the new GP. Beth Brooks returns from maternity leave in June and a new receptionist, Amy Taylor will start on 2nd June. Both roles are part-time.
* **Friends and Family Survey**: The responses from patients following their various appointments are as follows; 160 very good, 33 good, 1 poor, 1 very poor, 2 neither good nor poor, 1 don’t know. This serves as a good indicator of patients’ view of their care by the Practice.
* **New Services**: There is to be a phlebotomy service for patients with long term conditions and those with an urgent doctor referral. It is anticipated this will equate to about 25 patients per week. The service may be extended to a weekly service but this will be determined following ongoing assessment. The provision of this new service is the direct result of the closure of Ladies’ Walk. Ear syringing is to be provided as well as ECGs (electrocardiogram) for those over 16 years**.** ECGs records the electrical activity of the heart and helps to assess heart rhythm, rate and general function. Children under 16 are referred to Russell’s Hall Hospital.
* **Pharmacy First:** Russell reported that people are gradually getting used to using this service, how it operates and for what conditions. Patients are now more accepting of the signposting to local pharmacies for accepted conditions such as urine infections.

**Reports from other meetings:** The Chair along with Sue Smith attended a meeting of representatives of the Primary Care Network (PCN) on Tuesday 15th April 2025. PPG members had already received minutes of this meeting. There was a short discussion around the proposed boundary changes which would allow Woodsetton and Ridgeway surgeries to accept patients from outside their current boundary. There was also a verbal report about the ‘Laughter Yoga’ session which was part of a presentation at the PCN meeting.

Chris Bate reported that she had been to recent meetings where the closure of Ladies’ Walk had been discussed. There followed a discussion where members shared their understanding of the present position and the role of different politicians. Our local MP Dr Kumar had raised the issue in Parliament. It was agreed that the various uses of Ladies’ Walk would be sadly missed but are the result of a lack of funding.

**Review of Dementia Talk and next steps**: The talk was held at Gornal Library on 2nd April. Twenty four people attended. The speaker was excellent, funny, knowledgeable, inclusive and adopted a very practical approach to the issue. After some discussion it was agreed that we should go ahead with organising another talk either in late September or early October and the subject is to be on the subject of ‘strokes’ as this is something that affects so many people. The chair is to approach the Stroke Association in Dudley for a possible speaker. Amanda and Chris will approach the library to seek approval and agree a possible date in conjunction with the Chair.

**Facebook/Newsletter**

Sue said she would welcome ideas or contributions for the newsletter. Russell is to provide some information relating to the surgery. Chris said the facebook page is updated regularly and is a useful source of key information.

**Questions/Matters of Concern from PPG members**

The Chair shared an incident that had been passed on to him about a patient with some visual impairment who, whilst waiting in the surgery, had not seen the screen notifying her to attend her appointment. Russell and Vikki agreed to put a sign asking patients who struggle to see the monitor to speak to reception on arrival so that they can be told when their appointment is ready.

Sue said that following the talk last year about the incidence of ‘aortic eneurysm’ and the screening programme for men she had asked why the screening did not include females as well. She mentioned this at the last PCN and was surprised to learn of several women known to members who had died or been seriously affected by this condition. Sue has since written to the MP Dr Kumar asking for a screening programme for women. The MP has since taken it up with the Ministry of Health.

Three members passed on lovely compliments about different members of staff following appointments.

**Any Other Business**

Amanda said that on the 10th June Gornal Library will betaking part in the

‘Just Say Hello’ park bench initiative. It is part of the campaign to combat loneliness.

**Date of next meeting: 20th August 2025, 6pm at Bull Street Practice**