**Patient Reference Group**

**Brookside Surgery**

**Minutes of the meeting held on**

**Tuesday 30 January 2024 at 7 pm**

Present : Chris (Chair), Madeleine Clark (Practice Manager), Dr Jon Menon and 7 further attendees

1. Apologies: 9 apologies

2. AGM

Given the number of absentees, it was agreed to postpone the AGM until the next meeting of the Group.

3. Minutes of last meeting.

These were approved and will be published unredacted on the website.

4. Matters arising

Waiting times to see a doctor of choice were at most about 10 days, depending on the chosen doctor. Appointments to see Dr Watters were subject to the longest delays owing to her involvement in specialised female complaints. Otherwise, it was usually possible to get an appointment by phone or video the same day – even an face to face appointment is often obtainable.

Most patients telephone to request an appointment and appointments are available to book online through either the NHS App (the preferred option) or the Patient Access online accounts.

In addition, patients can also contact the surgery through the NHS App or a link from the website with non-urgent queries. Users are prompted to explain their problem/symptoms and triage is carried out inhouse so as to direct the patient to the appropriate person.

In the Rugby area, 70,000 out of approximately 120,000 people access appointments through an online system. It is particularly useful when a photograph would assist diagnosis – for example, when a patient is complaining of a rash. This system is an offshoot of the Covid pandemic which prompted the development of online tools.

From the 31 January, pharmacists will be able to prescribe treatment/drugs for 7 conditions – sore throat, earache, sinusitis, impetigo, shingles, infected insect bites, and uncomplicated urinary tract infections in women. It is estimated this will free up around 10 million GP appointments per year! Despite a rising population, the number of GPs is falling, so any relief on their time is to be welcomed.

There are fewer queues in the dispensary. However, the group shared experiences, some good – the only person there, no waiting time at all – some not so good. It was suggested that if it was taking a long time to serve one patient, for whatever reason, a second dispenser should come forward to serve those waiting.

It is accepted that Fridays – particularly afternoon – are usually busy. This is accentuated by the doctors signing out palliative and acute drug prescriptions needed over the weekend. Avoid collecting prescriptions on Fridays if at all possible – that is the message.

Patients are urged to use the NHS App to order repeat prescriptions. Members of the Group confirmed how efficient they found the system. If the practice removed the availability to order prescriptions by telephone, it would save 45 minutes of dispensary staff time per day and be safer and more accurate.

5 working days are still needed to prepare the prescriptions. This takes into account continuing delays in the delivery and shortages of some drugs. Brexit has exacerbated supply problems, as have interruptions to worldwide supply chains following the pandemic, war in Ukraine and problems with passage through the Suez Canal. There are also surges in demand of some treatments, often influenced by social media.

5. Latest Practice News

(a) Staffing

The practice is in the very fortunate position of having two GP Partners (Dr Menon & Dr Watters), 2 salaried GPs (Dr Tyrrell and Dr Thurlow) and 3 GPs in training (Dr Slinn, Dr Pollock and Dr Wong). Dr Rosie Tucker has completed her training this month and will take up her new post as a salaried GP in South Warwickshire in February.

There remains a vacancy for a qualified dispenser but we have a Pharmaceutical Science student, Ruhaan, helping us out at the moment.

Admin and reception team have been bolstered by the addition of Shyla as she is now a permanent member of the team.

(b) Appointments data and patient satisfaction

Figures extracted from the Practice’s appointment system show that 2259 appointments were offered between 1st and 30th January, of which 1915 were booked. This includes practice nurse, clinical pharmacist, physiotherapist and other attached staff. The practice is in the fortunate position of having had 4 trainee GPs for January and this has meant that capacity has been high. Of those booked 1002 were face to face appointments.

Those attending were asked for their experiences of making an appointment and if they were satisfied with what the surgery is offering. The responses were positive.

(c) Planned projects for 2024

The Practice has a number of projects planned for the coming year - most imminently, a new telephone system. No numbers will change but the new system will offer more information and options to patients when they call the surgery. If the queue is longer than 4 calls, patients will be offered the choice of a call back which will be made when they get to the front of the queue. The Practice is working through the set up of the new system and will use our website and social media to let patients know when the system goes live.

The new system will require changes to the way calls are handled within the surgery. To support these changes, the practice has signed up to the General Practice Improvement Programme (GPIP). This is a 14 week programme. There are weekly sessions of up to 3 hours. A facilitator will help cover different areas of work, focusing on matching capacity to demand. The Practice Manager and Dr Menon are leading on this and hope to report back on the resultant improvements at the next meeting.

6. Membership of the Nation Association of Patient Participation

It was agreed that the group should join this Association, details of which can be found on their website.

7. Possible patient survey

The last survey was in 2019. It was agreed it was time – and beneficial – to hold another. The Practice Manager will forward the questions used last time. Members are encouraged to make their own suggestions which should be emailed to the Chair, who will collate the replies.

8. Any other business

Dr Menon pointed to the expanding population of Rugby. Patient numbers continue to increase. The building expansion of the surgery has proved timely and welcome.

9. Future meetings

It was thought that evening meetings should be held in BST, not GMT.

The meetings for 2024 will be on the **14 May at 6.45 pm**. This will include the AGM.

The autumn meeting will be on the **24 October at 1.30 pm**.