

Westgate Surgery

Patient Focus Group
Minutes of Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams
15 September 2020

Attendees:

Mr Geoffrey Lafford – Chair
Mrs Nicky Macdougald – Practice Manager
Mrs H Gillespie – Practice Secretary (part time)
Mr M Meaney
Mrs J Glover (part time; left because of a computer connection problem)

Apologies:

Mrs S Walsh

1. Welcome and Introductions

Those who joined were welcomed to the meeting.

2. Minutes of last meeting (23/01/2020)

Approved

3. Update on Covid and how the practice is working

Nicky explained the processes the surgery was using over the summer to see and treat patients and explained that this would continue. The GPs are continuing to triage patients first and then book appointments with those that need a face to face consultation. 70% of nurses appointments are face to face with the Nurses carrying out annual reviews over the phone.

Nicky explained that the GPs are probably seeing about a third of the patients face to face that they saw last year but the overall patient contact via telephone and video calls is a lot more than last year. In addition telephone consultations whilst recommended to prevent covid spread do take longer.

Nicky asked Mr Lafford and Mr Meaney if they had heard any feedback regarding the service we have been providing. Mr Meaney had not heard of any concerns or comments. Mr Lafford had tried to use eConsult on the surgery's website but found it very unfriendly and repetitive to use and gave up before reaching the end. He reported that representatives from other Thanet surgeries had mentioned similar experiences at the K&M CCG Local Area Group. Nicky explained that the surgery had not promoted eConsult and favoured phone calls so as not to disadvantage those that do not like electronic communication but it is available.

Nicky explained that she did not feel that the surgery was doing enough to communicate with patients how the surgery is currently working; we are using Facebook page and the Surgery Website but she felt we needed to do more and asked if Mr Lafford or Mr Meaney had any ideas how we could do more. Mr Lafford had asked in his May message to PFG members for suggestions for getting more patients to use the website, but so far there had been no response.

Arrangements for future virtual meetings were discussed. One possibility was an agreed date for a virtual meeting, say 1st of each month and advertise this so patients are made aware. It was also suggested that perhaps email updates could be sent out to those patients the surgery has emails for. Nicky said she would like to have a core group that she could consult as necessary (this idea had been discussed at the PFG meeting on 15th May 2019 – see item 8 of the minutes). It was agreed to form a core group and both Mr Lafford and Mr Meaney agreed to be members. If any other PFG members would like to join the group, please email Nicky.

Agreed that future Newsletters will include briefing notes from the Patient Focus Group and this will include updates from the Kent and Medway CCG Thanet Local Area Group. In response to Mr Meaney's comment, Mr Lafford agreed to make future messages shorter and less complicated.

Nicky advised that she was keen that the practices increased the level of communication with patients and staff particularly through this winter with more lockdown potentially happening .

Discussion on some of the difficulties experienced by surgery staff from patients demanding face to face consultations and other things which it was felt was due to national medical saying surgeries were closed. Mr Meaney said it is not just the surgery staff that are getting the brunt of public dissatisfaction and not just surgery staff having to tolerate this. Both Mr Meaney & Mr Lafford have seen examples of the public being abusive to shop keepers.

Mr Lafford pointed out that the last patient survey demonstrated that the service provided by the surgery was good and this needs to be remembered. He hoped the staff and the medical team would try not to be too upset by a small minority.

4. Practice Objectives

Planning – much of the last objectives had been around housing development but it was unclear now whether this would go ahead in the short term. The thoughts were that the surgery will still need to be expanded again as even without the development Westgate was increasing patient numbers. Mr Lafford noted that Thanet District Council have adopted the Local Plan, which includes provision for a new surgery.

The Practice Aims and Objectives for the Years 2020/2022 were approved.

One objective is about patient engagement and the surgery agreed to look at increasing communication with patients during covid and have smaller, more regular meetings with the core group and then reconsider this when we know where the pandemic is going.

5. Questions and Answers

Mr Meaney asked about use of technology.

6. Future Meetings and Patient Engagement

Health watch can hold a virtual meeting – surgery to look into this.

Agreed to try Zoom next time instead of Microsoft teams.

Nicky to message Mrs Glover.

7. Topics for future meetings

No new topics were suggested.

Date of next meeting: to be arranged