

**Riverside Health Centre**

**Patient Participation Group (PPG)**

**Minutes**

**Meeting held on Monday 16th June 2025 at 1300 at Riverside Health Centre**

**Present:** Deirdree Conn, Anne Walker, Katie Byford, Anne Jones, Hannah Mark, Gus Fidgett, Carmel Lo, Susan Wootton

1. **Welcome**

Deirdre welcomed two new members to the meeting

1. **Apologies:** Jill Farmer, Carolyn Hook, Zoe & Hugh Cronin
2. **Minutes held on 28th April 2025**
3. **Matters Arising**

There was one outstanding item from the previous meeting which referred to a flyer that had been produced by St, Helena Hospice. This flyer did not have a contact telephone number. Dierdre has since spoken to Greg from the Hospice and a new leaflet has been produced which includes a contact number. Greg has also offered to come to a future PPG meeting and talk to the group. Alternatively, the Group was invited to visit the Hospice to see the work undertaken there. It was also suggested that the PPG could hold its next meeting at the Hospice.

The Hospice was able to accommodate 18 patients but sadly NHS funding for 10 patients had ceased

1. Deirdre gave an update on the meeting that she, Zoe and Anne had attended with the practice manager, Mel.

The practice list size has increased from a 2003 number of 3,500 patients to the present size of 6,500 patients.

The current premises are seen as not fit for purpose, with a lack of consulting rooms, administrative staff being housed in a portacabin at the rear of the building and the main patient waiting area and pharmacy being combined. This does not allow for confidential conversations.

The current building is owned by the Co-Op but due to its size there is no scope for the practice to increase its medical services or employ additional staff or partners.

The fabric of the building is run down and the practice is reluctant to spend any money on refurbishment if they eventually hope to be granted funds for a new surgery. To date the practice are no further forward in obtaining funds for a new premises or for the conversion of an existing building. They have asked that the PPG help in this matter.

There had been previous agreements for funding but the Council had refused the application made for such a building and parking area. After this rejection the funds were allocated elsewhere.

There is currently a feasibility study being undertaken and Deirdre is going to speak to the company undertaking this so as to ascertain if they have found a suitable site for redevelopment. Zoe has agreed to talk to the council to see what premises/land may be available and to discuss the reasons for the refusal of planning permission that was previously sought. Anne will attempt to find more about funding sources for a new premises or the redevelopment of a larger property.

The reason that the current premises cannot be expanded is because the main sewer runs under the existing building.

1. Anne gave an overview of the PPG Chair meeting she attended on 14th May. The main topic of the meeting was a presentation by Healthwatch. Anne explained that every local authority had a Healthwatch Organisation and that the Essex one was the largest.

Healthwatch gives up to date information and guidance on a range of services including General Practice, Dentistry, Mental Health, Pharmacy Elderly Care Hospital Complaints Carer’s and homelessness. They are available Monday to Friday 9am-5pm.

They have an extensive directory of services from across the country. They can signpost to relevant services, arrange for a visit and have the ability to refer to the Wellbeing service.

1. Zoe was unable to attend this meeting but Deirdre gave an overview of the meeting that she recently attended. Deirdre explained that the ICB’s were restructuring and had to reduce their running costs by 50%. More NHS dental appointments were going to be made available for urgent treatment. There was a medicines waste campaign also going on.
2. **News from the Practice**

Katie informed the group that a social prescriber had been recruited and was due to start work E.O. June.

The Group was also informed that there were four vacancies and were in the process of advertising for:

1. Part time dispenser
2. Nurse- Asthma ad COPD experienced.
3. Nurse prescriber (John due to retire EO August)
4. Advanced Nurse Practitioner/Paramedic

Katie also discussed with the group the lack of uptake on the Mental Awareness bus that had been in the Co-Op carpark. The group felt that it may be due to the fact that those of the public that suffer with mental health issues may not wish to visit the bus whereas the previous bus which provided a range of general health services was more popular.

Katie also advised the group of the various projects being undertake ie. Proactive care project aimed at contacting dementia patients to offer further support. Energy Champions to help those struggling with energy bills. Military veterans to be coded on the practice medical system in order that support can be given if required. Breast Screening and Dementia information event.

Katie had arranged a meeting on 17th June with AnIma to discuss any concerns that had been raised by patients. She ask if there was anyone in the group who would be happy to volunteer to help patients who struggle to use the system. One member of the group who had struggled using the system agreed to help the practice with this.

1. **AOB**

One member of the PPG had attended the On-Line Future Learning Course. She found this very interesting, however, quite a lot of time was needed to commit to this course.

1. The meeting then closed and Deirdre advised the group that the next meeting would be on 22nd September at the practice. However, this was subject to change of date and may be held at St. Halena Hospice but would advise all members in due course.