**Patient Participation Group Argyle St Surgery**

**Minutes of meeting held 18.11.2024**

The meeting was held at Argyle St Surgery

**Present:** Rose Blackburn, Philip Bowen, Dennis Evans, Paul Evans, Claire Francis-Boswell, Jane Lee, Kay Macken, Tony Upfold, Judith Scourfield (PM), Lucie Jane-Whelan (HB) Jane Gammon

**Apologies:** Suzanne Cole, Jackie Perkins, Paul Jones, Maria Williams

Dennis welcomed everyone for being at the meeting and requested that the meeting continued in an orderly manner. He informed the group that he had received the resignation of Victoria Clare. It was agreed that Victoria would be missed by the group.

3. The minutes were accepted,

4. There were no matters outstanding, and Dennis welcomed a new member to the meeting, Jayne is one of the newly appointed managers following Judith’s retirement which will be in December.

5. Regarding the questions that had been discussed with Practice Managers. Judith explained that she was a little confused with the interest in the Government and the funding in Pembrokeshire and what happens with this in the surgery. She was not aware of any funding coming to the surgery for digital improvements but assured the group that the practice invests its own money into this. Tony pointed out that it was not strictly the surgery’s money until the end of the financial year. Also, what improvements had been made?

The group was informed that in 2014 a large amount of practice money was invested in upgrading the IT systems, but they were not aware of available funding.

Tony explained that he was not aware how the practice managed its money.

Dennis then introduced Lucie (HB) who explained that she had some authority regarding, Primary Care Clusters. Practices have contractual requirements that that must be met and that Argyle St practice is meeting all the requirements.

She went on to explain that blocking appointments is not unique to Argyle Practice, but it is a problem throughout Pembrokeshire. A meeting was held in September in Saundersfoot and it had been decided that a large number of projects would be undertaken to examine the best way to manage the problem. She had been in post for 10 years supporting practices throughout Pembrokeshire and that she was confident that Argyle St Practice was doing everything they could to manage the challenges and that all employees were doing their best, sometimes during very difficult times and situations.

There are continual problems and challenges about what is achievable and what the Welsh Government can be challenged on. Meetings are held regularly with the practices in Hywel Dda catchment area.

Maybe hold a meeting at a local venue to discuss the surgery with the patients of the surgery, and to inform them of the good work and practices that are going on in this practice.

Tony stated that he was in agreement and a public meeting was something that he felt would be of benefit and had mentioned it at his initial meeting.

Judith stated that the practice would not be in favour or be willing to attend a public meeting. She was concerned that the moral was already pretty low and it would not improve by attending a public meeting.

Paul asked that if Argyle St are delivering on all aspects of the contractual requirements, would it be possible for the group to see the correspondence from the Health Board. Lucie explained that the request would have to go to Eluned Morgan for her approval.

Dennis said that seeing this document may assist the group in gaining more knowledge and understanding of the way the practice works, also how to help move forward.

Lucie asked if this was really what the group wanted, the blocking of appointments is due to a number of factors, from persistent offenders, people who do not really need to see a GP and those who do not turn up for appointments. Then there are those patients who need constant supervision due to chronic illnesses and those who require help managing inability to work etc.

Rose: We do need informative facts regarding the booking system. She re-laid information about an elderly woman who was ill but said it was impossible to see a GP that she had now given up trying. Judith said she should ask to speak to the manager as she would always speak with anyone who wished to discuss problems. The phone calls are recorded and will be listened to.

Jane PPG: said that she had recently been looking at the surgery website and had not found anything that would help the public understand and wondered if there was anything we could do to assist with improving the system and explain the services that are available.

Lucie: explained that there are contractual requirements but not all practices are working in the same way. Because Argyle St is such a large practice, they are well supported by Health Board. They have supported with physio in the practice, social worker in the practice, family support and recently a project which will see pharmacist going into schools to help support children and families who have asthma, to understand the correct way to manage it. There is also a Risk Stratification Tool Kit Project in place to help patients that are over 65 and live with chronic illness and frailty problems. Kerry informed the group that these were all excellent projects but were only accessed by a GP referral.

Dennis: Getting back to the initial concerns he enquired how the group wished to move forward with the questions submitted, as we wanted to help but needed up to date qualitative information.

Lucie said that she had been in post for 10 years and works 5 days for 7.5 hours and still doesn’t know or understand some of the documents that come from the Welsh Government. Contractual requirements change and just for instance, practices will no longer be able to order vaccines as these will now be governed by the Welsh Government.

Tony: Wished to say that he personally had received a superb service, but today he had been told that a particular person had asked was he off to a meeting and that he had again been unable to get an appointment as at 8.05am this morning, all appointments were gone. Judith was concerned about this comment and informed that everyone had been shocked today that at 8.30am there were actually a number of unfilled appointments, something that very rarely happens.

Claire: This was her first meeting and as a local person and understanding that the Health Board were in crisis and that she understood that Argyle St Practice was doing the best they could given the challenges, she recommended that the group should work with the practice to help to support them and wondered what the aims and objectives of the group were and was there a mission statement in place.

Kerry: The website is poor and does not do justice to the work the practice does and the services available. Lucie said that the surgery has had some very damning comments and negative and sometimes untrue publicity, but she would be willing to do anything she could to support any improvements.

Judith: Questions had been previously asked about how many times a patient would be allowed to not show for appointments, before they are struck off, these are persistent offenders.

Dennis: Was aware of legal requirements. Lucie said that there were some reasons that would result in this happening to a patient. This could be, a breakdown in relationship and this would mean that a patient would have to go to another practice or be assigned by the Health Board if this was difficult, and could be any practice.

Paul: Questioned if in the past there had been missed opportunities to access funding and wondered how would the practice be made aware of these being available?

Kerry: Said that the current IT system was excellent and fit for purpose, it had proved invaluable during COVID as it allowed telephone consultations to take place. Lucie said that she would find out about a 3.5 million funding, where it is and what it is available for. She said that different practices use different systems, but they have not identified if either one is better.

Dennis asked Paul if his question had been answered but he still felt that we required better information.

Rose: Regarding persistent users of the surgery and wondered if part of the problem that some people are not taking responsibility for themselves. Were the drug and alcohol, and family support agencies playing their part?

Dennis: Felt that there was no need to go through all the questions as Lucie had given some information and explained a great deal. He was however concerned that a meeting had been held between the surgery and the new MP Henry Tuffnel and that he had not been asked to attend the meeting. Then asked how the meeting had gone. Judith said that it was felt that he did not fully understand how surgeries worked and the logistics and enormity of the problems. Jayne (PPG) stated that it is not his responsibility as Health is evolved to Welsh Government. Would it be possible that the 5 practices could meet to discuss issues and work together to influence and put pressure on the Welsh Government.

Dennis said that Sam Kurtz had been interested and helpful in the past. Kerry said that the problems here were happening throughout Wales including Cardiff as she had contacts there.

Lucie: Thought that a mantra regarding the way forward was a good idea for the PPG and Claire said that a mission statement may give the group focus.

Dennis: Asked if the group were they in agreement with this approach. Lucie wished to add that Argyle Practice operated due diligence in the way they handled offenders, and she was proud of the way the practice operated. She also said that a number of practices are handing back contracts, and this caused huge problems for the communities.

Dennis: Regarding future meeting dates. He would set a calendar for 2025. Tony asked who the PPG would discuss issues with, given Judith’s future retirement. Kerry said there will be a generic email for managers, and one will contact the appropriate person. However, Data Protection will always be adhered to.

Paul: Why were new GPs not coming forward to fill vacancies. Lucie stated that they are encouraged as Pembrokeshire has a list of new recruits this year. Jane ( Practice) said that there is still an ongoing problem with recruiting a foreign GP who wished to join the practice. Lucie asked if it would help if she shared the contractual requirements governing recruitment. This was thought to be an excellent idea.

Dennis thanked everyone for their input and wished to thank Judith for her help over the years, the practice would miss her and so would the PPG but we wished her a very happy retirement.

Date of next meeting would 13.01.2025