

**Minutes of the Patient Voice (PPG) meeting held on Thursday 2nd July 2026,
at 2.00 pm at the Churchfield site.**

Before the start of the meeting, Laura emphasised the need to refrain from discussing personal issues during meetings.

Attendees:

Chris Eames
Anne Eames
Christine Freeman
Sue White
Verity Lawrence
Cathy Perry
Laura Haydon
Dr Zaidi
Carole Munro
Karen Luke
Michael Andrews
Christine Hayward
Pam Brown
Paddy Elgood
Kulwinder Bola

1.

Apologies received from:

David Birtwhistle
Robert Lawrence
Sue Marlow
Sarah Burley
Jean Simmonds
Valerie Hall
Sue Long
Katrina Bowler

Maureen Briggs has emailed to ask to be removed from the group, as she has now moved to Leighton Buzzard.

2.

Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes were accepted as a true record.

3.

Matters arising

It was strongly felt by the people present that a DNA should not be issued if a patient fails to answer the phone. Dr Zaidi stated that there is a time issue involved in these cases, but after some discussion, he reassured the members that there is no procedure in place to remove patients from the practice list at any point, so there are no implications of a DNA being placed against a name in these circumstances.

It was noted that the NHS app has changed somewhat: personal data can now also be accessed via the Airmid app.

4.

Christine reported that the Pilates group is still full, with 24 members and one person on the waiting list. This will be reviewed again in September. The start time of the sessions has moved to 10:15am..

The Café numbers remain fairly steady, and the annual Cream Tea and Raffle on 11th June was very successful; from this, £343 was raised. This was made up to £400 and was sent as a donation to Age Concern, who were very grateful.

5.

Practice Matters

Laura stated that there are 3-4 new Reception staff being trained and they appear to be promising.

Dr Zaidi then wanted to share the following points:

- There are several trainees at the practice (ie. fully-qualified doctors learning to be GPs). Some will be looking to stay with the practice, but finances can be a problem when it comes to the logistics of retaining them.
- Dr Zaidi informed us of two points which came from his attendance at the NHS Expo Conference in Manchester:

- The use of AI: Reception staff and triaging may be affected, so patients may not always speak to a human; there does seem to be a growing pressure from above to go in this direction.
- The NHS ten-year plan: Dr Zaidi feels there is a “leftward shift”. Health services are being moved into the community, with neighbourhood plans; PCNs (Primary Care Networks) are groups which will be working together on a larger scale. For example, a patient would first consult the Pharmacy First team, but if it turned out to be a more urgent issue, then they would be seen by a neighbourhood nurse at the medical hub, and after that, if necessary, by a doctor; this would then generally free up more time for GPs.
- Dr Zaidi pointed out that we should be aware that when we say ‘we need more GPs’, that it takes 14-20 years to fully train a GP, and so this is a longer term, more complex issue.
- Dr Zaidi stated that the practice pays for the triage system. This system itself may change for the practice and make it easier, but it will not dramatically change for the patients.
- Dr Zaidi mentioned the PCN outreach event, in which our practice is involved, regarding men’s health. This will take place on 11th July 2026 in Wardown Park. The aim of this event is to improve the health of men in the town.

6.

AOB

The persistent issue of the lift being out-of-order at the Castle Street Surgery was raised again, and it was felt that there is a need to identify patients who require access to a lift; the suggestion was made that a tick box should be added to the triage form, asking whether the patient is able to use the stairs.

There was a question as to why, on some occasions, there have been no doctors at the Churchfield site. Dr Zaidi replied that there would always be a paramedic (clinician) for urgent care.

- For information: at Vestry Close, the check-in screen informs patients where they are in the queue and how long they can expect to wait. This was seen as a good idea.
- There was an update on the staffing of the practice: there are two new nurses, three paramedics, five GP partners, together with Sam, the pharmacist, as well as regular long-term locums. All of these work across both surgeries.
- It was requested that clinicians and doctors should introduce themselves at the beginning of any appointment, as this does not always occur.

Laura reminded the group that Chris Eames intends to stand down as chair of the PV Committee at the end of the AGM meeting. We would therefore welcome any volunteers to become chair and/or join the committee. We extend our grateful thanks for all of his hard work over the years.

As there was no further business, the meeting closed at 3.15pm.

Date of next meeting: TBA.