

Minutes of the Patient Voice (PPG) meeting held on Thursday 19th March 2026 at 2.00 pm at the Churchfield site.

Attendees:

Chris Eames
Anne Eames
Christine Freeman
Sue White
Verity Lawrence
Cathy Perry
Laura Haydon
Maureen Briggs
Dr Zaidi
Carole Munro
Karen Luke
Dawn Crowhurst
Michael Andrews
David Birtwhistle
Ruth Deacon
Christine Hayward

1.

Apologies received from:

Robert Lawrence
Paddy Elgood
Pam Brown
Sue Marlow
Sarah Burley
Jean Simmonds
Valerie Hall
Sue Long

2.

Minutes of the previous meeting.

The minutes were accepted as a true record.

3.

Matters arising.

A question was asked as to whether the email with the information regarding the surgery access times and face-to-face appointments had been sent out. It

was confirmed that it had been sent to all the patients on the current PV email list, held by the secretary, although some people had not received it.

There was a discussion about access to emails by patients who are not online or who do not possess a smart phone. Dr Zaidi suggested that a notice with any relevant information should be displayed in the waiting room.

4.

Christine reported that the Pilates group is now full, with 25 members on the list, and a waiting list has been started. The price-per-session has been increased to £5, which is the first increase since 2020.

Although the Café numbers have decreased a little, it is still going well. There has been one more volunteer helper to add to the Wednesday team. A suggestion was made to start a Café Facebook Group.

5.

Practice Matters

Dr Zaidi passed on a message from Sam, to enquire whether there are any men interested in attending a one-off 'men's health group', in order to run through a basic health check. Interest was shown amongst those present.

Dr Zaidi had then wanted to share the following points:

- He stated that times given to patients for a phone appointment can occasionally be delayed, as the surgery can be deluged by patients with emergency requirements.
- If the patient does not answer Dr Zaidi when he calls, he will leave a message and ask them to call back within 40 minutes, although he acknowledged that this may not be the same across the practice. It is shown on the patient's record that he has called; if the patient does not return the call, then it will be marked as DNA on their record. It was suggested that people expecting a doctor's call should try to keep their phones near them and not on silent. However, it was recognised that this may not always be possible.
- Dr Zaidi stated that there has been a suggestion that the PPG needs

‘corrections’, as to how it can be made more effective, for example recruiting new members, but no further information was available.

- Dr Zaidi then raised the new GP contracts which have been imposed by the Government without the GPs themselves being consulted. This has caused concern about the current triage system. There are no longer adequate safeguards, because of the increase in multiple requests.

The new contract requires GPs to advise patients on the day of their message as to what’s going to happen. This can prove difficult. For example, if a patient phones in at 6.29pm, if the surgery regards it to be an urgent situation, they have to ‘deal with it’ and possibly even see the patient, even though the surgery closes at 6.30pm. The GP has to ‘deal with it’ - but what is meant by ‘deal with it’ is unclear.

- There are long waiting lists for outpatients, for example, Neurology has a two-year waiting list.
- The Government has increased the amount of money for the recruitment and training of GPs, although no figure has been provided as yet. Dr Zaidi has worked out that it costs £160 to allow one patient to be seen for 30 minutes in one year; this is obviously not sufficient.

He reported that the training goes well, but the problem lies in GP retention. He stated that the income to GP practices has not been adjusted in line with the rate of inflation.

- Dr Zaidi concluded that the Government’s position is all about access, not continuity of care. He has himself contacted the relevant local MPs about the problem, but they are unable to influence the Government in this matter.
- There was a discussion about Pharmacy First. It was stated that this facility cannot be accessed for certain conditions if the patient is over 64 years of age. The patient can be prescribed certain antibiotics for minor ailments by

the pharmacist. However, there is a certain level of risk for the pharmacist, because they are not an expert in some of the illnesses and will not have a complete knowledge of patients' other medications or conditions.

- The point was again raised that there is still no notice displaying the clinicians' names at the Churchfield site. It was also noted that the Castle Street sign needs updating.

6.

AOB

- There was a query regarding the availability of blood tests at the Churchfield site. It still appears that there are many more blood test appointments available at Castle Street than there are at Churchfield.

It was stated that the number of appointments should be equal at both sites, but the Churchfield site's slots usually are filled more quickly. It was pointed out that, if a blood test form is obtained from the surgery, patients can choose to go elsewhere, including Vestry Close or the Arndale Medical Centre.

- Laura is still looking into the idea of, as previously suggested, a 'Whistleblowers' group'.
- The question was raised in regard to the previous suggestion of the surgery providing a computer area for patients with no access to a computer themselves. There is no movement on this as yet. However, there is a plan for extra rooms to be added in the future to the Churchfield and Larkside complex.
- The issue of SMS links requesting readings for blood pressure, which expire after 7 days, was raised. Dr Zaidi will look into this.

Laura also pointed out that no further loans of blood pressure monitors can be made by the surgery, because they are simply never returned.

- Following on from a statement made in a previous meeting, there was a question as to whether phoning 111 should still be avoided, and a discussion followed on from this. The concluding advice was that patients should use the 111 service only if there are no other options available.

As there was no further business, the meeting closed at 3:15pm.

Date of next meeting: TBA.

NB. The date of the next meeting has now been set for Thursday, 2nd July, at 2.00 pm at the Churchfield site.