

Open Meeting – 18 November 2023 – Minutes

Text in underscored italic is post meeting information

Present: Jean Alden, Sennen Chiu, Lyn Duffus, Matt Edwards (Practice Manager), Purminder Gandhu, Rhian Ingram, Keith Marshall (Chairman), Noreen Marshall, Phiroze Munshi, Bharti Sadhu

Apologies: Joe Hamilton, Sheila Hayles, Harsha Mortemore (Vice-Chair)

1. Welcome

1. Keith welcomed everyone.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

1. The minutes of the Open Meeting on 20 September 2023 were agreed and signed.

3. Role of the Practice Manager

1. Matt talked about his role as Practice Manager. His background is originally in IT in the pharmaceutical industry, before becoming an Assistant Practice Manager, and then joining Barnabas almost 10 years ago.
2. Matt asked what those present thought was his biggest challenge. We all agreed that it was us, the patients, and keeping us happy.
3. Every GP practice faces the same problems: essentially the aftereffects of the Covid pandemic (which although not over has receded somewhat). To illustrate this Matt highlighted:
 - Demand was up 25% compared with before the pandemic.
 - In 2019 around 15% of our 9200 patients were regular users; this is now at least 40%.
 - The Practice receives 600-800 phone calls a day, around three times as many as in 2019.
 - Patients want to see a GP rather than visit a pharmacy.
4. Matt emphasised that in his role he had to cover everything (except clinical). Unlike in larger organisations where there are specialists for HR, building maintenance, IT *etc.*, in a GP practice the Practice Manager has to cover everything from ensuring everyone is paid to changing light bulbs.
5. There are many aspects of Matt's role which he cannot legally discuss, but other aspects include:
 - Trying to ensure safety is maintained, especially given that a GP can safely see around 30 patients a day, but they are now regularly seeing 50.
 - All the above is affecting the staff, and Matt is concerned about the mental health of all the staff.
 - Recruitment. The Practice is now short of 3 receptionists; hiring is not succeeding due to the salary levels, stress, and shortage of suitable applicants. The Practice also

want to recruit another salaried GP, but in the last three months have had no appropriate applicants.

- The current medical centre was purpose built around 30 years ago; demand has outstripped the available space; and there is no ability to expand the building. The Practice was interested in the plans for a health centre on the old Glaxo site, but the current status is not known – meanwhile the new residents are creating extra demand.
6. The discussion then centred around what we, as a group, can and should be doing to help the Practice and the patients. The following were noted:
- The group can only do what we have volunteers willing to do. This has declined over the years as many former willing members have withdrawn (mostly through death or illness).
 - While many patients are sufficiently IT literate, there are many who are not, and would benefit from some initial help with online GP services. Saturday mornings were suggested as a possible time to do more engagement with the local community.
 - Suggested that a small group meet (initially for one hour) to try to work through what needs doing, and what is possible, especially to unlock the problem of funding, engagement, patient awareness of the group, and patient access generally. A group of four was suggested: Matt, Keith, possibly Purminder and maybe one of the reception team. Matt suggested starting this in January. Keith to follow up. Action: Keith
 - Along with this there needs to be a focus on our main objective. At a top level this should be to work with the Practice to ensure they get some “outstanding” ratings when CQC next inspect.

4. 2024 Meeting Dates

1. Dates and venues for 2024 meetings were discussed.
2. It was agreed that we prefer to meet in person and that this is more effective.
3. Matt is still unable to make contact with the church to hire the hall or link area; Harsha has also tried and been unable to make contact.
4. We cannot see suitable venues, close to the Practice, other than the medical centre and the church facilities. While the Greenwood pub has been suggested they would require a large amount of money to be spent at the bar. Keith has also looked online at the local schools but they seem only to hire out their large school halls.
5. Matt is willing to host two Saturday morning meetings at the Practice next year. It was agreed that these should be in May and September.
6. There should be four other meetings: January, March, July and November. These will initially be scheduled for Wednesday lunchtimes. If the church can be booked then meetings will be there; otherwise they will be on Zoom.
7. Meetings will be scheduled for around mid-month.
8. Dates can be flexed during the year if need arises.
9. Keith will schedule dates and include them in the next monthly update. Action: Keith Dates also attached at the end of these minutes.
10. Informal calls will not be scheduled for next year as they have been poorly attended this year and seem to have outlived their usefulness.

5. Members Feedback & Issues

1. Much of the members' feedback had been covered during Matt's session.
2. One further point noted was that there are many different healthcare apps and it is unclear how they all relate to the NHS App and when they need to be used. If this can be clarified, and explained to patients, then this could take some pressure off reception. Purminder agreed to draft a comparison of the various apps for the March issue of *Barnabas Bulletin*. Action: Purminder Deadline: 14 February

6. Practice Updates

1. *Staff Updates*

- Dr Carey has returned from maternity leave and is working Thursdays and Fridays.
- As mentioned above the Practice continues to try to recruit three receptionists and a salaried GP.

2. *Phone System*

- Matt reported that the length of the queues and the number of dropped calls have reduced.

3. *Waiting Area*

- Keith still has to plan the reinstatement of the noticeboards. Action: Keith
- The Practice has submitted a bid for money for various improvements: replacing the waiting area seating (also possibly the floor and redecoration), refurbishing the toilets, replacing the clinical room sinks, aircon for one of the upstairs offices.
- The contracts for the (centrally funded) waiting area screens and self check-in screen expire in March. New contracts which the Practice must fund are expensive.

4. *Room 6 Wall*

- The damaged wall has now been repaired.

5. *Patient Surveys*

- The PCN has received survey results from the work being done by Healthwatch Ealing.
- Matt wishes to run Practice surveys again in 2024. Keith and Matt to liaise to see how this can be achieved and supported. Action: Matt/Keith

6. *Invitation Text Messages*

- Matt hopes to get an invitation text message out to younger patients later this month.
- The Practice now has a limited budget for text messages which constrains what can be done.

7. Other Group Updates

1. *Barnabas Bulletin*

- Keith is in the process of writing the December issue.

8. Matters Arising, AOB

1. No further business.
2. Next Open Meeting: Wednesday 17 January; 13:00; on Zoom.

Keith C Marshall, Chairman
22 November 2023

Proposed 2024 Meeting Dates

- Wednesday 17 January; 13:00; Zoom (or Church Hall)
- Wednesday 20 March; 13:00; Zoom (or Church Hall)
- AGM: Saturday 18 May; 11:00; Medical Centre
- Wednesday 17 July; 13:00; Zoom (or Church Hall)
- Saturday 14 September; 11:00; Medical Centre
- Wednesday 20 November; 13:00; Zoom (or Church Hall)

Dates/times may change depending on the availability of venues (especially the Church facilities). Watch the Members' Monthly Update for confirmation of dates and venues.

Link for all Zoom Meetings

Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7279594414?pwd=VmYwODdoWGg2eTFvTIVjVIZyRmhSQT09>

Meeting ID: 727 959 4414

Passcode: 149417
