Notes

AGM (Annual General Meeting)

The Chair welcomed attendees to the second AGM of the Patient Participation Group (PPG).

The meeting was held at Fusion in Spinks Lane in the Wellness Room and started at 4pm.

Also present was John Wood (vice chair)

**Chairs Report**

The minutes of last year are available on the PPG section of the practice website. ([www.fernhousesurgery.co.uk](http://www.fernhousesurgery.co.uk))

While we were unable last year to find a volunteer to support the PPG functions of communication and membership - later in the agenda we will be proposing a second vice chair role that will cover much of this area.

With enhanced member numbers - following a text message prior to the summer meeting we have sought a venue that offers space, disabled access, and convenient parking. I am grateful to Fusion Leisure Centre for their offer of the wellbeing room tonight.

Another first this evening is a talk given by Dr Mayet representing both Fern House and the Maldon and Witham Primary Care Network. I hope that this can continue to be a feature of AGMs.

Primary Care has been undergoing many changes to the way services are provided in a time when the NHS sector has rarely been out of the news. New roles and changing methods are often challenging for patients and staff. Explaining the changes and listening to the lived experiences of those who use the services is a feature of PPG meetings.

For the last few years, we have started a garden project based in the Fern garden and in September we held our third MacMillan cake sale rising £235 for the Cancer charity.

The successful garden Project has been running for a few years now but could do with more volunteers. They meet every Tuesday between 10am and 12 noon. Please contact either the surgery or Marian Redding if you would like more information.

We intend to continue providing an opportunity for members to meet the practice team and where possible to link with other patient representative groups in Mid-Essex.

Also, present representing Fern House Surrey team were Dr Mayet and Nicole Kaye who represented Sarah George (Practice Manager).

Everyone from staff to patients has been affected by changes to the Primary Care Network (PCN) and Dr Mayet will discuss this further later.

**Election of Additional Vice Chair**

The next item on the agenda was the proposal and acceptance of Susan Ager as an addition vice chair to the PPG. Members were informed that a full vote was not required as the constitution of this Voluntary Group is evolving. From 2025 please inform the Chair before the July meeting if you have an interest in taking on further responsibilities. Additional support would be welcomed. Contact on this email f.patientgroup@nhs.net

**Questions & Practice Report**

The report and news from the PCN were given by Dr. Mayet. He reported that it had been a very difficult year across all areas with overwhelmed hospitals leading to challenging conditions in Primary Care. Dr Mayet answered questions and responded to issues.

Dr. David Sanwu has joined the practice as a GP registrar and is now seeing patients.

Fern House surgery car park is only for the use of staff and blue badge holders.

Patient feedback via the PPG is helping to focus attention on areas of the practice that need attention. One of these being the on-line booking system using Patches.

* There are currently several emergency appointments made available via Patchs each day.
* This can be accessed by clicking ‘Contact us online’ then selecting ‘Contact my GP practice’.
* There are only a certain number of appointments realised daily, but admin request can be submitted throughout the day via this portal.

Fern House is currently working on new ways to digitise processes with appointments and within the surgery to limit phone call waiting time and queues within the surgery. There may be some changes over the next coming months which will be reported at the next PPG.

**GP Survey 2024**

Dr Mayet reported that the patient feedback survey results were much improved. Further information will be provided via the practice website.

A member of the PPG commented that the telephone system was much improved and that the call back system worked perfectly. Praise was also given to the reception team.

The surgery will be expanding the availability of blood tests in house and have employed a phlebotomist.

Dr. Mayet reminded the attendees that appointments to see a Physiotherapist were available by self-referral. There are also Social Prescribers available. their role is to link patients to services that help them to overcome loneliness and social isolation and to improve their physical health. The practice also has a mental health nurse who can see patients face to face at the surgery.

Regarding the PCN, Fern House have linked with the following surgeries: Collingwood Road, Witham Health Centre, Blackwater, Longfield Medical Centre (Maldon) and Tollesbury Surgeries. This gives better access to funding services across the PCN.

Medication reviews are undertaken by telephone call from a pharmacist. There was a reminder that local pharmacies (through pharmacy first) can prescribe and deal with certain medical conditions.

A member of the group commented that the website was hard to use for those with neurodiversity. Dr Mayet agreed communication needs to be improved.

Dr Mayet reported that Diabetes was increasing in the population and discussed the different medical approaches.

Covid and Flu injections were underway and would finish at the end of November.

Regarding the PCN, Fern House is the first to get patient reppresentatives onto the PCN Board and interviews would be taking place in November.

It was also discussed how many more hospital appointments now come through by text.

Proposed Dates of Next Meeting. We are aiming to vary the day of the week, avoid school holidays and take account of the attendance on dark, winter evenings. We want to provide an opportunity for those at work to attend. This is subject to the availability of the staff team to attend.

Monday 27th January 2025

Tuesday 8th April 2025

Monday 7th July 2025

Tuesday 7th October 2025 (AGM)