**Hodnet Medical Centre - Summary PPG meeting, 14th September 2022**

Present: Dr Mehta; Ros Mehta; Michelle Holland; Richard Holtom; Mary Hardy; Karen Calder; Jennifer Kelleher; Sandra Williams

Apologies: Helen Charnock

**Practice Update**

After brief introductions and welcome to new people, Dr Mehta presented an outline of the issues being faced by the Practice in the current climate.

These included long working hours; attendant administrative work; ongoing staffing issues due to a shortfall of doctors willing to cover sessions; increasingly high expectations of the Practice coming from some patients, coupled with a lack of awareness of the pressures.

There was the additional risk of potentially having to close the Practice should several of the staff go down with Covid and there was danger of it spreading.

The telephone appointment system has its benefits, but it’s always preferable to see a patient in person. Knowing patients and being known by them is hugely beneficial, as is continuity of care. Reinstating morning surgery would be good, but not practically possible yet, given other demands.

Dr Mehta explained some of the thinking behind the decision not to join the North Shrops Primary Care Network (PCN), pointing out that NHS England agendas were not always matched to either his own or his patients’ best interests.

In response to a question about whether being merged with a larger Practice might become inevitable, Dr Mehta said this could not be forced upon them.

It was noted that accessing services and getting through on the phone was easier at Hodnet than at several other local practices, although patients sometimes don’t appreciate what they have. Some can make life difficult for reception staff when they fail to accept that their requests cannot be met immediately in just the way they wish. This is detrimental to staff morale, and does not take account of the ongoing pressures of just keeping the Practice open.

Discussion followed about the desirability of appointing a nurse practitioner who might be able to help with triaging. It is wasteful of time and resource when doctor appointments are taken up by trivia.

Impending Flu and Covid injection clinics will bring their own pressures, but plans are in place to run sessions later in an afternoon, when the building is quieter.

The number of patients the Practice can realistically support is around 3500.

Nursing home work was enjoyable but also time-consuming, particularly difficult when beds are used as a step-down unit for hospital patients.

Generally speaking, Dr Mehta was optimistic about the future of the Practice, and spoke of positive outcomes from a reorganising of the skills mix within the organisation, at reception and in the dispensary.

**Future role for the PPG?**

After a long gap during lockdowns, and given the generally high level of satisfaction with the Practice, is there a role for a PPG in future?

Staff felt there was, particularly in the area of public relations, communicating some of the difficulties to help patients to better understand the pressures, and temper their expectations of what is possible.

In practical terms this could include:

* promoting the Patient Access app for repeat prescriptions;
* possibly helping with fund-raising for items of medical equipment;
* encouraging more views of the Practice website.

But given data privacy issues, how can PPG members easily connect with patients?

Could try promoting Patient Access at the Flu clincs, using leaflets to explain the benefits.

Help with providing regular updates for local parish magazines, websites or other outlets, e.g. ‘A Day in the Life’ or ‘From the Doctor’s Desk’.

**Action**:

Mary to produce meeting notes, Ros to upload to Practice website.

Karen to assemble details of publicity outlets, parish clerks, copy dates of local publications etc.

Sandra to produce an outline/template for future writing.

Richard to forward Lyon Hall invoice to Practice for payment.

Given that both Richard and Mary wish to step down from responsibilities after next meeting, all to seek new members.

**Future meetings**:

Timing needs to vary to include early afternoons and later in the day for those working.

Agreed to meet again one Wednesday in November, late afternoon. Ros to confirm date, Mary to circulate.