

Report to the AGM of the Romney House Patient Participation Group

Held at 7pm on 25 April 2012

at The Dolphins Hall, New Church Street, Tetbury

Patient Participation Groups have been in place nationally since 1978. Indeed, we had a Patient Participation group here in Tetbury but sadly it fizzled out in the mid 1990s. In the last few years they have been increasingly expected and encouraged at government level to be part of the growing changes in NHS provision and in the 'big society' ethos.

Thus in September and October 2011 posters were displayed in Romney House Surgery giving information about an exploratory meeting to gauge interest in setting up another PPG for the surgery. Forms were available at the surgery for interested patients attending the surgery to complete. Additionally, a random sample of 375 patients over the age of 16 was also invited to attend through a computer generated letter. This was a sample of just under 5% of practice patients and was done with the intention of capturing a wide cross section of the patient community and not only those who were attending the surgery at the time.

The initial meeting was held on 19 October 2011 at the surgery to explore interest in setting up a Patient Participation Group was attended by thirty two patients together with a number of practice staff. It was led by a patient, David Pearsall, who had volunteered to help the practice launch a group. We are delighted that he has agreed to be the deputy chair of our group. David made a presentation outlining how the group should be set up and the purposes of having such a group which include: to give the practice staff and patients the opportunity to discuss topics of mutual interest in their practice and to provide a means for patients to make positive suggestions about the practice and their own healthcare. That meeting made the decision to form a PPG and a steering committee of 12 members was formed.

The steering committee has met as a whole or in sub groups on at least 10 occasions since then. The earlier meetings were spent drawing up terms of reference under which to operate and to guide our activities. Copies of those Terms of Reference under which we are operating are available here tonight and are on the practice web site. We are using these terms of reference so that we can proceed in confidence and this meeting, on 25 April 2012, we are calling it an AGM although we have not been in existence a year. You will then have the terms of reference we have adopted and will comply with so that next year at the AGM in April you can propose any changes you may wish to make to them. At present we are very much feeling our way and not everything in these terms of reference could be adhered to for this AGM.

This was, in the main, due to the fact that the task of drawing up terms of reference was rapidly overtaken by the need to draw up and undertake a survey of practice patients by the end of March. This was a lot of work for highly motivated but nevertheless busy volunteers - - - but, we did it!

We drew up the survey and conducted it over a period of two weeks from Monday 30 January 2012 using a protocol drawn up by Linda Woolley. We are extremely grateful to those patients who attended the surgery during that time for taking part and for those of you who assisted in its execution. We were then tasked with writing a report on which the practice had to respond formally and draw up an action plan by the end of March, the date by which all these documents had to be publically available in written form and on the practice web site. Had we not had such a committed committee this would not have been possible and had not Steve Picken and David overseen the technical areas of this work we would not have managed by the deadline --- which we were then advised had been extended to the end of April! Such is life.

Also, at the beginning of February members of the committee were invited to take part in the interviewing process for a new Practice Manager and we were very happy to be involved. We are obviously sad that Jean Henderson, the previous post holder and initiator of the group, has left but wish her well in her new position. We are very pleased to be working well with Ian Wallis, the new practice manager, so soon after taking up his post and are confident that this will continue.

You can see that we have not been idle and that it has been an extremely busy six months. I am very grateful to the dedicated committee who have made it possible through their hard work and members of the wider group who helped out with undertaking the survey itself. We are very grateful to the practice partners and staff for making us so welcome at the practice and for giving us so much encouragement. This has helped the group enormously to be on a sure footing and working well with the practice actively to promote good communication between the practice and its patients and to bring a sense of ownership and partnership between the two for the benefit of all. We look forward to the next year and to your views on, help in, and commitment to, the areas of work which you, as patients and members of the group wish to be undertaken.

Alison Hesketh

Chair, Romney House, PPG

April 2012