



Minutes of a Meeting held at 7pm on Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> May 2023 at Haddenham Medical Centre

Present Barry Lynch (Chair), David Gregory (Vice Chair) Dr Mark Howcutt, Ciar Munn and 32 PPG members  
Michael Cole and Giles Flaxton from Lindengate Health and Wellbeing Charity

1. The Chairman welcomed members and introduced Michael Cole and Giles Flaxton from Lindengate Health and Wellbeing Charity.
2. Michael told the meeting that the charity had been in existence for 10 years. Set in 6 acres of garden it provides a peaceful setting for one-to-one communication for people with low to moderate problems of depression, anxiety or stress. A memory pathway and dementia programme is now funded for one year and it is hoped to welcome more people into the programme for patient plus a carer. During Covid the programme gave help to NHS workers. With access to the programme contact can be made with the GP to make sure people get the best care possible.

Giles said he had lived in Haddenham for 27 years. He has been a volunteer for 4 years and enjoys helping in the heritage orchard, native reserve, formal gardens and ponds and driving a tractor. There are maintenance and Horticulture teams to encourage people to build new skills. He takes part in charity runs to raise money. There are open gardens at Lindengate on Wed-Sat at Dobbies Garden Centre in Wendover at the rear of the car park. They do not do counselling, just therapy.

3. Practice Report – Dr Mark Howcutt and Ciar Munn

Dr. Howcutt said there had been a lot of changes with a new telephone system and at short notice a new appointment system to be implemented which is now in place. They will see how it works and make changes if necessary. They have a full nursing team and new trainees in August. No change in doctors and reception is now fully staffed.

Barry commented on the new appointment system expressing that he was disappointed that HMC had not discussed the implementation of the system with the PPG prior to its introduction. By comparison Unity Health, a PCN partner practice, had been discussing the changes to their appointment system with their PPG since November 2022. Barry believes the software used is not user friendly and there was no guidance to help patients with completing the forms. He felt it strange that nowhere in the system can the word “appointment” be found and the hours the system can be used are limited to “Core Hours” which are not specified or explained. An advantage of an online system is that it could be available 24/7. Barry felt that restricting its use to certain hours can only be assumed to be a way of reducing its use.

Dr Howcutt reminded Barry that a meeting had taken place with him and Brian Rogers several weeks before the change in appointment system to discuss the possible changes and the system ultimately chosen was discussed with them. He explained that the Government only published the final rules that led to the change a few days before the change had to be implemented and all the focus of the practice was on getting the system in place. Dr Howcutt advised that although GP “core hours” are 8.00am to 6.30pm, the vast majority of patients make contact with the medical centre from 8am to 4pm and so it was decided to use the online form from 8am to 4pm initially with the plan to review these hours as patients and staff got used to the forms. He explained that the phrase “Core Hours” used on the website was not the wording chosen by

the practice and that they have already requested a change with the developers. The practice believes the software chosen is the simplest and shortest of the options available.

Ciar said they had had feedback from patients that they are getting on well with the new system. She suggested patients try the system and do a practice run if they want. Our reception team will complete the form on their behalf if a patient cannot do this themselves but it is helpful for patients to complete themselves if they can so that the reception team have more time to help those who genuinely cannot.

Dr Howcutt stated that it was hoped that the new system would in some cases direct patients to a suitable PCN practitioner such as a physio or pharmacist and take pressure off GPs. He said that early signs were that pressure was being relieved and morale in the practice was improving.

#### Comments/Questions from Floor

Brian Rogers said he had found the new system to be very good, being sent a text message linking to the form and a good response from the doctor. Several other members also said they had good experiences with the new system.

Ciar replied to a questioner who thought the new system could only be accessed from a mobile phone and responded that the link to the form could be activated by either PC or mobile phone.

Dr Howcutt advised that they would help people who were unable to use the new system because of lack of smartphone/PC.

Question from floor - Who reads the form when it is received at HMC, doctors or reception?

Ciar responded that reception feeds the forms to duty doctor who then instructs reception how to respond with an appointment if necessary. Dr Howcutt added that very urgent requests would result in a doctor ringing the same day whereas less urgent matters could be allocated an appointment within 6 weeks.

Communication with patients was agreed to be a priority with so many important changes at HMC.

David Gregory emphasised that it would help if PPG membership was increased so that more patients would receive regular information about new procedures.

Barry said that Ciar had agreed to send out text messages to patients inviting them to join the PPG to boost membership and reach more patients from the PPG/Practice.

Floor - An ex GP receptionist spoke and confirmed it is difficult to divert patients to a physio or other Practitioner. Patients will not listen and always want to see a doctor.

Dr Howcutt commented that it is a very hard job being a receptionist and demand is currently still very high. 10 years ago patients would consult the practice three times a year on average, now it is 7 times a year.

Dr Howcutt – we believe we have a safe system and it works well but will continue to monitor and change. He said HMC has one of the largest PPGs in the area – we are happy to support efforts to reach as many patients as possible.

David Gregory commented that the PPG considered it important to provide help with training patients to use systems and monitor their own health.

Barry commented that the NHS App is likely to be the most used system in the future but that as a result of the PPG survey help would be maintained with Patient Access.

Dr Howcutt said that they were working towards making test results more understandable.

4. Results of Patient Workshops Survey – Barry made a screen presentation of the recent PPG survey. You can see the full details at [www.dinton.info/pdfs/ContactingtheMedicalCentre.pdf](http://www.dinton.info/pdfs/ContactingtheMedicalCentre.pdf)

5. Any other Business

J Lumsden was having problems linking 2 patient profiles online in Patient Access. Ciar said a Proxy form needed completion and signing for an access ID for both people. Form takes 5 working days to implement.

Some confusion has been caused where patients have been told at HMC reception they support 'Patient Access' and not the 'NHS App'. CM agreed that both systems will be supported (as shown on practice website)

Dr Howcutt advised that the latest information from the NHS suggests that from October 2023, every patient should have access to all their medical records online. There will also be new systems on the NHS App for hospital referrals which are likely to be only available on the NHS App.

Another patient raised a complaint which involved medical Issues and was advised that these matters were not discussed at open meetings. Dr Howcutt asked them to contact him directly.

6. The Next PPG meeting was provisionally set for 6<sup>th</sup> September at 7pm (TBC).
7. The Chair thanked the members and guests for their attendance and declared the meeting closed.