

Alchester Medical Group PPG will

Contribute to the continuous improvement of services.

Foster and improve communication between the practice and its patients.

Help patients to take more responsibility for their health.

Provide practical support and help to implement change.

Attending – George Thomas, Dr Laura Bate, Laura Cooper, Chris A'Court, PPG members – Sue Wilde, Vivian Nicholson, Norman Ruby, Martyn Best

1. Vaccination centre update

GT

George gave an update on how we are doing with regards to the Vaccination centre. We are inviting patients aged 40+ (we are slightly ahead of the national system as we have the capacity to offer to all these patients) and have vaccinated the vast majority in that Cohort (those aged 40-49).

We have vaccinated around about 93-99% of patients in Cohorts 1-9 (first doses). This is an excellent uptake (flu vaccination uptake of all patients is usually around the 75% mark). At the end of this week we will have given 18,300 first doses across the Bicester PCN, and 4,860 second doses (over 23,000 doses delivered). We are in the top 3 in Oxfordshire in total number of doses delivered, and we didn't start vaccinating until early January (a little later than some others). Our top total number of vaccinations given in one day is 1751, which is the best in Oxfordshire.

During May we have around 6,500 second doses to administer and will have a limited supply of further first doses (we don't know when these will be delivered yet).

We are extremely pleased with the way things have gone and especially grateful from the support from all the volunteers that have helped this run so well.

We are sending text and letter reminders regarding the second vaccinations, and phoning patients as well. The bonus to the vaccination delivery process is that our patients are updating their mobile numbers with us – around about 75% of our patients have a mobile number on our system.

PPG members all wanted to give positive feedback about the vaccination centre and their experience using it.

Chris A'Court mentioned that community leaders have visited us – our local MP, the High Sheriff of Oxfordshire and our Town Mayor has visited us.

2. New surgery update

GT

George gave an update on how the new surgery building is doing. He shared two pictures of what the architects imagine the new building to look like, with the 'therapy garden' at the front of the building by the entrance. We hope to source local as possible materials to use when building it.

Sue asked if there would be a consideration to get volunteers to help maintain the garden – GT hadn't thought about that step just yet but happy to consider it.

Christ A'Court confirmed that shortly there will be a 'microsite' launched which will show the details of the planning application, and will invite the local community to an online public event at the end of May which will give everyone a chance to see the details of the planning application and we will be able to get views and comments about the project. Dr Quartley will be conducting a presentation at the start.

We will ask people to register an interest and get a virtual ticket from May 1st, with the meeting to be held on the 27th.

The timescale for the whole project is around about 2 years – by Spring 2023 we hope to be seeing patients at the site.

3. Resumption of face to face GP appointments

PPG request

Sue asked if we will ever start to push people to use the eConsult system exclusively, and stop people phoning us. GT confirmed that we are not going to push people to solely use the eConsult system, however we are contractually obliged to offer a eConsultation service. Patients are free to use it or not use it. We as a practice don't particularly like the system.

Dr Bate – we had a long wait for patients (5-6 weeks) with our previous system, and people couldn't wait that long so we ended up having to deal with them in an 'urgent' slot. During the pandemic, we couldn't see people face to face as lots of people had COVID, and we had to be sure that our staff and our patients were safe – using social distancing and reducing access to the building as much as possible. This is when we brought in the new system of calling patients and triaging them, which means lot of patients don't have to wait as long anymore.

Going forward, we currently can't go back to seeing patients face to face due to the vaccination centre – we aren't sure when we are getting a next batch of vaccines, which means we get them at short notice, and we have to move appointments around quickly – which would be far more difficult if the GPs had more booked appointments. We are also still trying to use social distancing as much as we can.

Previously, patients may well have been quite happy to wait for 5-6 weeks for an appointment, however now we are finding people don't want to wait, they want to be seen quickly.

Langford – we are still a couple of rooms short as we have had to reserve these rooms for COVID patients, which make capacity difficult (spaces to have face to face appointments are difficult to come by).

We still don't want people to walk into the building to make an appointment as we still are observing social distancing and safety of our patients and staff are important.

We do constantly tweak things to make things more accessible for our patients.

We do see some patients, if our GPs feel like they should be seen.

4. AOB

- George mentioned in the meeting that we are getting more complaints and some are in a quite aggressive and often abusive way to our team.

George said that we have a zero tolerance policy on abuse, and we, with any patients who act inappropriately, can start a process by which we ask a patient to sign a behavioural contract which outlines how they should behave while using our practice, what our responsibilities are, and also what the patient's responsibilities are. It may be an idea to look at some form of education for behaviour towards our practice – this may be a good project for the PPG to look at in the future.

- Martyn asked if we are able to count how many phone calls we 'miss' – those that go unanswered. When it is particularly busy it can be very difficult to get through to the practice on the phones.

We have the ability to get stats for calls once they have been answered but not before – we routinely track how long people waited for their call to be answered and these are usually fairly low.

- Martyn asked if we are going to be able to book appointments online any time soon? Dr Bate confirmed that currently we are not able to offer online appointments as our nurses and HCA have to go to the vaccine centre and having to rearrange appointments is difficult as it is, so to open up appointments online would not be viable at this time.

- Sue wanted to talk about recruiting PPG members. We have a very small PPG and it would be helpful to have more people, and the only way to get more people is to find ways to engage with them.

Sue is going to join a Healthwatch meeting to see how other PPGs recruit and what they are doing and will come back to the group.

George reiterated that we do appreciate our PPG support. Thank you.

Viv said that she thinks they are very lucky with their practice in that they can access a GP and wanted to say thank you. Sue agreed, talking to people who live in other parts of the country, they feel very lucky.

END OF MEETING.