

Minutes of the PPG Public Meeting

Date: 24th September 2025

Time: 6-7.30pm

Location: St. Peter's Health Centre, Brighton

Chair: Joanne Smith

Minutes: Phillip Faithfull

Attendees: Dr. Rebecca Jarvis, Julie Manthorpe, Carol Witney, Debbie Hill & 18 members of the public

Apologies: Judi Lynn, Robert Brown

The committee sent their best wishes to Judi and Robert for a swift recovery.

- 1. Welcome & Introductions** Joanne Smith welcomed everyone, including Michael, the new IT and Communications Lead, to the meeting.
- 2. What is the PPG? The Patient Participation Group (PPG)** is a group of volunteer patients who provide a patient perspective and act as a "critical friend" to the health centre. The PPG works with the health centre to improve services. **We do not handle personal medical issues or complaints**, as there are existing procedures for these matters. For more information, please visit the **Patient Participation Group - St Peter's Health Centre website**.
- 3. Updates from Previous Meeting (11 June 2025)** The group reviewed progress on actions from the last meeting:
 - **Medication Reviews:** The practice now invites specific patients to select their preferred GP for continuity of care.
 - **Longer Appointments:** All pre-booked GP appointments are now 15 minutes. Double appointments are available for patients with complex needs, allocated by a GP after triaging the request.
 - **Phone & General Communication:** All calls are recorded for quality. Staff communication training is ongoing, with specialist conflict resolution training for receptionists scheduled for October. The practice is also reviewing patient text messages for clarity, starting with those for diabetes blood tests. Training on neurodiversity has been arranged with Dr. Jessica Eccles and Bex Dew.
 - **Healthwatch:** The practice has raised its concerns about the abolition of Healthwatch with the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and is awaiting a reply.
 - **Shorter Waiting Times:** The triage system continues to ensure patients are allocated a clinically appropriate appointment slot.

3. St. Peter's Health Centre Updates – Dr Jarvis

- **New Staff:** The team has welcomed Pippa Mitchell (Advanced Nurse Practitioner), Michelle (Patient Care Advisor), Dr. Tessa Cournoyer (GP Trainee), Dr. Ioannis Hannadjas (FY2 Doctor), and Beth Phillips (Clinical Pharmacist).
- **New Opening Times:** Starting in November, the practice will remain open throughout lunchtime.
- **Vaccinations:** A flu and COVID-19 "Super Saturday" vaccination drive is scheduled for 4 October. The practice is also promoting Shingles, Pneumovax, and RSV vaccines for the winter season and is working to increase childhood immunisation rates. Chickenpox vaccines are now part of the national programme.
- **Cervical Smears:** A new research project is inviting women to try at-home tests to increase uptake.
- **Working with Other Services:** The practice highlighted the benefits of **Pharmacy First** for minor conditions and **Enhanced Access** for evening and weekend appointments. The **East Brighton Health Hub**, a free NHS drop-in service, is available at Robert Lodge every Friday from 10 am to 1 pm and offers access to a variety of healthcare professionals, including social prescribers and mental health support.
- The practice successfully contacted 1,500 people who had not responded to blood pressure text invitations, resulting in 62% now receiving treatment. A pilot course for people with persistent pain is underway, and a new Pain Café will be launched soon. The practice is also reviewing pathways for long-term conditions and will begin group consultations.
- **GP Survey Feedback:** A survey with 137 responses showed strong positives, with 92% of patients happy with the helpfulness of the reception team, understanding next steps, and the care and trust in their healthcare professionals. The main areas for improvement were contacting the practice by phone and through the website.

4. PPG Updates

Education & Community Projects:

- **World Menopause Day:** Joanne will host a special event for **World Menopause Day** at the health centre on **Saturday, 18 October 2025**. The day is dedicated to raising awareness about menopause and the support options available for improving health and well-being.
- Looking into how we can organise some **focused health awareness events** (e.g. diabetes, hypertension, wellbeing) at St Peter's similar to those at *The Hangleton and Knoll Project*
- Kirsty Walker – Director of Neighbourhood Projects at Trust for Developing Communities – is willing to support us to do some Health Awareness events – we just need to identify a couple of topics to focus on for these.
- Healthy Neighbourhood Fund (via TDC) and Fairness Fund are options that can offer some financial support for such events.

Fundraising:

- Phillip Faithfull announced the formation of a Fundraising Committee to raise money for vital new equipment. The wish list includes BP monitors (£15-£20), a couch (£800-£1,000), a MESI ABPI MD device (£2,500-£5,000), and an ear irrigator (£150-£200).

Discussion Groups & Actions to Improve Communication

The group split into smaller teams to provide feedback on improving communications.

Key Issues Discussed:

- **Missed Appointments:** Ideas were shared to improve the appointment cancellation process and make the self-check-in screen more visible.
- **SMS Messages:** The group discussed making messages clearer, reviewing their frequency, and ensuring invitations are understood.
- **NHS App:** Members considered how to better promote the app and make it more user-friendly.
- **Patient Feedback:** The group brainstormed ways to encourage more patients to provide feedback through surveys.

Following the discussion, the surgery will explore the following to improve communication and patient experience:

1. **Improving Appointment Cancellations** To make cancellations easier and reduce missed appointments, the surgery will explore the following:
 - **Look at current cancellation options by telephone.**
 - The practice will **review the cancellation options** on the surgery's website. The goal is to make these features more prominent and user-friendly, ensuring patients can easily find and use them.
 - **Text Message Reply Function:** The surgery will **explore a text message reply function** that allows patients to cancel an appointment by simply texting back "CANCEL." This would provide a quick and convenient option for patients who prefer to manage appointments via text.
2. **Enhancing Appointment Text Messages** To provide clearer and more useful information, the surgery will **review and update its automated messaging system**. Ideally to include key details requested by the PPG, such as:
 - **Healthcare Professional's Name:** The name of the specific healthcare professional (e.g., GP, Nurse, Pharmacist) the patient is scheduled to see.
 - **Appointment Type:** A clear description of the appointment type (e.g., face-to-face consultation, phone consultation, video call).
 - **Location/Contact Details:** A reminder of the location for face-to-face appointments or instructions on how to receive a phone or video call.

Any Other Business (AOB)

Closing Remarks: Joanne, Phillip, Dr. Jarvis, and the staff thanked everyone for their attendance. The group was pleased that several new members had signed up for the PPG.

Next Meeting: **Wednesday 25th February 2026 6 pm - 7:30 pm** at St. Peter's Health Centre. All are welcome.