

Minutes of On-Line Meeting 14 May 2020

Present

Shobhna Dave (SD)

Susan Sullivan (SS)

Sandra Reed (SR)

Dr S Maddipati GP (Dr M)

Pauline Coulthard (PC)

Linda McComie (LM)

David O'Donnell (DO'D)

Dr M Kohli GP (Dr K)

Daphne Tibbles (DT)

Elisabeth Clarke (EC)

Nigel Meadows PM (NM)

	Item	Actions
1.	The meeting was called in order to update PPG members on the current situation as well as changes being made to accommodate restrictions during the Covid 19 outbreak, together with forthcoming plans.	
2.	Consultation changes ongoing	
2.1	Dr M began the meeting by outlining how the practice will manage the proposed eventual easing back of restrictions.	
2.2	Telephone consultations are working well and the Hilltops messaging service is also in routine use, utilising existing software.	
2.3	The CCG has been encouraging surgeries to further make use of and develop digital services, and the Covid crisis has advanced this with growing emphasis on on-line/telephone/paperless communication.	
3.	PPG Responses	
3.1	DO'D expressed concern that many patients, whilst being users of technology, experience difficulties using it and are concerned as to how their means of contacting the surgery will be affected.	
3.2	NM offered reassurance that the primary means of entry to communication with the surgery remains via telephone, but added that this needs to change in light of the exponential increase of patient numbers.	
3.3	Those present noted the future use of the new medical centre hub on the Western Expansion. Dr M advised that, whilst the building is complete, it has not yet been allocated to any buyer. This being the case, families arriving in new homes in that area will continue to register with existing surgeries, including Hilltops.	
3.4	NM added that that the crisis has created the opportunity to show a new way of working, with requests via the website being encouraged.	
3.5	Having said this, NM reiterated the ongoing use of the telephone, explaining that those patients who aren't confident in the use of technology will still be able to contact the surgery by 'phone and speak to a receptionist who will complete on-line forms for them, passing information/requests on to the relevant clinician.	

3.6	It was acknowledged by those present that this will have the added benefit of easing pressure on front line receptionists.	
4.	Current Practice Workload	
4.1	In response to the question, Dr M replied that the practice workload is variable, with Mondays and Fridays being the busiest.	
4.2	Rooms 1 and 2 are being used for face-to-face consultations, while 'phone and video consultations are working well.	
4.3	Dr M added that patients should still use A&E facilities when symptoms arise that give cause for concern in order to avoid the development of serious conditions. A&E departments are working with 'hot' and 'cold' areas which are well separated in order to prevent the spread of any infection.	
4.4	Dr M advised that it is hoped routine referrals will be reopened but there will be a long wait. There is currently a two month backlog, which will be exacerbated by the need for staggered clinics and staggered waiting room places within them.	
5.	Proposed System Updates	
5.1	Alternative new systems are under consideration. One will incorporate triage.	
5.2	We currently have Footfall as the web site – this signposts patients to other solutions as well as delivering a tile based navigation system. Under consideration is an online triage system by Silicon Practice who currently supply Footfall. If successful, the two systems would be integrated The alternative online triage system is Klinik. If adopted, it would mean that the surgery would have to drop Footfall in favour this web site.	
5.3	Klinik is also being considered by other practices.	
5.6	NM advised that the Network (Watling Vale, Stony Stratford Medical Centre and Hilltops) would need a common system.	
5.7	Dr M said that the aim is to deal with most people on the same day, thereby avoiding the need for routine appointments.	
5.8	Dr K added that the practice needs to move forward and try to have updates up and running over the next couple of weeks.	
5.9	NM pointed out the dislocation caused by the covid outbreak and subsequent effects, and anticipates that, after lockdown, there will be a new way of working.	

<p>6</p> <p>6.1</p> <p>6.2</p> <p>6.3</p> <p>6.4</p> <p>6.5</p> <p>6.6</p> <p>6.7</p>	<p>Communication with Patients</p> <p>Dr K referred to the growing IT procedures and acknowledged the need to inform patients of their ongoing arrival and offer guidance in their use. In addition to the website and FaceBook, suggestions were invited from those present as to how these means of communication could be enhanced.</p> <p>DO'D reiterated his concerns with the increased use of IT and agreed with the need for communication as many patients will be unable or unwilling to use it.</p> <p>LM suggested the creation of standard wording that could be included in responses conveyed by email or letter to patients.</p> <p>SD added that emails, texts, letters and social media could all be utilised to incorporate various standard wordings, as appropriate, when contacting patients.</p> <p>Dr M referred to the weekly Network meetings, adding that Watling Vale and Stony Stratford MCs will be starting afresh with new IT systems.</p> <p>Dr M further advised that surgeries have to fund their IT systems, with some of this funding reimbursed by the CCG. These systems are supported by annual rolling contracts that are covered by the individual practices.</p> <p>The aim of Hilltops Partners is for all consultations to be On The Day, whilst bearing in mind the exponential increase in numbers.</p> <p>SR acknowledged that, with regard to difficulties experienced in the use of IT by some patients, this is an inevitable part of the transition period to a method of working that will better fit the current circumstances, both in terms of the covid crisis and, in future, for the growing numbers of patients together with the increasing services being made available to them.</p> <p>It was further acknowledged that the current website is considerably more user friendly than the previous website, being well laid out and simple to navigate whilst continuing to be backed up by telephone reception staff who are available to help patients who need their support in its use.</p>	
<p>7</p> <p>7.1</p>	<p>PPG Newsletter</p> <p>Following the welcome publication of Hilltops' Newsletter, Dr M asked if the PPG had plans for their next Newsletter. SR confirmed that information from today's meeting will be incorporated, as appropriate, into the Spring/Summer Newsletter which will shortly be prepared in draft form.</p>	
	<p>Following the success in holding today's meeting, it is hoped that further such meetings can take place while ongoing restrictions continue.</p> <p>The meeting ended with thanks to all those in attendance.</p>	