

THE TOLLGATE PRACTICE

PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 16th JULY 2025 AT 1.00 PM

ATTENDEES

Surgery/ NHS Staff: Nicky Young (NY)

Patient Members: Chairman -David Mills (DM) Secretary - Michael Vass (MV) Christopher Dowsett (CD) Pamela Hurcomb (PH) Karen Drake (KD) Peter Walker (PW) Rosemary James (RJ) Susan Spice (SS) Wayne Tearle (WT)

1. **Welcome.** DM welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. **Apologies.** MV reported that apologies had been received from Angela Young and Lorraine Feakes.
3. **Minutes of the last meeting** held on the 16th April 2025 were approved.
4. **Matters Arising.** There were no matters arising not covered by the agenda.
5. **Notifications.** MV informed the meeting of various items of correspondence he had received since the last meeting and offered to provide additional details at the end of the meeting to anyone wishing to undertake any further follow up.
 - a) **PPG Awareness Week (31st May/6th June).** During this week a campaign was run to raise the awareness of PPG's and recruit new members. To date we had received no additional expressions of interest and NY outlined some of the issues which held back recruitment. WT offered to arrange the promotion of PPG membership in the free Stanway news publication
 - b) **Urgent Care Strategy** Including the use of the Call 111 service
 - c) **Physician Associates.** It was noted that earlier this morning the government had changed the name to Physician Assistants. The meeting was unsure what level and depth of training was required before being qualified for this role - which apparently does not include any prescribing rights. NY stated the Abbeyfield Practice was not currently employing any Physician Assistants but this would be kept under review.
 - d) **Medicines Waste Campaign.** The need for patients to ensure that they were only in receipt of medicines currently prescribed as once they left the dispensary they could not be returned for use.
6. **Practice Staff Update**
 - a) **Doctors.** NY explained that two new doctors had been recruited - Dr Kriel would be starting in September and Dr Sivakumar in October. Ideally another (full time equivalent) doctor was needed which would be a great help in reducing the pressure currently being felt in the availability of appointments – recruitment was underway. KD raised the issue of continuity - outlining the problems that occur when seeing different doctors at each appointment. NY acknowledged the point but said that logistically it was not possible to achieve despite it being something that most patients would like. The discussion on doctors ended with WT explaining his interest

in pressurising the government for extra doctor funding in the local area; he also raised the issue of “abuse to staff” which everyone condemned in the strongest terms. NY outlined the steps that were taken to deal with repeat offenders.

- b) **Nursing Team.** No change since the last meeting but efforts were still being made to strengthen the team with an additional Advanced Nurse Practitioner and a Practice Nurse.
 - c) **Reception Staff.** The practice now had a full complement but they were all very new into their roles and although making good progress it takes some considerable time before they can be considered as fully trained. SS suggested this could be as long as two years and NY did not disagree.
 - d) **Admin Team.** NY had nothing specific to report beyond commenting that the total staff numbers employed by the Abbeyfield Practice had now reached ninety.
7. **Normal Appointment.** There was a lengthy discussion on the new appointment arrangement system. NY felt that the new system of submitting a written request for a normal appointment was working reasonably well. She also explained that patients could still phone the surgery and that the reception team would fill out a request for patients without internet access. NY admitted that, like all similar practices, there was not enough appointment slots available to satisfy the needs of all patients but that the triage arrangements did mean that urgent need was prioritised.
8. **Regular & Annual Appointments.** These continue to be handled differently. Annual health appointments are notified and normally undertaken on or around the birthday of the patient. Most regular appointments (generally for a prescription review) are also notified and efforts are being made to co-ordinate required blood tests etc. It was stressed that patients could help with this by contacting reception if they are aware of tests that had not been scheduled
9. **Surgery Website.** Recent steps to update the site were noted. CD still felt that outdated staffing information was sometimes an issue.
10. **Frequency of PPG Meetings.** PW suggested that it might be useful to hold more frequent meetings and differing views emerged. It was finally agreed that the next meeting date would stand as 5th November 2025 and that a schedule of bi-monthly meeting dates be prepared for 2026.
11. **AOB**
- a) **Garden** NY apologised for the state of the garden but indicated it was currently a subject of dispute between the previous practice partners and the landlord. Until this is sorted Abbeyfield could not become involved.
 - b) **Surgery Clearance** The meeting was informed of the work that had been required to clear the surgery of rubbish and old equipment
 - c) **Coordination** CD outlined the problems he had encountered which linked with comments made above under Item 8.

12 **Next Meeting.** Wednesday 5th November 2025

Meeting closed at 2.20 pm