

## Chairman's Report – March 2015

Since I took over the Chair we have spent a great deal of time trying to understand our current role and then looking to the future (with those who have attended our pre-meetings and those who have responded by email to some of our queries) to try to determine where we should go in the future.

Our overall aim remains one of being a 'critical friend' to the Practice. This means acting as *one* of the means of communication between patients and the Practice, conveying issues of general concern to the Practice Management and relaying back the answers to these questions and informing patients about significant changes in the way the Surgery is run.

From talking to patients it is clear that very few of them are aware of the existence of the PPG and know even less about its role or who its members are. We are therefore starting a campaign to raise awareness by placing articles in local magazines. Based on what we have found out from talking to patients and the Practice, from personal experience and from reading the NHS survey (and we hope soon the Care Quality Commission report) we have tried to identify issues where we think the PPG can be of help to the Practice and its patients. The amount of help will, of course, depend on the efforts and availability of our volunteer members but the following is a current list of topics where we feel we can be of help.

1. Collate and pass on issues of a general nature raised with us by patients and relay back the answers from the Practice. (We should make it clear that we are only concerned with issues which affect *all* patients - we do not deal with *individual* complaints which should be referred directly to the Practice.)
2. Write articles about the work of the Practice and how to use its services effectively and report on the results of surveys.
3. Act as guinea pigs for systems changes.
4. Examine the website content and other communications from the Practice to patients.

Before we could make a start on these topics we had to make some changes to the way we were run.

1. We abolished the difference between 'Virtual' and 'Full' members of the PPG. Everyone is now a 'Full' member and may attend both our pre- and full meetings (subject only to accommodation limits in the Surgery). Former 'Virtual' members who do not wish to take an active role in our work can still learn about the work of the PPG by going onto the Practice website and reading the minutes of meetings and reports and looking out for articles in local journals.
2. A task which has gone hand in hand with this initiative has been the drawing up of a list of members who still wish to take an active part in our work. This has been a surprisingly difficult task and I am grateful to Suzanne Sagers and Liz McFadyen for taking this on.
3. The establishment of 'pre-meetings' has been a way of determining what our agenda should be for our full meetings with the Practice and this should make our handling of these meetings more productive and effective.

I have to thank the Practice Management and PPG members for the time and effort they have all put into clarifying and pursuing our role.

Mr John Read (Chairman PPG)