

**Minutes of the PPG AGM of 8<sup>th</sup> August 2013**

Graham Richard (Chair), Dr Bruno Capone (GP Lonsdale Medical Centre), Visiting Speakers Kate Sergeant (Alzheimer's Society), Kathryn Gale & Janette Olley (Carers First)

Attended by PPG committee members: Moira Millar, Clare Macadie, Hazel Duncombe, Maggie Frazer and patients of Lonsdale Medical Centre

**The Chairman** welcomed all attendees and thanked various members of the committee for their efforts in arranging the meeting.

The minutes of the last meeting were passed.

The financial statement was circulated and was approved.

**PPG achievements so far**

The Practice has carried out the required survey and results were posted in the waiting room and on the surgery website.

New chairs have been purchased for the waiting room and treatment rooms.

A database has been put together so far for purposes of informing patients of PPG & surgery business. We have nearly 600 email addresses to date.

There was a suggestion that a blog should be initiated by the PPG – this will be considered for the future.

**Chairman's address**

The last year has not been easy for the PPG, but we have managed to undertake a patient survey, acquire new chairs for the waiting room, helped produce a newsletter for the practice and support the PPG Awareness Week in early June. We also participated in the practice's survey of attitudes and views regarding new premises. One difficulty has been creating a reasonably sized number of supporters. We are now hoping that this will be eased by the creation of an e-mail base of over 500 patients who can be contacted by Ann on the PPG's behalf (this being confidential information). If it works, this will make our job a lot easier. A few further short points need making. Most important to stress is that since last year the PPGs role and status seems to have shifted in the light of NHS re-organisation. In addition to providing a channel of communication and collaboration between patients and their GP practices they are now being asked to feed information upwards into the local NHS commissioning process itself. This has, incidentally, required local PPG chairs to attend numerous meetings over the last few months to brief us on the organisational and financial situation in West Kent. The theory is that we will be able to help the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) decide on its priorities when it comes to allocating funding. How this will pan out is frankly unclear but I feel we should do our best. With this end in mind we will shortly be producing the 2013 patient questionnaire, with some items designed to assist this.

What this shift means is that as well as being concerned with patients' relationships with their GP practice, PPGs should now provide a channel for patients' experiences of the NHS in general – including e.g. hospital visits, co-ordination of care services etc. We should not though fall into the trap of simply being another forum for complaints, but a route by which people can make their priorities, suggestions and constructive ideas known. If you have any suggestions regarding questions you would like included in the questionnaire please let us know as soon as possible. In the immediate future we will also be issuing another newsletter, edited by Moira Miller. Personally I am hoping that the idea of providing talks on health-related topics will start bearing fruit in the coming months. Our future agenda must, in the end, be largely driven by what the patients want us to do. Finally, it must be said that the PPG will only be able to fulfil its potential if the health professionals in the practice as well as the patients provide some input.

### **Address by Dr Bruno Capone**

Dr Capone thanked the PPG group for the contributions they had made over the last year and stressed the importance of communications between the group and doctors so that the doctors know what patients feel are priorities within the surgery.

Dr Capone sits on the CCG committee and explained the expectation of GP's with regards to medical support. Alzheimer's and Dementia are very topical and other such conditions such as mental health in the community are not necessarily getting the attention that they should and this may be a future topic for the group to organise.

Question and Answers session followed.

Speakers from the Alzheimer's Society and Carers First presented to the group followed by a Question and Answers session.

**The Chairman closed the meeting**