

Minutes of Red House Surgery PPG Meeting

Monday 9th February 2026

Extracted from meeting recording

Attendees: Sarah Setterfield, Jane Hanlon, Gordon and Angela Lovell, Bob and Vanda Gould, Bruce Battams, Anne Minihan, Mary Tait, Fay Read, Jacqui Coleman, Christine Cartwright, John Neale, Sandra Whitefoot. Dr Adam Staten

Apologies: Clive Robinson, Judith Westell, Jan Lloyd, Sheila Dale, Mark Pitman, Tania Pal, Steve Bates, Hilary King, Liz Mold

Joined remotely: Elspeth Woods, Shona Manson

Meeting Summary

The PPG discussed appointment triage changes under government pressure, the challenge of serving older patients without digital access, and exploring best practices from other surgeries. They welcomed a talk by the Alzheimer's Society on dementia support. They also reviewed Healthwatch's limited usefulness. PPG priorities were revisited, particularly patient wellbeing, and debated ways to engage more patients (newsletters, events, online groups).

The group agreed to form a working subgroup with a view to plan two bi-annual patient education events on health topics, flesh out details virtually, and then report back. In AOB, they thanked the outgoing treasurer and welcomed a new one and decided to provide financial updates quarterly.

Detailed Points

1. Appointment Triage Review

- Practice under pressure from government to implement "total triage" (phone/walk-in/online equity).
- Current system "bursting at the seams": long waits for calls, frustrated older patients without broadband.
- Plan: visit other local surgeries to see which triage systems work best to balance open access vs. barriers.
- Concern: harsh AI-driven tools can block patients; need tailored, less disruptive solution.
- Timeline: months away from any change; surgery keen to involve PPG input before decisions.

2. Impact on Older Patients

- High proportion of seniors unwilling/unable to use online forms.
- Receptionists often fill in forms for non-digital patients; this adds to staff burden.
- Social prescriber (Anna) helps with non-clinical needs (benefits, loneliness) but relies on referrals.
- Need to ensure "inclusion for older people" remains a priority amid digital shifts.

3. Healthwatch Update

- Recent Healthwatch meeting (meeting notes circulated to PPG meeting group) – the proposed concept of “neighbourhoods” was discussed at length as well as NHS plan, under discussion. PPGs seen to be part of the plan going forward in a role to represent the patient voice. Further meetings chaired by Healthwatch will explore further.

4. Alzheimer’s Society Presentation

- Dementia: umbrella term, progressive brain diseases; no cure yet; leading cause of death in UK.
- Types: Alzheimer’s (50–75%), vascular (20%), Lewy body (10–15%), frontotemporal (2%), mixed (10%), rare (5%).
- Symptoms beyond memory loss: misplacing items, getting lost, speech decline, perception issues, appetite changes.
- Risk factors: unmanaged health (diabetes, hearing loss), lifestyle (smoking, poor diet, inactivity).
- Services: one-to-one dementia advisors, carer support groups, peer groups, Singing for the Brain, online forum, support line.
- Access: referrals from memory clinics or GPs; programs available pre- and post-diagnosis; publications and symptom checklists provided.

5. PPG Wellbeing Focus

- Aims: improve patient wellbeing beyond clinical care; address loneliness, digital exclusion, mental health.
- Proposed actions:
 - Quarterly or bi-annual public “All Welcome” patient education events on health topics.
 - Potential topics by age/gender (e.g., ADHD/anxiety for youth; prostate/menopause/cancer for middle-aged; dementia/social prescription for older).
 - Format ideas: focused speaker panels (2–3 topics per event) or health fair stalls.
 - Use newsletter, Facebook page, texts to promote events.
- Challenges: GDPR restrictions on emailing patients; small current newsletter mailing list (~330).
- Next step: form virtual working subgroup (7 volunteers – Sarah, Ann, Mary, Jacqui, Elspeth, Shona & Gordon) to define event topics, formats, promotion plan; report back next meeting.

6. Newsletter & Communications

- Newsletter content praised as “fulsome.”
- GDPR rules block mass emailing PPG newsletters; need explicit patient consent or CRM function.
- Alternative: sign-up option via online form or reception for patients to opt in to PPG newsletter.
- Facebook page and text messaging remain key channels.

7. Treasurer & Finance

- Outgoing treasurer (Tania) stepping aside for the time being due to personal reasons; new temporary treasurer (Shona) appointed.
- Group agreed to receive financial updates quarterly (unless unusual spending/fundraising).
- Ongoing fundraising via bird box sales - next batch of 50 in progress.

8. AOB

- Christine Cartwright thanked the PPG for the gift voucher following her end of tenure on November 2025..
- Tablecloth replacement: discussed one large vs. two small covers for events. Subgroup to confirm sizes.

Conclusions

- Practice is evaluating new digital triage systems but will proceed cautiously to protect older patients' access.
- Alzheimer's Society offers robust dementia support pathways; PPG to distribute their materials and links via newsletter/website.
- PPG will focus on patient wellbeing by organising two public events yearly on age-specific health topics.
- A working subgroup of seven volunteers will finalise event details virtually and report next month.
- Newsletters will continue; group to explore opt-in process to expand mailing list within GDPR.
- Financial oversight shifts to quarterly updates with new treasurer.

➤ Date of Next Meeting 9th March 2026 – 6.00pm for 6.30pm start.

2026 Dates – 2 nd Monday of the month			
12 January 2026 9 February 2026 9 March 2026 13 April 2026 11 May 2026 8 June 2026	Speaker Speaker AGM	13 July 2026 10 August 2026 14 Sep 2026 12 October 2026 9 Nov 2026 14 Dec 2026	

Meeting closed at 20:11