

**DAVENPORT HOUSE PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP**

**Davenport House, Bowers Way, Harpenden, Herts AL5 4HX**

**ANNUAL REPORT TO MEMBERS**

**31 December 2017**

**Officers and members of the Management Committee elected at the Annual General Meeting on Monday 6 March, 2017**

**Officers:**

Chair:	Richard Munton (1)
Vice-Chair:	Sandra Lawes (2)
Honorary Secretary	Vacant (3)
Honorary Treasurer	Ken Holmes (4)

**Members of the Management Committee:**

Bob Fletcher (Website Manager)  
Helen Hartley (Membership Secretary, Newsletter distribution)  
John Harris (Editor, PPG Newsletter)  
Gillian Thornton (Journalist and Press Relations)  
Sheila Uppington (Education)

**Unelected Members of the Management Committee**

Dr Andrew Chafer, Senior Partner, and Shannon Davies, Business Practice Manager (ex officio). The Practice is entitled to nominate one other member but no nomination was received.

- (1) Under the revised Constitution, the term for the Chair is two years renewable for one further term. Richard Munton offers himself for re-election.
- (2) Sandra Lawes is stepping down at the AGM. The position is advertised in the formal notice for the AGM.
- (3) The position of Honorary Secretary was subsequently filled by Viv Vayssieres for a short period. Joan Shopper has since taken over and requires election at the AGM.
- (4) During the last year Ken Holmes became ill and was forced to resign. Richard Sewell then took over and requires election at the AGM.

All members of the Management Committee are available for re-election.

## **MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT: Headlines**

2017 has been a year of major changes for the National Health Service, the Practice and the Management Committee.

Dealing first with the Management Committee, it is with great sadness we report the death of Ken Holmes, our Honorary Treasurer for the last five years. The PPG owes him a considerable debt for his hard work, efficient management of its funds and measured advice on its affairs. He will be missed. The Committee will also miss the enthusiasm and initiative of its Vice-Chair, Sandra Lawes, who is stepping down at the AGM for health reasons. The Committee thanks her for her extensive engagement in, and commitment to, all its work and wishes her a speedy recovery.

The Practice, too, has had several staff changes combined with growing pressure on everyone's time. Despite these the Committee is very grateful for all the support it has received, in particular the contribution of articles to the Newsletter, Dr Chan's participation in the Editorial Committee, assistance in finding speakers for the education meetings, and Shannon Davies' active participation in linking the Committee with the Practice.

As noted in last year's report, maintaining membership is a continuing struggle. The Committee and the Practice engaged in a number of initiatives this year to increase numbers but with very limited success. This failure is one reason for beginning a review of how the PPG operates. The review has been further stimulated by the NHS requirement since 2016 that all Practices are required to have a PPG. In principle, all PPGs should be open to all patients as a matter of right. Membership should not be a matter of opting in, with or without payment of a subscription. This raises major questions for us, including how best to communicate with all patients and how to replace the subscription income we currently received. The Committee, supported by the Practice, is still early in its deliberations and changes will not be introduced before the 2019 AGM. Further information will be provided at the 2018 AGM and the membership will be consulted on proposed changes during the coming year.

As signalled at the 2017 AGM, the Committee decided to provide additional financial support to the surgery this year from its accumulated reserves. It has funded the new Information Booklet, the staff notice board at the entrance to the surgery, and, in consultation with the doctors, an ECG machine, a hyfrecator to assist with minor operations and a portable ultra sound, a total spending in the order of £7,000. We hope all patients will benefit from these investments.

Finally, the Practice was inspected by the Care Quality Commission towards the end of 2016 and it was not possible to report the outcome in last year's Annual Report. The Practice did very well being recorded as 'good' in all five separate categories of assessment.

## **EDUCATION; Sheila Uppington**

In response to members' suggestions for topics, four meetings were held at Rothamsted all of which were pleasingly well-attended. At the AGM in March, Dr Thenuwara spoke on 'Antibiotics and their Prescribing' and Dr Sandler on 'The Finances of the NHS'. In May, the

planned focus was on 'Problems of Digestion'. Unfortunately the speaker cancelled at the last moment but Vicki Rodger from the Samaritans stepped in and gave us a real insight into their work.

Our July meeting entitled 'Common Mental Health Issues in the Elderly' was presented by Dr Jha. Helen Beherens then gave a very helpful talk on coping with dementia, especially at home. The final meeting in October led by Dr Cairn on 'Breathing Problems' covered common problems of respiration and how to recognise them.

An account of each meeting can be found in the Newsletter. As always our sincere thanks go to our speakers who volunteer their time and expertise free of charge. We hope you will support our education meetings in 2018 – 14 May on Digestion, 2 July on Feet, and October 8 on Nose and Throat, all at 8.00pm at the Fowden Centre, Rothamsted.

#### **WEBSITE: Bob Fletcher**

The manager continually updates the website on a regular basis. On-line (KiT) members receive email reminders of coming events and changes to the surgery. If you have not provided your email address and wish to receive email updates please access the website and follow the links to the Home Page. Select either [www.patientgroup.org.uk](http://www.patientgroup.org.uk) or [www.davenporthouseppg.org.uk](http://www.davenporthouseppg.org.uk)

#### **NEWSLETTER: John Harris**

Assembling the Newsletter was challenging during 2017 due to the increasing pressure on our GPs who provide the majority of medical articles. The editorial panel meets quarterly to plan each edition and this year included Dr Panteleimon Chan representing the Practice.

John Harris continued to edit and design the Newsletter producing a PDF for submission to the printers electronically. No additional design input was used this year which kept costs to a minimum. The meeting posters are produced in the same way at greatly reduced cost. Gillian Thornton conducts all the interviews with the GPs and staff, and is a member of the Editorial Panel. Each Newsletter continues to be proof read by Rosemary Horne for which we are very grateful.

The editor would like to thank all the doctors and the Practice Business Manager for the delivery of articles throughout the year without which there would be no Newsletter. In addition, there is a large team of voluntary deliverers who ensure you receive each edition. We are greatly indebted to them. If you have any comments or suggestions for the Newsletter please contact the editor on email at [newsletter@patientsgroup.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@patientsgroup.org.uk)

#### **VICE-CHAIR'S REPORT: Sandra Lawes**

In addition to deputising for the Chair, my two key responsibilities are managing the 'Keep in Touch' programme and assisting the Surgery with communication initiatives.

'Keep in Touch' is a free data base run by the Patient Group that was launched to improve communication about important Practice issues with patients who are not members of the PPG. Despite herculean efforts by the Committee and several stalwart volunteers, take up

has been disappointingly low. There are 1,691 patients on the database and none have converted to full membership of the PPG.

The PPG has played a major role in two communication projects. The first was a new Patient Information Booklet, the project managed, designed and funded by the PPG with the content provided by Shannon Davies, the Practice Business Manager. Packed with information about the Practice, the booklet has been praised as smart, modern and easy to use. The second addressed a concern raised by patients who were confused by rapid changes among surgery staff. The solution was for a display board to be put in the surgery entrance showing the photographs and names of everyone at the Practice.

#### **EXTERNAL: Richard Munton**

Good links are maintained with the national organisation for PPGs (NAPP), with the St Albans and Harpenden Patient Group (SAPG) and with Herts Valleys CCG. Each organisation produces extensive material and we put the most important articles on the PPG website and prepare synopses of others to put in the Newsletter.

#### **MEMBERSHIP: Helen Hartley**

Membership numbers have improved very marginally this year but remain at about 750. If you have friends or family who would like to join please phone Helen on **01582 767462** or collect a membership form from the Reception Desk in the surgery, or visit the website (see above) to download a form. If any member changes address would they please inform the surgery and Helen.

#### **TREASURER'S REPORT 2017: Richard Sewell**

Total income for 2017 at circa £7,625 was virtually unchanged from 2016. An unexplained deposit of £153 was made again this year from the same source as previously. The deposit has been carried forward and returned on 2 January 2018. Total expenditure amounted to £10,995 of which £5,920 was spent on equipment for the surgery, including the purchase of a second screen in the Ground Floor Waiting Room as agreed last year. In addition, £752 was expended on a new Patient Information Booklet and £390 on a new Staff Notice Board in the entrance to the surgery. So a total amount of £7,062 has been spent for the benefit of patients and the surgery.

After allowing for these purchases, the ongoing expenditure costs involved in producing the Newsletter, funding the education meetings and running the PPG have continued to be kept low this past Year at around £3,933. The overall financial position continues to be sound with a current balance of £10,500 after allowing for the considerable outlay in surgery equipment and other purchases. These used up the excess income/expenditure balance brought forward and drew upon the accumulated reserves. In broad terms the current position is now similar to that at the start of 2016.

Finally, thanks are once again due to Ian Farnsworth who kindly audited the accounts.