**HIGHLANDS SURGERY Patient Participation Group**

**Minutes of a meeting held on 29th July 2025**

**PRESENT** Dr A Shaw, Katie Baker (Practice. Manager) Pat Holden (Chair), SB KB SC VC CH GH PHa AJ VJ MN VO MP AR ARw LSa LS MWd

**APOLOGIES** EM JJS JS JB JdT ML-B PS RL-B SW MW

**MINUTES** of the meeting were read and agreed by all. There were no matters arising.

A question was asked:

What can **ANIMA** do?

**Dr Shaw** explained Anima is an on-line triaging platform, working similarly to eConsult, but is a shorter tool. It helps practices manage the high volume of requests they receive. Anima gathers information from patients through a series of questions and if there are no red flags, may direct them to which healthcare professional it would be best to see. It can send a link to a patient’s phone, and also provide them with a copy of the information put on Anima. There is a link to Anima on Highlands’ website and reception staff will also direct patients to Anima when they phone in.

**KB** explained the Practice was still only trialling Anima and, although Anima’s team and knowledge were good, she felt that back of house had not found it so user friendly due, in her view, to insufficient management in designing the platform.

Vicki said she had been to a meeting recently regarding Anima and found them very good at listening to feedback, and was sure that if adaptations could be made they would be very willing to do that. They are however a fairly new service so the practice was still looking at Anima’s usefulness.

**CLINIC ROOMS**

**KB** said they were not getting funding for the new clinic rooms, but had managed to acquire funding for IT. The clinic rooms were now signed off and it was hoped they would be up and running by the beginning of September. The smaller of the two might be used for IT purposes.

**STAFF INFORMATION**

In August it will be trainee doctors’ change over time. Dr Khan and Dr Rashid will be remaining. Two new trainees would be arriving, Dr Baggan and Dr Nadim.

 Dr Serasinghe would be joining the practice as a Salaried GP.

It was asked whether photos of staff could be displayed in the reception area. **KB** explained that not all doctors and nurses were willing to have their photo put up and it would not work with just a few photos. It was also felt it was easier not to have names on doctors’ doors as these would constantly need changing. **Dr Shaw** said he and other doctors actually liked to come out of their rooms to call the patient’s name and take them in, as it was a more personal approach.

**DNA**s

**KB** informed us that there had been **76 -** fewer than last month’s figures.
There had been: **19** GP’s, alarmingly **31** Nurse’s, **10** HCA’s **3** Nurse Practitioner’s, **11** Pharmacist’s and **2** MSK missed appointments.
**KB** said it had been necessary to remove another patient from the practice, after 3 DNAs with accompanying letters and phone calls. She said the practice were looking at possible causes for DNAs, such as age range, to see if there was a generational trend for example. She said some people were very apologetic when rung after a missed appointment, admitting it had been a complete oversight on their part. She said that, when a person has received three letters and not responded, they should know what the consequence will be.

**FLU CLINICS**

**KB** said launch date for the flu vaccinations was 1st Oct. She said the practice had decided to go back to Saturday clinics this year, first clinic being **Oct 4th**. It will be possible to get flu and Covid vaccinations on the same day, putting 1 vaccine in each arm. It will be possible to book appointments on-line. Izzy will be in charge of flu clinics this year. The ICB will be checking Clinic plans so will know the Covid take-up. Flu clinics will be at the **Branch Site** this year. At present the practice have no idea what vaccine will be sent.
As before, the practice would appreciate the help of PPG volunteers to staff these clinics, freeing up surgery staff for other jobs. Dates will be sent to **PH** who will send out to see who is available.
It was asked why pharmacies started vaccinations in September. **KB** said that technically they can’t give them before 2nd October, but they often do not adhere to the rules.
 **FACEBOOK PAGE**

Vicki has recently set up a Facebook page for the surgery. The idea is mainly for the surgery to post out; Izzy will be able to put flu clinic dates on there, for example. There will also be information of events in the local area, not attached to the surgery but relevant to patients. Patients will not be able to post, but can comment on items posted. Since its recent set-up it has been viewed by over 1000 people.

**PATIENT SURVEY**

The 2025 GP Patient Survey, which randomly selects patients to record their views & then collates answers, rated Highlands Surgery in joint first place at the top of all Southend surgeries, with 91% of patients saying the surgery was good. **Dr Shaw** said they were very pleased with the result, PPG members present congratulated all at the surgery for doing so well.

**PSA TESTS**

**PH** said that, as this had been raised in the press recently, she asked **Dr Shaw** for some guidance. He said that because PSA (prostate specific antigen) blood tests have many false positives and negatives, he doesn’t recommend men should have one just on request. The follow-up to a positive result could be invasive, which could cause infection. He would always wish to talk with a patient first, check their symptoms, possibly do a physical examination and see if a test is appropriate; then counsel them if a test is indicated.

**CQC UPDATE**

It was queried if was there any update.

**Dr Shaw** said they had received a 16 page draft report and, although there were still a few queries, the report graded Highlands as OUTSTANDING. There were 5 domains covered of which 3 were outstanding, one of which was management, 2 were very good. This put the practice in the top 5% in the country.
**Dr Shaw** said Highlands were the first practice in Essex & Greater London to achieve outstanding in the last 5 years, since 2020. There has never before been a practice in the Southend area rated as Outstanding. This was the first time Highlands had ever achieved outstanding There will be an ‘Outstanding’ banner put up outside, and The Evening Echo will be contacted. The practice will contact MP David Burton-Sampson, who said he was willing to make mention of it in the Commons.
The PPG extended heartfelt congratulations to all at the surgery and to **KB** for outstanding management; saying it was a well- deserved result. **Dr Shaw** said all surgeries have their problems and it’s impossible to please everyone, but any patient is free to join another practice, if unhappy, “but of course it won’t be an Outstanding one”.

**REGISTERED PATIENTS**

The surgery currently has 14,737 patients. It was asked if there was a capacity figure. **Dr Shaw** said this was dependent on available clinic rooms, and considerations like parking. In response to a question of would there be sufficient staff if patient numbers were increased, it was explained that the surgery was paid per capita, so more patients meant more money to employ more staff.

**WEBSITE**

**KB** said they would be changing the website in the not too distant future, when it was out of license. The current provider was 3 times more expensive than other companies so budget-wise it would certainly help. She said the surgery was always looking to save money, and a saving like that can provide money for other digital tools.

**AOB**

A patient mentioned they’d had difficulty on the NHS App finding any record of an appointment**. KB said** that some parts of the hospital use it well where others do not.

A question was asked what happened to a person’s medical records when they passed away. **KB** explained there are no paper records anymore and, on passing, a patient’s records would be retained for a period of time, then they would normally be passed on to be stored by an NHS service. There were certain circumstances where specific individuals would be able to see these.

The **next meeting** is to be held at **St Margaret’s Church Hall, Meeting Room 2**
(entrance opposite the Church – first door on the right)

Lime Avenue, Leigh-on-Sea SS9 3PA
on **Tuesday 2nd September 2025** at **12 noon**

New members are welcome – just come along and join in.