



- All this effort has resulted in the recognition by both the Kent Care Commissioning Group and the NHS, that Staplehurst is the best-run hub in the Weald – linking with Marden, Cranbrook (two practices), Hawkhurst, Lamberhurst, and Yalding. This significant organisational change was initiated as recently as April, and it was up and running in July – a real achievement.
- The provider of the Centre’s website has been changed for the better – still the same web address.

#### **Friends News – Robin Oakley:**

- Further to his announcement at the last Friends’ AGM – Robin reminded us that he would be standing down as chairman at the end of this year, he has produced a schedule of the tasks involved – to illustrate that, if his successor(s) preferred, could be split between four separate individuals.
- Donations from David Wilson Homes has enabled the Friends to purchase a mains-powered ‘Otoscope’ – used for ear examinations.
- It is essential that the next four Newsletters are produced – because they have already been sponsored by the village’s Community Event Group. The next latter will be Letter No. 50 – congratulations – it had better happen !
- As the houses on the new estates are becoming occupied, Robin is delivering Health Centre leaflets to inform the new residents of the Health Centre’s whereabouts – he is noting which addresses he has delivered to, and blocking them off on a map.
- The application to the Charity Commission renewed membership has been made.
- The application for a lottery licence (cost £20) has been made in readiness for the Christmas Draw.
- The two recent Health Awareness talks arranged by Robin had been of real interest.

**Parish 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Event:** A table has been booked (to be shared with the Emergency Help Team) to promote interest and awareness in the PPG. The event will be held in the Village Centre (now the Community Centre) at between 10.00am and 16.00pm on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> October. While Andrew will be manning the table throughout, any support in promoting the PPG would be welcomed. Health Centre leaflets will be available, along with flyers which vulnerable residents can register with the electricity and water companies for immediate attention during emergencies.

**Any Other Business:** There were no AOB items, and the meeting closed at about 8.15pm

**Date of Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> January at 7.15pm in the Health Centre.

## **Staplehurst Patients Participation Group**

### **Chairman’s Report 2018-19**

Four meetings were held, on 19<sup>th</sup> Jan (attendance: 19), 10<sup>th</sup> April (17), 18 July (20), and this evening, 9<sup>th</sup> October.

**In January** Elaine reported the Saturday 9am-1pm opening of the Health Centre to be proving successful, as well as the late evening surgeries, open until 8pm, within the Weald Practices (Marden

and Cranbrook). The Saturday opening of the Centre part of the new strategy – when the Centre is manned by staff from other practices.

There was an availability issue with the Flu Vaccinations which, fortunately has not been repeated this year.

The Friends purchased a new ECG digital machine and Ankle Brachial Pressure Index Screening equipment has been purchased at a cost of £3861, raised by the Robin Oakley's Friends of the Health Centre.

**In April** I reported on a meeting of the West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group, PPGChairs, held at the Hadlow Manor Hotel on 12<sup>th</sup> March – at which it was made clear that some small practices were at risk of closure (leading to mergers), while larger practices (with 16,000-21,000 patients) seemed safe. This illustrated the dangers of sudden local population increases, with which some small practices are not able to cope – because their performance drops below the standards required by the NHS. Staplehurst seems safe at present.

The Chairman indicated that there was a general shift (for economic reasons) to provide patients with 'multiple patient needs' to have their own 'personal' clinician. Asked if our Centre was addressing this shift in approach, Elaine answered that the possibility of introducing 'polypharmacy' and 'elderly care physicians'.

The Health Centre was still understaffed but it was planned to recruit a 'Sexual Health Specialist Nurse' to prevent any reduction in the service provided by the Centre.

The Friends had conducted a survey (a detailed questionnaire) into patients' reaction to the service they had received – completed by 231 patients. My understanding is that the results were extremely favourable.

**On 18<sup>th</sup> June** I gave a talk to the Horticultural Society about the PPG in an attempt to raise our profile in the village

**In July** Elaine reported that **the practice was now 'out of special measures'**. This was the big news of the year, and a great relief to everyone who works here.

Elaine reported serious abuse from patients on staff, even a doctor was a recipient of really unpleasant comments. This has led to low staff moral and resignations.

Under a new NHS 'contract', from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 medical practices have to become part of a 'Primary Care Network', for which they will receive additional funding. To justify this extra funding they have to provide extra hours and 'improved access'. The link to the Rubin Clinic at Maidstone, for family planning, sexual health and counselling is another part of this strategy.

Craig Brown (Strategic Business Development Manager for the Weald Primary Care Network) came to provide some introduction to the concept of Primary Care Networks, to add to the detail provided by Elaine in April:

- Primary care networks were introduced into the English NHS as part of the NHS Long Term Plan in 2018, and the 2019 GP contract required practices to join networks. Each network is to have between 30,000 and 50,000 patients. The stated aim is to create local fully-integrated community-based health services
- This new organisation replaces the earlier patient-choice arrangements

- The practices will receive additional funding to enable them to provide a wider range of specialised services, such as clinical pharmacists & social prescribing link workers, and subsequently for physiotherapists, physician associates and paramedics.
- The reason for the change is the age profile of the existing staff: one third will retire in the next five years. Re-organisation is a necessity.
- The Weald Primary Care Network comprises eleven practices, serving (at the last count) 50,000 patients. Clearly the upper preferred range limit of 50,000 will soon be reached. What will happen then? How robust is the new 'system'?
- The answer: Health 'Eco' Systems. The key will be to engage with the commissioning groups and procurement of materials – a new generation of procurement-purchasing specialists is being recruited.
- On-going training will be provided through an 'education network'; but there seems to be an issue regarding who is to fund this. In the debate, KCC was said to be 'top slicing', implying that KCC charges the practices for training.