

Denton Surgery Patient Group



Minutes

Denton Surgery Patient Group

Held on Wednesday 5th March 2025

In Denton Village Hall

Present: Nicola, Jane, Tony, Herbert*, Gillian, Lyn, Sue, Leah, Kev

- 1) Apologies received from: Reg, David, Tim and notification of late arrival from Herbert.
- 2) Minutes of our meeting 29th January 2025

These were accepted. The summary of minutes is thought to be a good idea and Jane is to continue to produce them. Copies of both full minutes and summary to go to Jules (at the surgery) for circulation. Copies to be placed on PC noticeboards in villages where available and copies sent to Parish Councils. Notification of the AGM date also to be circulate/posted to these locations.

- 3) Matters arising – Progress on the action points of the minutes of the 29th January meeting

Action points:

- **Kevin** to contact the hospital PALS re benefit of volunteer patient transport scheme – [Update: 6th March now in contact with the Communications and Engagement Manager Zoe Needham about this]
- **Nicola** to provide jpeg of village surgery for use by the DSPG in surgery related correspondence [Outstanding – completed 12 March]
- **Kevin** to look for a suitable speaker on the topic of menopause for the Patients' Voice/AGM meeting in May. [Speaker Helen Adula now booked. See attached biography. I have suggested and Helen has agreed to the following title of her talk:

'The menopause - a lived experience. The challenges, advice and support available.'

- **Nicola** to find a speaker on weight loss for the above [Outstanding]
- **Nicola and Kevin** to arrange time to record a podcast on the role of the PCN physiotherapist [Outstanding]
- **Lyn** to talk with Pat Terry regarding the issue of blister pack recycling (**NB** on the agenda)
- Nicola reported that the Cycle “Parking” now in place and a sign will be ordered for it warning public that bicycles are left at their own risk.



4) Correspondence

- Blister Pack recycling, Lyn and Kevin to present their findings.

Both Lyn and Kevin have met with Pat and established that the issue of recycling blister packs is one that is expensive and has overwhelmed most attempts to recycle through community drop off points. Copies of correspondence and research attached. It was decided to help by educating our patients about the issue and raise awareness through social media and in our general conversations with the public. [**Action:** Kevin to work with Pat Terry to promote issues]

5) Practice Manager Surgery update (Nicola)

PCN changes still underway with some negotiating over personnel and roles taking place. A new role created for an apprentice administrator has been created. The surgery is recruiting a full-time dispenser. Covid boosters will begin around 1st of May.

6) Patients' Voice: Notified issues from patients

- What should patients do about disposing of unused and unopened medication.

Although it is wasteful, unused and even unopened medication cannot be recycled and has to be destroyed. This is for patient safety as there are risks over a broken supply chain, meaning that the medication could have been tampered with or stored incorrectly before being received by

the patient. Where possible patients can help by only requesting what they need and if possible, check before the prescription before leaving the dispensary counter. A patient had raised the issue the of the pharmacy not currently taking back unused medicines although they had been asked to return them. Nicola reported that unfortunately, the pharmacy currently has no space to take medicine returns. The surgery has a limit of what they can store before it is collected for disposal and there is a cost for this service to the surgery.

- Events at NGH.

Events at NGH have caused some patients a degree of concern. Access to A&E is not easy and parking in the area is severely restricted. In some cases patients felt that consultants were not being properly briefed or possessing the appropriate knowledge or experience needed to treat them effectively. Leah informed the group about a dedicated Facebook page 'University Hospitals of Northamptonshire Complaints and Discussion Group' to which people report their experiences at NHG. [Link: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1664312597695829/>]

- Medical Review

Does a medical review have to include a GP appointment? Dependent on the patient condition and data, blood tests etc, it may be appropriate to confirm a re-issue of the prescription and not involve a GP appointment. A patient can always ask to see a GP to discuss treatment and medication.

7) Communications review. Mini update, good news stories, contacts.

*Herbert arrived and Tony left 2:07

The Mini update to continue and will be circulated for use as discussed earlier. The sharing of good news stories and contacts is encouraged.

8) AGM planned for May. Details are to be finalised including talks, venue, time, expenses and guests

Talks on the topics of the menopause and weight loss support medication are confirmed. Men's health was also considered. The time for talks should be 20 minutes maximum for each presenter, including questions , possibly less if we have 3 talks. Nicola has invited the practice staff and two GPs will be attending. Members agreed to encourage friends and neighbours to attend.

Refreshments will be in the form of biscuits and tea/coffee and possibly a soft drink. These will be available on arrival. A donation to a charity for those speaking was agreed. No amount for the donation was discussed.

9) Volunteer Patient Transport update.

David and Sue are sharing the co-ordinator role on a two monthly rotation. David has fallen and hurt his ribs badly and is out of action for at least 8 weeks. Our best wishes are with David for a speedy recovery. We have two new volunteer drivers through their DBS checks and now driving for us and a third at the DBS check stage.

10) Tuesday Wellbeing initiative update and developments.

Jane Robinson is now helping organise events and activities at the Tuesday Well-being meetings. Jane has experience with Age UK and has already begun to work on a programme for those attending the bi-weekly sessions.

11) Treasurers report (Lyn)

The drivers' fund is made up of donations to the drivers by the patients to the well being meetings who they take at their own expense. This fund will be used to support the drivers.

Lynn alerted everyone to the typo on the accounts for February and this has now been amended.

12)

Time and date of our next meeting

April 9th to be booked at Denton Village Hall

Attached documents and information

Speaker Bio

Helen Aluko

I have been a menopause advocate in the Civil Service for the past 6 years and run presentations for menopause awareness.

I reached out to the wellness hub at the Abbey back in Aug 2023 and I then founded The Menopause Cafe at Delapre Abbey. When we first started the menopause cafe we only had a few attendees but it has grown and I now have a WhatsApp group of around 45!

Blister Pack

The scale of the problem is immense. Pat's scheme alone with limited people knowing about and using it would require something like a large box (containing 7500 packets) every month at £200 per month.

Those supermarkets and pharmacies that had schemes were overwhelmed and most have stopped or are restricting the service. Boots have started a scheme but only accessible by using an app and is for personal use only and looks to have a limit of 5 items at a time. Our nearest is Riverside – so a drive to only as this is not serviced on any bus route.

The hospital does not operate a scheme for recycling and will not accept those from the public.

Blister packs are considered medical waste and are incinerated.

West Northants position is to black bin them and send to landfill.

All dry mixed recycling is taken to the Sherbourne Material Recycling Facility (MRF) at Coventry.

Blister packs are not recycled.

North Northants have through Cllr Lloyd Bunday set up a trial scheme in Kettering working with Mill Rd Pharmacy which they fund. This started in August 2024. I have spoken to Cllr Bunday and found this had to stop due to its success! It cost too much to maintain (around £10k a year working with only one pharmacy). Lloyd is contacting blister pack manufacturer in Corby to see if the current design is the only option and if things can be done to help recycling.

Kevin has posted on the NAPP forum a question about what happens in other areas of the country and has had little response. This issue is slipping under the radar of most patients and groups.

There is little political will to address the issue and no pressure on suppliers to change. Kevin has written to and talked with our Councillor, Stephen Clark who is aware of the issue. The charity WRAP, a global environmental action NGO, is referred to in the online article by SCI in which they also suggest there are some 'Green shoots' in the issue of blister packaging. I have written to WRAP to ask what their position is in relation to the recycling of medical blister packs. RECOUP is another charity that is pushing for responsible packaging and plastic recycling. Both WRAP and RECOUP have a lot of information on their sites that we are most likely unaware of.

[<https://www.soci.org/chemistry-and-industry/cni-data/2021/11/blistering-waste>

<https://www.recoup.org/about-us/>

<https://www.wrap.ngo/about-us>

Accessed: 10 March 2025]

Questions asked of Sherbourne MRF via e-mail 10 March 2025

I am secretary of the Denton Surgery Patients' Group and looking into the recycling of blister packs. We know that they are considered by West Northants as an item that cannot be recycled but we have found out that some patients are putting them in the recycling bin. I am informed that all dry mixed recycling is sent to your facility for sorting and recycling, but I would like to know what you then do if blister packs are found in amongst the waste.

I am informed by them that 'Any non-recyclable items are taken to a facility to be used for energy production (instead of using coal) in making cement and aggregate for construction purposes such as housing.'