**Fern House Surgery Patient Participation Group**

**Meeting on 19th May 2019**

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| **The minutes have been created as a newsletter so that all patients can share this information and access it via the Fern House website**  **If you would like to attend a meeting and /or become a member of the PPG please ask at reception.** |
| The meeting was chaired by Marian and staff attending were Lorraine, Sarah and Sandie plus Dr Hopcroft, GP and patients who attended included Margaret, Ruth, John, Donna, Bridget. |

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| **Clinical Commissioning Group news**  The clinical commissioning group is now producing paper versions of their online newsletter **‘Engage’**. The March 19 edition was available at the Fern PPG meeting.  Key points include the Primary Care Foundations Programme which aims to support practices by increasing the number of health professionals working with doctors. Advanced Nurse Practitioners and Nurse Prescribers will be trained by Anglia Ruskin University which has long standing programmes. The work of a Community Pharmacist is highlighted as an example.  Mental Health therapy support in Mid Essex is also featured in an item on ‘Health in Mind’ and ‘Silvercloud’. | **PPG Coffee Morning and Fund Raiser**  We held our second coffee morning in April and this time raised funds for Diabetes UK. We provided cakes (sugar free in some cases) and raffle prizes. Thanks to Sandie from Fern for setting up the table and balloons and to John and Margaret for providing raffle prizes and cakes and helping out at the event.  Patients who were diabetic and attended felt there was more they needed to learn about their own condition. A talk from a specialist nurse at the Friends of BCH meeting was reported to be very well received and could be repeated.  Next time - probably before our November PPG – **we would like more help from PPG members** if you can spare the time. We will relocate the table to enable a better footfall. We also need **suggestions** about a suitable charity we could support. |
| **PPG membership** is still disappointingly low and we hope we can as a group encourage others to join. We have outdated information on the Fern website and the admin team is trying to rectify this. It would be very helpful if all the old information was deleted and minutes the form of a **newsletter** from the most recent meetings were placed there instead.  Along with news of the next coffee mornings when there is an opportunity to talk to PPG members, it would be helpful if the joining instructions were available online also. | |

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| **Braintree Community Transport**  Did you know that this is an alternative to taxis or buses and is relatively cheap to use if you need transport to and from hospital or other appointments? Find out if you are eligible to use it. Call 01376 557883 or email [community.transport@braintree.gov.uk](mailto:community.transport@braintree.gov.uk)  Volunteer drivers are wanted so contact the team on the above number if you are interested. | **Social Prescribing**  If you’ve heard of Live Well and Connect Well then you’ll know that there have been a number of initiatives locally to improve health and well - being. The NHS is taking this further and employing link workers to develop ways to ensure that the isolated and lonely are helped to find new ways of getting out to social groups or being befriended so that their lives are improved. Doctors will be able to get help to connect patients with social contacts and activities to improve health. |
| **Patients**  The PA system at Fern still gives cause for concern. The lack of electronic notice boards as an alternative to spoken announcements was noted and the practice urged to reconsider this. Meanwhile could GPs please stick to the ‘Say it Twice’ system so that patients can hear when they are called and do not have to go to reception to query garbled announcements.  The practice is also asked to provide a few chairs with arms for those disabled patients who struggle with the current chairs in the waiting areas and consulting rooms. A raised toilet seat in the patient toilet would also be much appreciated. | **Practice**  The extended / out of hours service is now available at St Peter’s hospital and Douglas Grove. This is an important development and offers increased numbers of appointments to cover evenings and weekends.  Online services are increasing the number of appointments bookable in line with local policy.  There is a weekly release of online appointments for a month in advance. If you need help with IT skills to use online services there are courses locally at the Witham library.  Blood forms have switched to electronic format. |