

PPG MEETING

DATE: JULY 7TH 2025



FERN
HOUSE
SURGERY



Chairs Report - Marian Redding

- Marian welcomed the 19 members attending including Vice Chairs, John Wood and Susan Ager, and the Fern team.
- As there was a speaker on this occasion the usual agenda was cut short.

Agenda

- 1. Welcome and introductions
- 2. Chair's update
- 3. Fern update
- 4. Speaker: Dan Doherty -NHS Alliance Director Mid Essex
- 5. Conclusions and date of AGM

Chair's update

- 1. To draw your attention to a report from Healthwatch looking at the success of the Patients First scheme in pharmacies.

[Pharmacy First scheme](#)

- 2. To note the publication of the long trailed 10 Year NHS Plan. There is much to be learned but a lengthy read.
[The NHS 10 Year Plan to make the NHS fit for the future](#)
- 3. To tell you about the plan to increase and support Virtual PPGs within Mid and South Essex. They will not replace the face to face meeting but will enable more communication to a wider group of patients within a practice. Training will be available as management of this group will sit largely with the PPG and it is hoped that more links to survey opportunities will develop from this. If you are interested in helping with this please contact fernhouse.reception@nhs.net or let Reception know.
- 4. Regarding events - Sue is running this year's MacMillan cake sale on Friday 26th September at Fern House. Look out for the posters with QR codes for Just Giving.

The AGM will take place on Tuesday October 7th at 4pm-5pm at Witham Leisure Centre, Wellness room. If there is any changes made to this then we will post an update on the Fern House Surgery website.

Please note: Winter meetings begin at 4pm

Fern House Surgery update

- 1. A new salaried GP will be joining the team, Dr Philippa Jefferson. She will work two days a week, her normal working days from August will be Wednesday & Thursdays.
 - 2. We are pleased to welcome Toby Pearson a nurse practitioner who will be joining the practice from September.
 - 3. The services of phlebotomist Suely Welsh are helping to provide many more blood tests locally.
 - 4. There has been an update to the messaging service from Patches to AccuRx. This has been updated on our surgery website. It is yet to be updated on the NHS App as we are still in the transitioning period.
 - 5. We were reminded that the car park at Fern House Surgery is only available for those with blue badges.
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Introducing the speaker - Dan Doherty

Dan is Alliance Director for Mid Essex and was here to update us on the changes affecting the (ICB) Integrated Care Boards, the potential changes as council boundaries change and with them possibly health areas. He also spoke about the continuing services based at St. Peters Hospital, Maldon.

The Mid and South Essex ICB is cutting staffing levels. This matters to us because ICBs are responsible for commissioning health services for the area they represent. This is a difficult job as competing needs must be resolved. Alongside this are the expected changes to council areas and the possible models of how many and what size these may be. Essex will also gain an elected mayor. As councils allocate funding for social care these factors matter. Watch out for a decision in February 2026! Meanwhile health services must be working out the meaning of neighbourhood care and how GPs can provide services for neighbourhoods. The presence of neighbourhood hubs relating to small towns may include GP services alongside social and council care and possibly more.

On the three shifts within the 10 year plan: there is a wealth of detail in the paper produced this month.

Please see the links below

[The NHS 10 Year Plan to make the NHS fit for the future](#)

[Truly fit for the future? The 10 Year Health Plan Explained](#)

St Peter's hospital may in the future provide such a hub as the recommendation of the latest report is that the site should be supported and eventually developed. The ICB will be considering these recommendations. It is expected that midwife led births will remain in Braintree with antenatal and postnatal appointments offered at St.Peters.

Questions

Using Brentwood hospital stroke unit for mid Essex patients was thought questionable by some members. For some it is a considerable distance and expensive for relatives visiting for some weeks.

Another question asked were NHS services being duplicated and out of control. Once hospitals offered many services on one site and now there would be many hubs. While attending more local appointments wherever possible works well for cutting down travel and costs and often helps with accessing public transport or parking, not everyone agrees. It was suggested that clear guidelines be used to understand how these services should develop.

End of life care also needs guidelines. Housing developments will also require more services and will lead to new neighbourhoods being formed. Dr Mayat reported on funding