Fern PPG (Patient Participation Group). Newsletter Winter 2021 / Spring 2022

Like many groups the PPG has been suspended during the Covid pandemic but we intend to resume meetings in 2022. Liaison with the NHS and voluntary activity have continued and updates are included below.

If PPG is a new term to you here is a brief explanation. Since 2015 General Practices have been required to have a PPG to ensure regular communication with registered patients. These groups meet regularly either online and / or face to face in order to work together with doctors and managers to better respond to the issues raised by patients. It is not a complaints forum as these are handled by the Practice Manager or PALS services.

Many of you have been asking ‘when will things be back to normal’. So much about daily life has changed that would have been unimaginable two years ago. The NHS has been very much in the news throughout this period but vaccination is allowing us to move to a new normal.

Volunteering for the NHS has been a positive feature of this last couple of years. A huge thanks to Fern staff and 70 volunteers who have worked so hard to make the Witham vaccination programme so successful. Thanks also to local firms who have fed volunteers and even provided Easter eggs. The newly formed alliances of general practices (Primary Care Networks) were central to the planning of vaccinations. Three local primary schools have also helped to celebrate this achievement by their art work illustrating how children have experienced the pandemic. We hope to see more of their work at an exhibition to be held in the Witham Town Hall in February.

Many people have rediscovered the joy of gardening but doctors also recognise the therapeutic effects of fresh air, company and physical activity. Volunteers have also been clearing parts of Fern garden so that doctors can refer patients to a gardening project designed to act as an alternative to traditional prescriptions. Members of the PPG have successfully raised the funds for equipment and planting to enable this to happen.

Find out more about the PPG on email [f.patientgroup@nhs.net](mailto:f.patientgroup@nhs.net)