**BRIDGES PPG MINUTES 6TH AUGUST 2024**

PRESENT:

Meridy Phillips (Chair)

Rupert Turberville-Smith (GP)

Lennie Edwards (Practice Manager)

Jim Gammans (NHS Dorset)

Sue Brunt, Shirley Earley, Liz O’Connell, Paul O’Rourke, Gill Penwell, Jo White, Norman White

APOLOGIES: Alan Clark, Anita Roberts, Ian Urmston, Dorothy Woods, Julia Yates

ACTIONS FROM THE LAST MEETING:

None

The next two items were brought forward to the beginning of the meeting because R T-S and L E had to leave early for another appointment.

GP IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM, RSV VACCINE, CANCER CARE CO-ORDINATOR:

(R T-S & LE)

The GP improvement program will start next week funded by NHS England and will last 6 months with the aid of a facilitator. It will look at various aspects including demand and capacity for appointments and the time it takes for the phone to be answered. After the period is over, the data will be analysed and practice will look at what needs to be worked on.

The new RSV vaccine is to protect against a respiratory virus which is particularly risky for babies and the elderly. From September it will be offered to women who are 28 weeks into pregnancy and it may be administered by the practice or midwife. Patients aged between 75 and 79 will be invited to receive the vaccine, although it is not certain whether this will be a national system or left to individual practices. It will not be co-administered with the flu or covid jab.

Hayley Fagan has been appointed by the Primary Care Network (PCN) as Cancer Care Co-ordinator and newly diagnosed cancer patients will be referred to her for non medical support.

PRACTICE UPDATE: (R T-S & LE)

Co-administered covid and flu vaccinations will be offered in October for the over 65’s and people with compromised immune systems. Sessions will probably be at the surgery rather than central points which will mean more clinics or longer days. There will a children’s clinic in September. Volunteers will be required to assist at these sessions.

As has been widely publicised throughout the media, there has been a vote for collective action by GP’s. Partners in practices were asked to vote by the BMA on whether they were willing to take action because there was unrest about the new contract. 98% voted in favour. For a long time GPs have worked over and above the requirements of their contract and goodwill has been eroding. It will not entail a ‘day of action’ but rather ‘working to rule’ over an extended period. At the moment some forms which are excessively long and time consuming to complete might be replaced with a letter from the GP. Some treatments are passed on by consultants for the practice to carry out without any formal agreement. All practices in the Weymouth/Portland area will be meeting together to discuss exactly what ‘working to rule’ will entail so that they can communicate as one unit to other organizations which may be affected. One major issue is that the new contract was drawn up before inflation rose and whilst practices will be expected to pay staff an increase in salary, the funding provided by the Government will not be sufficient. Already some staff are not being replaced when others leave and some clinical sessions have been dropped. The bottom line being, some practices could cease to exist because like any other business, if they are not financially viable, they cannot continue. Patients need to be made aware of the issues being faced. Historically, hospitals have received the lion’s share of funding whilst 90% of NHS work is done in practices. Long term preventative care could to be improved so that there will be fewer people needing hospital admission. The GPs and support staff are going into this with heavy hearts because they know patients will be adversely affected somewhere along the line, but it is seen as the only way to make the Government take notice. Already Wes Streeting has issued a letter in response and it is generally hoped that the new Government will be more supportive than the previous regime. Looking towards the positive, if the whole system can be re-balanced into a better way of working for all concerned, it will be worthwhile, although it may be a painful transition. It was agreed that any communication to patients about the action will be checked by the PPG before it is distributed.

PPG PROJECTS: (SB)

Aging Well exercises for ‘pre-frail’ patients continue at Wellworthys. These classes will also now be held at Redlands. Funded by the PCN it is a 24 week programme of 1.5 hour sessions per week. If anyone is willing to volunteer as a ‘meet and greet’ or generally assist, please contact Sue.

The Health Talks on hypertension and pre diabetes have been deemed a success and as a follow on it has been suggested that basic cookery classes could be offered, as many people’s diet is affected by their lack of skill in this area which leads on to over consumption of unhealthy ready meals. The Friendly Food Club is a charity which offers these classes. Each course is 6 weeks long and they provide two tutors with, ideally, 2 volunteers. The hope is that a subsequent class would have one tutor assisted by a volunteer tutor and other volunteers on hand and then ultimately the class would be totally volunteer led. A grant has been approved from Dorset Council and Weymouth Town Council have also been approached for funding. A national bid is also a possibility. Times and venues are yet to be settled but if anyone is interested in helping, get in touch with Sue.

The newsletter is almost ready for distribution.

AOB:

None

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: TBC