



## **Sothall and Beighton Patient Forum**

### **Minutes of the meeting Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2019 at 6:30pm**

**Chair:** Michael Lyall (Practice Manager)

**Practice staff:** Dr R Welch, Allison Smith (Business manager Sothall and Mosborough)

**Minutes:** ML

**Members Present:** BM, JM, CL, DR, SR, DH, PH, TS, CA, JW.

**Apologies:** N/A

Michael opened the meeting by thanking everyone for attending and confirmed the group's agreement with the content of the minutes from the previous meeting. Michael introduced Allison Smith who has been the business Manager for Sothall Medical Centre and Mosborough Health Centre for a number of years.

We also discussed an email that Michael had sent to the group earlier this week asking how they felt about a student reporter who currently writes for the South East Echo ([www.southeastecho.jusnet.co.uk](http://www.southeastecho.jusnet.co.uk)) attending the meeting to report on the proposed merger. Most of the Forum felt this was acceptable however those concerns that were raised were passed back to the student for consideration. Michael also explained to the Student (and Forum today) that, due to the imminent general election, we are bound by Purdah (<https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/purdah/what-purdah-means-practice>) and are therefore unable to comment on anything that could be considered as influencing the political process. After considering both Purdah and the Forum comments the Student reporter decided not to attend.

#### **1. The Proposed merger of Sothall Medical Centre and Mosborough Medical Centre**

Michael started by sharing and discussing the results of our patient questionnaires (online and paper sheets in surgery). Michael felt that explaining why we are looking to merge would help the Forum better understand our decision to explore this:-

GP surgeries are unlike most of the NHS. They are most commonly run as small businesses, usually (but not always) managed by a group of partners who are also GPs. We are paid for the service we provide by the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) who is in turn funded by the government department of Health. We have a contract with the CCG to provide a group of services. However we also provide services from the business that we are not funded for. To fulfil our contract and continue to operate as we currently do, we are required to have at least two Partners.

The current partners at Sothall are Dr D Leonard, Dr A Rainford and Dr R Welch. These are your GPs but are also partners in the business. Over the last four years we have recruited a number of excellent salaried GPs. Each time our advertisement was for 'A partner or salaried GP, ideally with a view to Partnership'. Without going into all the detail of the non-clinical responsibilities, Partnership is less attractive than other GP roles; more GPs now seem to prefer to work as Salaried GPs or Locums.

With this in mind we were looking at our (and your) options for the future. If we do nothing, the three current partners are looking to retire, probably all within the next 3 – 5 Years. We don't know if we will be able to recruit any new partners, and perhaps more crucially, have

no way of predicting what will happen to the Surgery if this happens (Please don't let this panic you, as the CCG will ensure that a service of some kind continues).

By far the most sensible option was to look at merging with another practice. We already share some staff with Mosborough and know that their ethos and values are particularly aligned to ours. We therefore approached Mosborough and were pleased that they are also keen for this merger. They have just over 6,000 patients to our 10,000 but are in the fortunate position of having four younger partners and two much younger salaried GPs who are keen to become partners with them. A merger would leave the merged practices with a potentially much more stable partnership which should ensure that we can manage our practices as we currently are for the foreseeable future. The Forum asked why Mosborough wanted this merger. There are a number of reasons for both practices, one of Mosborough's reasons is that they are a training practice (as we were until our GP trainer left the practice in 2016). They can train a number of Registrars but are rather restricted by space. We don't have a lot of space but between the two practices we can accommodate these more effectively. We were also asked how Mosborough manage to get GPs interested in Partnership; Dr Welch explained that, in part this was due to Registrars completing their training, wishing to stay in the practice they had become accustomed to. We would potentially also benefit from this following any merger.

We then took questions from the forum and reviewed the comments from the patient questionnaires. We confirmed the following which seems to have been missed by some patients completing the questionnaire:-

- We will not be closing either site (Neither site could possibly cope with the additional patients)
- We do not envisage any staffing reductions but do feel that we will be able to improve efficiency with pooled staff
- Patients will be seen at their usual practice
- We don't think any patients will notice any difference in service
- Almost all patients will see their usual GPs (Only exception being patients who want to see a specific GP from the other surgery, or where one of the surgeries is having particular difficulties with covering unexpected leave or absence; this is currently not an option!)
- Booking appointments will not change due to this merger; we are encouraging on-line access where possible but this is not linked to any merger
- This is not a cost saving exercise
- There are some comments saying why close Beighton then merge 'again' with another practice. This merger is very different as all of the Staff and resources from Beighton were simply moved into one building at Sothall; we didn't lose or gain any staff or patients.

The raw data suggested that just over half of the patients did not think the merger was a good idea. Having said this, almost all of the objection comments related to increased demand, reduced capacity, having to travel to more distant practices or insufficient

information to decide. The group all agreed with the practice that following the above explanation these concerns were not founded. Unfortunately it's not possible to contact every individual and discuss that concerns. Michael noted that the comments that some patients post on social media seem to influence some patients more than official practice information. The Forum unanimously agreed that now that they understand the reasons for our decision, that this is a positive move for our patients, one patient said that he was grateful that the practice is looking forward and ensuring that the practice has a future that we can have some influence over.

Any actual decision has to be approved by Sheffield Clinical Commissioning Group and NHS England.

To keep up to date with this and other practice initiatives, please follow our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/SothallMC/> or visit our website <https://sothall.net/>

## **2. Flu update**

This Year's flu campaign was delayed due to national vaccine supply issues which have still not been completely resolved. Having said that, we have managed to catch up with where we were at this time last year thanks to the hard work of our HCA's and Nurses. The assistance of Patient forum members in the smooth running of the drop-in Saturday clinics was much appreciated.

The following figures include patients vaccinated outside the practice when we have been informed:-

Over 65 Year old patients: - we have vaccinated 1248 and have 529 eligible patients

Eligible adults under 65: - Vaccinated 488 and 836 remain eligible (we have full stock)

2 – 4 year old children's Nasal Flu: - stock is still severely restricted and we are only allocated 10 each week. We are hopeful to get all the stock we require next week and will start a robust drive as this cohort are 'super spreaders'. To date we have vaccinated 60 and have 157 remaining eligible.

## **3. Volunteer Update**

The new initiative to help promote on-line access seems to be going very well. At Sothall we have two volunteers, John and Martin, who are coming to the Surgery waiting room at various predetermined times and showing patients the benefits or supporting patients to access services online via the NHS app <https://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/nhs-app/> or TPP app <https://www.tpp-uk.com/products/systmonline>. The times that they are here are promoted via the website, Facebook page, noticeboards in the waiting room and we have been texting a small cohort of patients which we feel could benefit most. There's no need to book and they are happy to show several patients at the same time. We also have an administration volunteer from the Woodhouse Community Forum scheme who is helping with a variety of clerical tasks. If you are interested in volunteering please contact the Volunteer coordinator, Amanda Broadhurst at [amanda@mywoodhouse.co.uk](mailto:amanda@mywoodhouse.co.uk).

## **4 Car Parking**

It was commented that the car park was again becoming overcrowded. Michael suggested that the Surgery remind staff and visitors that the Belfry very kindly allow us to park in their car park and this may improve the situation slightly. We also pointed out that as we are

providing additional clinical staff there are quite often staff in all 12 / 13 rooms, if some of these staff get behind and each one has two patients who have come in cars waiting, this would already be a full car park. Michael will remind the staff again that they can park in the Belfry car park, as many of our staff already do.

#### **5 Care Quality Commission (CQC) <https://www.cqc.org.uk/>**

The CQC are an independent regulator of health and social care in England. They were inspecting practices rated Good every three years but have now decided to inspect every five years and conduct a remote / telephone assessment annually. The CQC conducted their annual review call with Sothall on 6<sup>th</sup> November and have concluded that the practice should retain its rating of 'Good' in all 5 categories

#### **6 Manchester University primary care research**

We previously discussed a team from The University of Manchester, School of Health Sciences, Division of Population Health, Health Services Research and Primary care coming to the practice to look at how our practice utilises a variety of clinical staff who are not GPs such as Physician Associates, Advanced Nurse Practitioners and Clinical Pharmacists. This visit has now concluded and the team were extremely grateful to the Patients who allowed them to observe their consultations and the Forum members who attended the practice for a meeting to discuss their views regarding our clinical diversity. The initial verbal feedback was that the team were very impressed with everything that they observed. They have promised to provide our practice with a more detailed report of their findings when their research is concluded.

#### **AOB from Forum**

Review of the telephone queuing message was requested.

There being no further discussions, the meeting closed at 19:50

**Next Patient Forum (provisionally) Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2020, 18.30 at Sothall Medical Centre.**