

Notes for Dittisham Parish Council of the Dartmouth Patients Participation Group (PPG) October 2022 AGM

This was the first meeting since 2019 and comprised a number of presentations by the various “agencies/organisations” that will be coming together under one roof at our new health centre. These included Dart Medical Practice, Dartmouth Caring, visiting staff from the local South Hams Primary Care Network and the same from the Moor2sea Intermediate Care Team.

Our local medical practice has had a patient increase of 500 people over the last year and this is still increasing as the Baker estate continues to develop. On top of this 42% of the practice’s patients are over 60 compared to a national average of 23%. This increase in workload together with feedback from previous PPG surveys has already led to changes in the online booking system that recognises the options of phone or text/e-mail consultations whilst still recognising the appropriate need for face to face consultations where the “slot” time has been increased from 10 to 15 minutes. The expectation (based on experience elsewhere) is that bringing all the health agencies together, including a pharmacy, under one roof next year will bring greater efficiencies in their working better together and also deliver better patient accessibility and outcomes.

We have already had a presentation from Dartmouth Caring at one of our DPC meetings and they will have a central role in the new health centre including a café/ social area. They will also ensure that the population in the centre of Dartmouth, who are losing their proximity to healthcare facilities, have transport to access the new centre.

The existence of the South Hams Primary Care Network was a new one on me and comprises a grouping of 5 local practices namely Chillington, Modbury, Salcombe, Norton Brook (Kingsbridge) and Dartmouth. This organisation not only facilitates sharing between the practices but also has front line staff of its own that are shared within the network.

The Moor2Sea Intermediate Care team was also a new one to me but they cover a wider area and their role includes responding to people who have a medical problem that, with appropriate help from the different agencies, can be managed largely at home. I admit to being less clear about how this fitted in with everything else and I think that they also grapple with the problem of finding ongoing care but I need to learn more.

Finally the thousand dollar question of when will the medical centre be ready and the answer is a rather vague “next spring”. In any event its population by the various organisations will happen gradually with our medical practice probably being one of the last to move. Their timing will be partly driven by their workload which traditionally peaks in the winter so their best guess is that they won’t move until after the end of March 2023. Apparently there will be the added complication of them changing their computer system (horror of horrors!) to be more compatible, presumably, with the rest of the NHS.

Councillor Phil Unitt