

**Falkland Surgery Patient Participation Group (PPG) AGM
22nd October 2025
Chair's Report**

[N.B. this report is based on preparatory notes and has not been checked against delivery.]

1. Introduction

Rather than just reviewing the last year, since I am stepping down as Chair (though staying on the committee), I would like to use this opportunity to briefly look back over my time in the role.

I became Chair in January 2018 after the sad death of the previous occupant of the role, Sylvia Grimwood. As well as being Chair for seven and a half years, I was also Secretary for almost four of those years as we couldn't find anyone to take on the role. Diana Mudge-Davies took on that position for a few years and it was subsequently taken on by Pete Davies who has been doing it to date, for which I am extremely grateful.

I don't want to go through the detail of everything that's happened since 2018, but just want to pick out a few things I think we've achieved and look forward to what the PPG may be able to do in future.

2. Achievements

So, what have we achieved?

Firstly, membership.

We've had an explicit objective for the last few years, of trying to increase the number of people who have signed up to receive our newsletters and occasional emails – our membership.

We wanted to expand the membership for several reasons:

- It means more people are engaged with the work of the PPG and what is going on in the practice
- It's a basis for getting feedback – which we have done on several occasions
- It means there is a pool of people, some of whom may like to get more involved at some point, including joining the committee

At November 2020 we only had 10 on our email list. By the 2022 AGM that had gone up to 83 and by September 2023 there were well over 100. We now have 226 email subscribers plus 18 we hand deliver newsletters to, making a total membership of 244. (We've actually recruited more than that but inevitably we lose some people over time).

Secondly

We now have our own website – www.falklandppg.org.uk. Many thanks to Bob Hills for setting up the original version of that. Because of problems with that site we have recently moved to another provider, which hosts us for free because we are a charity.

Thirdly

We have responded to various requests for help from the Surgery, such as helping with a Wellbeing Week, supporting Dr Lorna Berry in producing a directory of local community organisations and helping at the surgery 'take-over' of Parkrun. We have also helped obtain feedback, such as on the appointment system, a few years ago. More recently we sent round a questionnaire on a surgery Mission Statement.

Fourthly

We are out and about much more now and great thanks to Bettine for doing all the hard work for us to be at the Wash Common Community Festival and for the other members of the committee who helped on the stand. And we have also been helping at the flu and Covid clinics.

Fifthly

There has been a revolution over the past few years in how GP practices operate, with many new roles, new appointment systems and more access through digital channels. I hope we have helped to some extent in providing information about that, through our regular newsletters and open evenings. Thanks to John Curtis for all his work on the newsletters.

3. Hopes for the future

However, there is much more that we could, and would like, to do. I will just mention four things.

Firstly

We want to continue to grow the membership but more particularly to broaden the demographic – to have more younger people and families and those whose voices are often not heard. However, I think that simply increasing the

number of members should no longer be the core of our strategy. We need to move to being more useful and valuable as a body.

So, the **second** thing is that we need to be doing more to get useful feedback that can benefit the Practice and patients. Most private companies have to pay for market research, but with the PPG this is freely available. By increasing patient understanding, spotting and helping iron out wrinkles in processes and coming up with ideas for better ways of doing things, we could help improve services for patients and save the surgery staff a lot of time that could be put to better use.

Thirdly

We need to continue to develop the website. As well as a way of providing information, we can also use it to engage Falkland patients and get feedback from a wider group of people.

The **fourth** and final thing is that I think there is scope to make use of patients as volunteers, (for those that are happy to help). There are some other PPGs who do that well, but many struggle. However, if you think how much hospitals like the Royal Berks, use volunteers, you realise what a productive resource they could be. Of course, a hospital and a GP surgery are very different but thinking about what volunteers do at the Royal Berks and in some other PPGs can give us some ideas. For example:

- Helping patients navigate systems, both electronically and physically
- Providing feedback on information given out, whether on websites or leaflets, to ensure it is clear, unambiguous and understandable
- Testing out new systems before they are put into effect (such as triage systems).
- Fundraising
- Sitting on interview panels for new staff
- Getting involved in improvement initiatives, providing a patient perspective
- Inputting into strategic thinking – what needs to change and how, including responding to national initiatives (such as a move to neighbourhood health)
- Supporting peer support clinics, e.g. on diabetes, helping young families, mental health or bereavement.
- Supporting health prevention initiatives, like walking for health or improving diet.

So there is much to look forward to and I hope the PPG continues to go from strength to strength.

4. Thanks

And finally, a few words of thanks.

To **committee members** past as well as present. For active participation in committee meetings. For helping outside of those, producing minutes, organising and helping at events, helping produce the newsletter amongst other things.

Thanks to the **surgery**. Thanks for the work they do, day in day out. But also for all the staff, GPs and others who have come and presented at Open Evenings over the years, and of course Mark who has been here at all of them, as well as all the committee meetings.

And to **all of you**, and those not here tonight, who have been a tremendous support to us over many years.

Thank you

Adrian Barker
22nd October 2025