**Huntingdon Road Surgery Patient Group**

**Annual General Meeting Wednesday 14 September 2016**

**Chair’s Annual Revue**

What a year! The word that stands out is ‘outstanding’, the judgment of the CQC after they paid their first inspection visit to the practice in April. We have already passed on the congratulations of the PG to the practice, but I think it would be appropriate for this AGM to applaud the doctors, the nurses, the receptionists, the managers and all the support staff as a gesture of our appreciation of their combined achievement.

Of course the PG was invited to contribute to the exercise, and two of us met with an inspector for about three quarters of an hour. On other occasions, too, we have been invited to participate more fully in the activities of the practice: two members attended the meeting when the practice drew up its priorities for the coming year, and it was gratifying to find that the Patient Experience is at the top of the agenda. We are now meeting with the Practice Manager on a regular basis, affording us an opportunity to better understand the workings of the practice and the pressures which it is under, as well as for us to share the concerns of our members.

The current pattern of four meetings of the PG per year seems to have worked well: since last September, when we heard proposals about the ill-fated UnitingCare project, we have had an opportunity to learn about the changes in a GP’s life over the last twenty-five years with Dr Connan, problems of mental health, presented by the head of the university mental health services as well as a local team leader, and most recently the delicate but important subject of End of Life Care, with a Macmillan Nurse and a local district nurse. In all these sessions, we have tried to maintain a balance between the supply of information and the opportunity for our members to make contributions or seek clarification of points made. This was particularly moving at our most recent meeting, when members gave illustrations of how their loved ones had been helped in the final stages of their lives.

The committee has met most months in order to prepare your programme and to discuss issues you have raised with us. For example, last December one of our members was told by a receptionist that they were not allowed to exhibit pamphlets giving information about a local charity providing support for patients with a particular disability because it was the practice’s policy not to allow any pamphlets. The committee asked the practice to review this policy, and we are happy to report that it was indeed changed, and the results are now visible in the three waiting rooms. We particularly appreciate the efforts made by Dr Connan in ensuring this improvement. We must also mention the generous offer of help in monitoring the supply of pamphlets as well as taking on the post of PG photographer and helping the secretary with sending out mail which is now being undertaken by our member, Peter Teich. We also review on an annual basis any complaints which have been made to the practice - remarkably few - to see how the practice has dealt with them and to ensure that there was a satisfactory outcome. Other issues are covered in a very full and frank account in Dr Connan’s Annual Report, which you can access easily on the HR website, but I shall just mention in passing the practice’s adoption of name badges for all staff, the welcome appearance of the doctors’ photographs on the website with the indication that the rest of the staff are considering following suit. Editing the practice’s newsletter continues to be an important function of the Patient Group, and the practice has emphasised the importance they attach to it by encouraging those reading it in waiting rooms to take it home with them

The other way we can communicate with patients is through the practice’s website, where we have made a number of suggestions to Dr Connan and Sarah-Jane, who are its principal architects. For some time, we have been pressing for an interactive version of our membership form - one where you fill in your details on-line, rather than having to download a form, fill it in then take or post it to the surgery. At last, we are delighted to announce, this interactive form is available and with a few clicks you can become a member and get rapid confirmation (I know - I’ve tried it!).

There are things we can be proud of, as a group: for the first time, our membership is over a hundred - 109 in fact. But we are facing difficulties in recruiting a higher proportion and a wider cross-section of the practice’s patients (the failure of our determined efforts last winter to recruit a single student, in spite of the best efforts of practice and patient group, is a good example of this). However, we now face a new situation, where you - our members - have a tool which should make it so much easier to recommend membership to your friends and family. We do appreciate that our present meeting times are not convenient for many groups - young families, people just returning from work and so on - yet it has perhaps never been more important for us all to be aware of changes which are taking place in healthcare not only locally, regionally and nationally, and our PG newsletters and bulletins from our national PG body do provide vital information about what is going on, so you can encourage potential members to sign up, even if they can’t currently get to meetings. If in the future, we have - for example - young parents who would prefer a daytime meeting, that would be something we could consider, but first, we need evidence of interest. Please help us: it would be wonderful if we could at least double our membership by this time next year!

Before I close, I must thank all the committee members, including ex officio Doctor Connan, for their commitment to the PG Committee, which is exemplary and makes our meetings really worthwhile. As for volunteers, I’ve already mentioned the new boy, Peter Teich but I’d also like to remind you of the regular contributions made by Richard Catchpole, who monitors the provision of magazines in the three waiting rooms.

…and of course, you, the members who keep us on our toes, and turn out through thick and thin - rain. snow and even heatwaves! Thanks to you all!