

St Helens Medical Centre

Minutes from the Patient Forum - Annual General Meeting Monday 16th March at 10.00am

In attendance:

Keith Bradford
Tricia Jepson
Susan Atwell
Maurice Dix
Derek Burt
Pam Hogg
Peter Dodds
George Weech
Christine Townsend
Jolie Hurst
Charlotte Morrison
Sally Fox (minute taking)

1. Welcome

Keith welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked all for taking the time to attend the AGM. Keith said this meeting is a chance to reflect on the past year and to share future plans. Keith thanked all members for their commitment.

1. Apologies for absence

Diana Tuson and Gay Allen.

2. Minutes of previous AGM

The minutes were agreed and signed off from the AGM on Monday 10th March 2025.

3. Matters arising

Keith mentioned the PPG Notice Board which has now been moved in the waiting room. Keith said he noticed a few posters which he thinks should not be there, Jolie will check and will remove.

PPG feedback forms - Jolie checked on Friday 13th March, there was one. Positive feedback from a patient – excellent, surgery went above and beyond, as Boots was at default. Reception staff took the time to listen and action, great customer service – Jolie will pass this on to the reception team.

4. Chairmans report

Over the past year, the Patient Participation Group has continued to support communication between patients and the practice.

We've worked to make sure feedback is listened to and used constructively to improve services.

A brief overview of resources was discussed. The focus remains on efficiency, and on directing support where it matters most – patient care.

Our aim is simple: to ensure patient voices are heard, that our services remain accessible, and that we continue building a strong, supportive community around the practice.

Looking forward, our priorities are clear.

*We will strengthen communication with patients.

*We will support community health initiatives

*And we will continue building collaboration between patients, staff, and management.

The St Helens Medical Centre Newsletter that was first published in August 2022 continues to grow and we are now at Issue 16.

Before closing this section, I want to express sincere thanks to our staff, volunteers, and patients. Your commitment and contributions are a what make this practice a valued part of the community.

I want to thank everyone who has taken the time to attend and contribute today.

Your involvement – whether through sharing feedback, volunteering, or simply being present – is what strengthens our community and ensures that patient voices remain at the heart of the practice.

We have reflected on the past year, set clear priorities for the future, and reaffirmed our commitment to working together for the benefits of all patients.

On behalf of the Patient Participation Group and the practice team, thank you once again for your support, and looks forward to continuing this journey with you in the year ahead.

Keith Bradford
Chairman PPG.

5. Practice Managers Report

Charlotte and Jolie read out a practice report on behalf of Summer.

I want to thank the group for their continued support for the Practice throughout 2025/2026 - the PPG continues to act as a link between patients and the practice team, helping to improve services, communication, and patient experience. As always, your feedback and active participation is valuable in shaping our patient experience, which will always remain a priority of the Practice.

We are pleased to have maintained a full GP team throughout this year, ensuring that all our patients remain allocated to a Registered GP. Continuity of care is a core priority at St Helens, and we are committed to providing this consistently, despite the ongoing challenges associated with workforce pressures and the modernisation of platforms. Over the past year, we have increased the utilisation of online platforms, giving our patients a variety of options in the way they can make contact with the surgery. Our front door, phone lines and eConsult Online Service all remain open 8am – 6:30pm Monday to Friday. We have also done a piece of work on reducing patient DNAs; by ensuring we have a working confirmation and reminder text messaging service in place for appointments.

Looking ahead, it is important to reflect on areas where we can continue to develop and improve in the year ahead. One of the challenges we have faced has been encouraging broader representation from across our patient population to join our Patient Forum. This is important to both the practice and our PPG, as we strive to enhance accessibility and inclusivity for all patient groups. Despite the group's efforts, this remains a work in progress, and we will continue to prioritise this objective over the coming year. We are keen to work closely with our Patient Forum to increase patient engagement through digital platforms, including greater use of online services and the NHS App for ordering repeat prescriptions where possible. We hope to do this by identifying and addressing the barriers and challenges patients may face when accessing and using these digital services. In addition, we aim to collaborate with the group to further improve communication around our appointment systems, ensuring patients are well informed and confident in accessing the care they need.

A vital element that makes the Medical Centre what it is today is the dedication and commitment of the staff who work within it. I am extremely proud of the professionalism, resilience, and compassion our practice team demonstrate on a daily basis, and of the consistent standard of care they have delivered throughout the past year. I am now taking a break from the Practice for the next 6 months as I go on Maternity Leave, but we have a strong management team who will be supporting the practice and the PPG through the upcoming months. Charlotte will continue in her role as Business Manager, with both Jolie and Daniel stepping into Operation Manager Roles.

Finally, on behalf of the Practice I would like to thank Keith for his continued dedication to the role of Chairman to the St Helens PPG. Keith remains in good communication with the Practice and the members of the PPG, and his hard work for the group does not go unnoticed.

6. Election of Vice Chair

Tricia has decided to step down as Vice Chair. Keith opened this to all in attendance and explained the main duty would be taking a lead on the meetings if Keith is unable to attend, and if this does happen the Vice Chair will be supported by Summer, Charlotte or Jolie whilst Summer is on maternity leave.

Christine put herself forward for the Vice Chair role and the group were very happy to vote for Christine. If Keith was to step down as Chairman next year, Christine would not automatically step into the Chair role, this was agreed by all.

New member Anne Larpent who attended the last meeting has since emailed Keith, and unfortunately with new commitments is unable to become a member of the PPG. Keith accepted and replied.

There is now one PPG member place available.

Keith asked what the group thought the best way forward was to look for a new member, and all agreed that word of mouth is the best way. Pam and Tricia asked for extra PPG posters to be printed so they can put around community and notice boards. Jolie will speak with Dan to arrange this. Maurice will mention to his Wednesday walking group.

7. AOB

Keith asked Jolie and Charlotte if the surgery was planning anything further regarding AI. Both confirmed nothing is on the horizon for the surgery and that online access remains available for patients.

George had seen in the County Press that Dr Westmore was going to Lapland, taking part in a Husky Trail for Mountbatten Hospice. The group would like to pass on their good luck wishes to Dr Westmore and look forward to hearing all about it. Jolie will pass this on to Dr Westmore and ask if Dr Westmore would like to pop into the next meeting.

Jolie wanted to pass on her thanks to all the Patient Participation Group for their support with the surgery.

Susan said over the last year, patients that have reached out to her with a query or concern have all been resolved and from Susan's point of view, the communication has worked well.

Tricia mentioned she had recently been in contact with Anna (Medical Secretary) and wanted to pass on how efficient and prompt she was. Jolie said thank you and let Tricia know this would be passed on to Anna. Positive feedback is hugely appreciated by the staff at St Helens Medical Centre.

Date of next meeting – Monday 1st June 10am

Date of the next AGM – Monday 9th March 2027