

PRESENTATION TO PPG AGM - 18 SEPTEMBER 2018

STRAND MEDICAL GROUP MOVE TO 1a THE CAUSEWAY

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(Writer, Strand PPG AGM attendee Julian James, issue 1, 19 Sep 2018)

This presentation on the January 2019 move of the Strand Medical Group to 1a The Causeway was given to the Strand Patient Participation Group AGM held on 18 September 2018 by Justin Cankalis, Practice Business Manager, and Drs Andy Thompson and James Burch. The Strand PPG AGM was chaired by Norman Taylor with secretary Anita Nutt and attended by 37 patients.

Justin Cankalis stated that the move to 1a The Causeway would take place in January 2019 and a leaflet had been prepared for attendees and others on the current set up and the new premises. A few years ago a bid had been made to the government Transitional Fund together with a business case for surgery relocation. The Strand Medical Group had sought the support of many local stakeholders and opinion formers. The Worthing West MP Sir Peter Bottomley had been involved and had raised the issue of the need for improved premises in the House of Commons. Several thousand organisations had bid for funding and the bid put together for the Strand Medical Group was successful.

Present key problems are that there are not enough consulting rooms, doctors or nurses. The new building will have larger rooms, the smallest consulting room being larger than the biggest in the existing surgery. To the right of the new reception area will be the nursing and treatment area with three consulting rooms, two treatment rooms and two sluices (the existing surgery having none of the latter). There would be a three-seat sub-wait area. To the left of the new reception area will be twelve doctors consulting rooms. The reception area will permit expansion beyond the present space which is sufficient only for four reception staff, this limit on numbers being a key issue in providing an improvement to service. Expansion will be possible. There will be a dedicated meeting room.

Dr Thompson explained the reason why the Strand Medical Group was making this move. It is to provide better facilities and service to the population of Goring-by-Sea. The cost to the local NHS will be only marginally greater than now, but with double the space. Over the town Worthing currently has 12 GP vacancies, the problem in recruiting being partly that of suitable premises. But it is frowned upon by the CCG and NHS and is a lengthy process to shut a practice list to new residents, and, as is well known there are major housing developments nearby. The present building has been sold to the developers.

Dr Burch said that for the first time in five or six years Strand Medical Group was up to the required number of GPs with returning doctors and others accepting new roles. It was a very good feeling to be able to offer more appointments. It was currently tough for staff and patients, the present lack of room making hot-desking necessary for some staff. The new designated consulting rooms would be smarter and the smallest bigger than the present largest.

The design of the premises was by professionals experienced in this sort of building. A site visit for the meeting had been considered but at the present stage of works was not practicable on safety

grounds. Internal photographs taken on the day of the AGM had been printed and were on display to the meeting. The process of decision on finishes and fittings had involved the Practice and the meeting was shown 'mood boards' capturing the situation for the doctors' area and the nurses' area. These included floor and wall finishes and colours, including changes through the passages and within the rooms. Mood boards for the reception and waiting area are still in progress. The meeting was asked preferences on reception area floor and a non-slip hard floor found favour. Building sound proofing would be much better than at present. Justin Cankalis stated that the reception desk design was out to tender, a less clinical appearance being sought, not necessarily in wood. It would include a low section for those needing it. There will be recording cctv but only in corridors and looking out from reception, but with no sound recording.

There was extensive discussion on the appointments booking system by telephone, internet and personal approach and the problems of each. Dr Thompson described in particular the drawbacks of the internet system. The problems are principally those of successful use and appropriateness of the type of appointment obtained, with doctor or nurse or just for advice. On the internet a non-urgent option for further ahead booking was suggested. Dr Thompson said it was known that the further ahead an appointment was the higher the rate of non-attendance. Other initiatives at the Practice had already made improvements in reducing this problem of waste of resource.

Justin Cankalis stated that the new systems will permit more performance statistics to be introduced and noted the current NHS Choices rating of the Practice at 2½ stars on the 1 to 5 scale.

There were a number of questions from the floor.

Where would there be parking? The Strand Medical Group was in discussion with the local council. Temporary parking bays were being sought in front. There was awareness of the need to accommodate mobility issues of some patients. Parking was a great problem to the patient asking the question, there sometimes being the need to using spaces for shopping with limited time allowance.

Would there be a better screen for telling when the doctor was ready? Dr Burch is working with the internal telephony provider. A visual and audible message system was possible. The meeting discussed various systems and their pros and cons in functionality and privacy.

How much money was needed to pay for all these extras? There is a divide from things that the practice should pay for and Dr Thompson stated that work was still being done to quantify the additional items. Computers and desks are paid for by the Fund, plants, pictures and so on are above and beyond. Justin Cankalis is identifying what can be taken across to the new premises and this will lead to a better cost figure.

Are all the facilities on the ground floor? Yes, all areas will be accessible on the level. There was discussion of ventilation and air conditioning. The equipment will include the changing of the air in each room every 15 minutes, including the waiting room.

Can there be different telephone numbers for patients requiring different services? Justin Cankalis had reversed the recorded message sequence to improve matters, now giving the options at the beginning of telephone calls.

Could patients send details of a problem by email? Dr Burch explained that it was mandatory for emails out of the practice to be encrypted.

Will there be an app for mobile phones? The NHS is due to release one.

Would the Practice be open for the same or different hours? Justin Cankalis was working with other practices to increase access across a group of practices to 08.00 to 20.00. Some of the Strand Medical Group doctors were now starting work at 07.00 on planned days of the week.

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