



Firs House PPG In the Community 2012 – 2018

Background

As a PPG, we discussed what we could do to be more accessible and provide some benefit however small, to the patients of Firs House over and above being patient advocates and acting as a liaison between patients and the Practice. Organising community health information events that would be open to any member of the community whether or not registered with Firs House, seemed to us to be a good starting point. It would not only serve as a means of promoting the PPG and the Practice to the community, but would also help us find out what their health issues might be.

The PPG had no budget and we wanted the events to offer free admission. We were fortunate in having the full support of the Practice and in particular of Dr. Simon Poole who chaired these events and in some instances, would be the main presenter. Community centres in Cottenham and Histon worked in partnership with us and generously offered us access to their venues and help with their AV system where needed, free of charge. In 2012 we began to put on regular health information events, frequently attracting up to 40-80 people. PPG members showed an incredible commitment and enthusiasm, designing posters, publicising through various local media, being on hand at the events to "meet and greet", make teas and coffees etc., even delving into their own pockets to cover incidental expenses.

Our Events Calendar

2012

- **Medi, Steady, Cook!** (Health benefits of a Mediterranean Diet), Cottenham – Dr. Simon Poole GP
- **2X Falls Awareness**, Cottenham and Histon, community physiotherapist and community matron

2014

- **2X Heart Start (CPR)** in Cottenham & Impington - British Heart Foundation
- **World Diabetes Day; Type 2 Diabetes**, Cottenham – Dr. Amanda Adler, Consultant Physician, Dr. Simon Poole GP
- **Prostate Cancer**, Cottenham. Consultant Urologist
- **Medi, Hearty, Cook!** (health benefits of a Mediterranean diet with tasters) Cottenham – Dr. Simon Poole GP



2015

- **Histon Feast** PPG Stand
- **World Cancer Day**; Latest advances in cancer research and clinical trials, Cottenham – Dr. Simon Pacey, Consultant Cancer Therapeutics, Lyndy Wesley, Cancer Research UK and Dr. Simon Poole GP

2016

- **Understanding Dementia**, Histon - Valerie Freestone, Clinical Specialist Dementia Nurse, Dr. Simon Poole
- **How to save your skin** (skin cancer awareness), Cottenham – Vicky McMorran, Skin Cancer specialist nurse, Dr. Simon Poole GP
- **Health & Wellbeing Café**, Impington Village College – (in partnership with students and staff at IVC)

2017

- **Fen Edge Festival in Cottenham** - PPG Stand

2018

- **Diabetes Demystified**, Histon – Yvonne Tylor, Specialist Diabetes Nurse, Dr. Simon Poole GP, Regional Representative from Diabetes UK
- **Allergies**, Cottenham – Dr. Pamela Ewan, Consultant Allergist

Have we made a difference?

We needed to know whether the events we put on were of interest and relevance to members of the community, understanding that some subjects would more naturally attract the older age group and carers, whilst others were more generic. The format for the events was intended to be informal, where possible arranging the room in a cafeteria style or placing chairs in a semi-circle. We reasoned this would be more sociable and encourage audience participation in the Q&A sessions, and it certainly worked.

We handed out a questionnaire to people about the event, asking them to complete it during the session so that we could collate and analyse the results. Their views and suggestions for future topics helped inform our planning for further events.

Results of feedback analysis:

- 74% of respondents attending the Mediterranean Diet event said they were likely to change their diet/lifestyle as a result of the evening.
- Overall an average of 90% respondents rated the events as good/excellent
- Over 90% said it increased their understanding of the subject matter



Selection of written comments:

- Very enlightening!
- These sessions are welcome and informative and very well organized.
- Thank you for putting this event on.
- Some useful pointers to help prevent/monitor (the condition) came up in the Q&A and were very useful.
- Excellent, well spent evening. Thank you everyone involved.
- Many thanks, very helpful.
- Good talk and answered questions very well.
- I don't have diabetes but learned so much of help tonight. Thank you.
- I can try to help my two sons live better with their Type 2 Diabetes
- (Liked) Speaker's depth of knowledge
- (Liked) Informality and relaxed atmosphere
- (Liked) Comprehensive cover

Anecdotally, members of the PPG and the surgery have received verbal feedback expressing appreciation of the events and what effect they had - for example, seeing their GP to check on their prostate (which they would otherwise have left to a much later stage), how the dementia event helped them seek help in their caring role. Following the event on Diabetes in 2018, a Diabetes support group was established in Histon with the assistance of Diabetes UK.

Our events have helped raise the community's awareness of our PPG, and resulted in the recruitment of new PPG members.

Working with young people

Our surgery and PPG members were delighted to take part in a Health and Wellbeing Event at Impington Village College on 20th April. We wanted to do something that would be useful for young people aged 11-18. Members of the PPG worked alongside staff at the college to facilitate the event, however the students took responsibility for planning and organising it. They identified topics felt to be relevant to students at the college such as healthy eating, sexual health, stopping smoking, prevention of skin cancer and services on offer at Firs House, and invited appropriate groups and organisations to attend the event and to provide information to students.

As part of this event, PPG worked with staff and asked students to take part in a survey that asked for their views about their local doctors' surgery. The results are published in the report **Impington Village College - PPG report for students**, available on the Firs House website.

Comments we have acted upon

- Without underestimating the attendees' technical knowledge and understanding, speakers should bear in mind a lay audience in the delivery of their presentations.
- A little complicated



An early presentation was too technical for most of the audience and more suited to an audience of clinicians. We have since been careful to ensure that prospective presenters are aware that their talk should be accessible to the average patient who wanted to know how they or their loved one would be affected and what help/self help was available for them. We modified our feedback form to include a question on whether the speaker(s) pitched their presentation right for a lay audience.

Moving forward

In 2017 we successfully bid for a grant from the Fen Edge Community Association's Family Festival Fund, which has given us more flexibility to develop our activities, and book venues that require some financial contribution.

Our next planned event on **Balance - (Falls Prevention and Tai Chi for Health)** will be in March 2019 at the Cottenham Community Centre as part of their 10th anniversary celebratory events. In July we will have a PPG stand at the Histon Family Feast. Our intention is to continue bringing topical health information events to the local community, building on our experience and considering ways in which we can expand our reach within the Firs House patient catchment area.