Haughton Thornley Medical Centres
Minutes of PPG meeting
27 January 2026

Present: Cathy Dobson, Eric Bynon, Chris Greenough, Amir Hannan, Dominic Sexton, Rachel Hirst

Apologies: Bill Burgoyne, Gerald England

1. Practice Update

- Appointments – there' still a huge demand for appointments. Currently 1 GP and 3 care navigators are fielding contacts and giving each a RAG (red, amber, green) rating which determines how long the delay will be before the patient is seen.

There's a challenge for this practice because it has two locations.
There are fewer complaints as patients are getting used to the system, and to not being seen as quickly as before.
It's stressful for the doctors as they have no time now to be proactive – contact patients who need monitoring but who don't call in.
All practices are having similar problems.

- NHS England – cuts mean that several managerial tiers have been lost which means less support for e.g. our own practice manager for day to day questions and training. A lot of experience has been lost.
- AI – can now be used to create transcripts of consultations, for example. Also can act as a 'virtual' receptionist.
- Back to discussion about demands on the surgery – options that can be explored include self-booking for non-urgent appointments, triage system redirecting patients to other sources of help e.g. pharmacies.
- 'Trends' – medical issues in the news create greater demand around those issues. Currently there's a lot of interest in ADHD and autism leading more people to come in for possible diagnoses. Assessments have been paused while a new service is put in place with the aim of diagnosing and then treating only those who need it.
- Covid boosters – PCN was delivering spring and autumn vaccinations but these will now be done within the practice. Also flu vax. Time will be booked in soon for these clinics plus care homes and home visits.
- Vax uptake was not good last year. Vaccination of children is also low. The practice is trying to encourage parents to get children vaccinated.
- Pharmacist will be going on maternity leave soon.
- Heating has been fixed but more work is needed.

2. Health promotion. Suggestion for an event in May to encourage people to take up vaccinations and screening. Room in Thornley House surgery can be used. Nurses can take the lead on different topics.

Or we could go to the Mall as we have previously.
We could target specific patient groups.

3. Pharmacies – patients need to order their own repeat meds – pharmacist ordering to stop. This is to target waste and free up pharmacists' time. Help to use the NHS app to order repeats is available in the practice. All patients will be informed about this change.

4. Next meeting 31st March 2026.