

# MINUTES OF THE GREAT BENTLEY PATIENT PARTICIPATION MEETING

HELD ON THURSDAY 15 JANUARY 2015

AT 6.30PM IN THE MITCHELL ROOM, GREAT BENTLEY VILLAGE HALL

## 1. **Welcome and Apologies for Absence**

The Chairman welcomed everyone including new members.

## 2. **Introduction of Douglas Carswell UKIP MP for Clacton-on-Sea.**

The Chairman introduced and welcomed our guest speaker, Douglas Carswell.

Mr Carswell said he is the neighbouring MP to Great Bentley but as there is some overlap he wanted to come here to our PPG meeting. He said that there are problems with health care in Tendring. We are very fortunate here but there have been problems in other areas such as Jaywick and Frinton. He said the fundamental problem is that there are not enough GPs and the existing ones are hideously overburdened and oversubscribed. In some areas there are no GPs. In Frinton, for example, there was one GP for 8000 people. He stated that good GPs are very pressurized.

### **Summary of Problems:**

- **A shortage of GPs:** there is a lot of pressure on the system. People will go to A&E if they cannot be seen by a GP. A shortage of GPs contribute to the problems in A&E as people who cannot see a GP walk into A&E.

- **Problems with A&E:** the system is swamped. In most walks of life there are coping systems in place eg in banking and in some businesses. He said that in A&E it is "a hideously unresponsive system" and a big problem. In fairness the Government has put in place an inspection regime. He said care is "not joined up".

- **Problems with the Ambulance Service:** the ambulance service is not able to discharge patients until A&E can take them. Ambulances have been "stacking up" and cannot go out on other calls. Mr Carswell said that all three main problems are interlinked.

He said Bernard Jenkin, MP for Colchester, has been very good in understanding and addressing problems in Colchester Hospital.

Following a debate in the House of Commons there are practical steps now in place to address the problem of the shortage of GPs. There are new Government Incentives to attract GPs:

Mr Carswell said that new incentives by way of a bonus (subject to tax) will be given to GPs who are working in an area for two years. GPs must be given professional respect not just "tick the boxes". Recently he took seven GPs from seven different GP surgeries to meet with Jeremy Hunt, the Government Health Minister, and one of the complaints raised was the QOF (Quality and Outcomes Framework). Since that meeting QOF pressure has been lifted.

He stated that many GPs are asked to be a small business - ie not just practise medicine. Perhaps we should offer a wider range of contracts such as salaried GPs? Locums are not the answer as they are costly and offer no consistency.

He said we need doctors who do not have the pressure of administration etc so that they can focus on being GPs. The way things are at the moment is not good enough. In the forthcoming General Election all the parties will be offering money but GPs need to be allowed to do medicine alone. The CCG is working on a proposal to try and recruit GPs who want to focus on just that.

At this point Melvyn Cox, Chairman, introduced the Great Bentley Practice GPs attending the meeting:

Dr Bhatti, Dr Chumbley, Dr Vine and Richard Miller, Practice Manager.

Mr Carswell was asked to take questions from the floor.

**Question from Alan Bishop:** What should any future Government do to improve dementia care?

**Answer:** The biggest problem is money and Dementia Care is costly. There needs to be an expansion of the number of specialist homes and funding available.

**Question from Anna Winter :** Please summarise the key elements in the UKIP manifesto for NHS.

**Answer:** There is no manifesto at the moment. Mr Carswell expressed some personal ideas including no-one should ever have to pay to see a GP ie free at the point of use. We should recognise restructuring that we had in a success of Governments and stated an idea to have locally elected Health Boards ie local control over priorities.

**Question from Dr Bhatti :** Dr Bhatti asked what the difference is between the CCG and the proposed Health Board?.

**Answer:** Mr Carswell replied that CCG decides how the money is divided up. In Mental Health Care, for example, they feel neglected. He said that the locally elected Health Boards should do what the CCG did but with an elected Health Commissioner in every area directly accountable to local people. This is not UKIP policy but is what he believes.

Dr Bhatti asked if this would be patient represented?

Mr Carswell said yes and these would be elected Health Boards. He cited the PFI contractor for Harwich Hospital as having unaccountable officials.

Dr Bhatti highlighted that the CCG is elected already and has patient representation.

**Discussion** took place as follows:

Mr Carswell said that one of the reasons for the shortage of GPs is that people go abroad. Should we not be training our GPs and paying the £9000 medical school fees as an incentive?

Dr Bhatti said that we cannot prevent careers elsewhere and to expect an exodus if the doctors are being treated badly, as they are now.

Mr Carswell said that in Canada, for example, the debt is cancelled after eight or so years.

Dr Vine commented that she has a significant training debt and stated that the job of a GP is stressful, under supported, constantly the target of everybody's complaints and not allowed to practice proper medicine. We are constantly ticking the QOF box targets.

Dr Bhatti commented that the "Golden Hello" would not be an incentive for a GP to stay. She also said that GP Training Salary will be reduced by 31% so how can you encourage training?

Dr Vine said that this does not address the underlying problems of why GPs do not want to do it.

Mr Carswell asked for suggestions. Perhaps do not charge medical fees of £9000 a year.

Anna commented that the £9000 has only been charged relatively recently. Are there are other reasons?

Dr Bhatti said that the problem lies within the GP training in hospitals and medical students are actively choosing against General Practice.

Mr Carswell said he made sure that the voice of the CCG was heard in a meeting he had with Jeremy Hunt, the Government Secretary of State for Health.

Mr Carswell said that he wants to make sure that at the next election UKIP has a manifesto on health which is as considered, thought through, substantial and credible.

Dr Bhatti commented that Mr Farage, Leader of the UKIP party, had made some silly and insulting comments about doctors not speaking properly. Mr Carswell said he was not here to discuss Mr Farage.

Mr Carswell said that in the Clacton by election one of the issues that came up was not that one of the most popular doctors happened to be born in Romania but why people had to queue outside a GP surgery at 8:30am to get an appointment. We need labour mobility in this country but if we had an Australian type system of immigration here we could decide on the basis of the skills people had who we give preferential treatment to and who we say “no” to. We could therefore have a quota. We do not have this ability at the moment as we cannot control our borders.

**Question from Anna Winter:** Anna asked again about the pledges in the UKIP Health Policy manifesto as to date she has only seen comments about immigration.

Mr Carswell says UKIP does have views on health, but have not yet written the manifesto.

Barry Spake commented that there were too many arguments about the Health Service in Parliament and the politicians should get their act together, ie a consensus of opinion.

Mr Carswell asked if Doctors should charge to see patients?

Dr Bhatti said charging may have to be involved and the public needs to know for a good NHS in the future.

Mr Carswell said that he does not want to see any charges. The NHS should be free at the point of use.

**Question from John Leggett/;** John stated that as University medical students are getting the benefit of our education system, should they not stay in a job here for 4/5 years on a loyalty basis and have a commitment to stay?

**Answer:** Mr Carswell said that in a free society you cannot stop people. You could put disincentives in place.

**Discussion** took place.

Dr Vine commented that she came to Great Bentley because she has family locally. She said that the vast majority are staying in the UK, choosing hospital medicine and most are city based.

**Question:** John Leggett commented that there are too many middle managers and the old system with a Matron was good and worked so why change? Too many spongers on NHS.

**Answer:** Mr Carswell said that at Colchester Hospital there is a management problem but that there is now a new Head of Nursing. Need good management. He also said that hospitals today do a vastly better job medically. We could make it easier perhaps to attract doctors to go into General Practice.

**Question:** Peter Balbirnie questioned not charging people. He believes that people who misuse A&E, Ambulances and GPs, should be charged. He quoted £1000 costs for an ambulance call out.

**Answer:** Mr Carswell asked the questioner if all calls coming in should be billed?

Peter Balbirnie said that it should be the self inflicted drinkers only.

Mr Carswell was alarmed at any form of rationing based on ability to pay.

**Discussion** followed:

Dr Bhatti said that some patients pay for cigarettes but would not be prepared to pay for GPs.

There was discussion of the number of people currently not paying for prescriptions and a figure of 80% was quoted.

Mr Carswell queried triaging patients. He also suggested a system whereby different GP surgeries could be linked online to allow for patients to go to another GP practice.

The PPG members felt they had no desire to go elsewhere. Dr Bhatti said GPs are not like banks.

**Question from Judy Bishop:** said she was fed up with the Government as it has been a “bat and ball” situation at PMQs and, because of previous Governments, the public perception is that the NHS

is in a mess. We have a wonderful GP surgery here. There are many changes which people can take advantage of such as "Care Closer to Home" Integrated Services but she feels people don't want to. She would like a huge change in Government and said she would like the Government to listen rather than be fobbed off.

**Answer:** Mr Carswell said he is working with Bernard Jenkin MP on this very issue and clarified that we need more GPs; we need to improve the NHS with locally elected Health Boards and no charging. We need change the current health system which has an impact on the local people such as those who have been queuing up to see a GP

**Question:** Should we charge to use Colchester Hospital on a Friday or Saturday night? People should not be hindered in hospital.

**Discussion** took place: It was commented on that it would be problematic as, for example, a seemingly drunk person may be a diabetic.

We have the best GPs here in Tendring. If we use these doctors as a model we will not have as many problems. It was suggested to refer this to Bernard Jenkin.

Mr Carswell commented that he has visited every GP surgery in his constituency and Bernard Jenkin too has shown a real interest in GP surgeries.

**Question:** If money is a problem where has the money gone from the sale of the land for housing at Colchester? Also as the over 65s do not pay National Insurance, and if they are earning, why cannot that money go into a general NHS pot?

**Answer:** Mr Carswell stated that he did not know where the money went. He said that the total national spend is £700 Billion and the Tax is £600 Billion making a huge gap. Because of demographic change etc and medical advances it is natural to spend more on Healthcare (currently 9.2% of GDP). Other countries such as Holland, New Zealand, Australia and America spend more.

**Question:** Why would the NHS allow its ambulance services to be privatised? It was commented that at least 60% of the money purportedly goes to Germany.

**Answer:** Mr Carswell said "don't make a pop at free enterprise".

**Question from Anna Winter:** Anna stated that she had been with three different practices and the Great Bentley practice is the best. Would UKIP use the Great Bentley practice as a model and reward the practice for their success?

Dr Bhatti said she is surprised the practice is not asked to be a role model in offering some solutions and cited that at a meeting with Jeremy Hunt, other GPs resisted our practice being approached. Other practices do not appear to be listening and she feels they would benefit, especially those that are failing. Anna said she felt our practice excels because it is very patient centred and patients are listened to.

**Answer:** Mr Carswell proposed that if he gets someone from a different surgery, could he suggest going to see Great Bentley surgery? The answer was "yes".

**Question:** Will UKIP stop all charges such as dentists and opticians under the NHS?

**Answer:** Mr Carswell said he cannot say at this point. He believes that if you stop charging people you will have some very unpleasant consequences re finances.

Discussion followed.

The meeting ended at 8:00pm with Mr Carswell thanking the PPG and this was followed by Mr Carswell being thanked by Melvyn Cox on behalf of the PPG Committee, members and Doctors present.

Refreshments for the meeting were kindly catered by Judy and Alan Bishop

**Date and Time of Next Meeting:** Thursday 19 February 2015 at 6:30pm in the Michael Wright Room.