

Minutes of the Laurel Bank PPG
held on Wednesday 15th April 2026 at 2pm at Malpas Surgery

Present: David Williams, Esther Sadler-Williams, Peter Overmeer, Trish Thompson, Trevor Jackson, Roy Kerry, Rhiannon Wilson, Denise Bradley, Ian Waddington, Dr Amy Evitts and Edward Rigby.

1. Welcome and Apologies

David welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Laurel Bank PPG.

Apologies received from: Marianne Poulton, Janet Foster, Wendy Bell, Suzie Leaman Pauline Hood and Hilary Wells.

2. Approval of Minutes and Matters Arising

None

3. Practice Update on the Merger

Edward provided an update on the merger. He reported that the merger has largely gone to plan, with expected challenges but also early improvements.

Access has improved, with significantly more GP appointments available several weeks ahead. Patients are no longer advised to call 111 due to lack of appointments and should rarely be told to call back tomorrow.

Allocation of usual GPs to former VSG patients is underway and expected to complete by mid-May, coinciding with the clinical system merge, which will take place on May 12th. Once systems merge, reception teams across all sites will have full visibility of the appointment book.

A final pre-merger communication intended for VSG patients was not sent. Post-meeting Edward amended it to a retrospective update ("we have merged") and issued it on 17th April 2026.

Staff have been moved between sites to improve access and ensure consistent cover. No further major updates were reported.

New prescriptions will be issued for 28 days, but the wider transition of repeat prescriptions to 28-day cycles is still under review.

4. Future Objectives

Supporting patients with NHS App access remains a priority. Rhiannon Wilson proposed inviting Opal to run assisted digital sessions again, and this was agreed.

PPG notes will be displayed on noticeboards at all sites, accompanied by a new Chair's message. **(Action David Williams)**. Edward confirmed that the PPG pages from the former VSG website have been transferred to the Laurel Bank Surgery website but this will need review and updating. **(to be agreed at the next meeting)**.

Recruitment of new members also is a priority particularly those representatives of a wider demographic. **(to be discussed at the next meeting)**

The PPG agreed to support the Practice in raising concerns with the ICB about the need for improved buildings and facilities, potentially through an open letter or a representative letter on behalf of patients. **(Action: Esther Sadler-Williams to start draft and circulate)**

Future online meetings will move to Microsoft Teams to improve accessibility and reduce travel barriers.

5. AOB

No further business was raised.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING
Wednesday 13th May 2026
at 6.30pm, via Microsoft Teams