

Patients Participation Group Meeting
Minutes of Meeting held in the Memorial

Hall Annexe

Monday 16/02/2026

Chairperson: Philippa Jones

Minutes: Karen Mannering

Present: Mr & Mrs R, Adams, Mr G Bedford, Mr J Chaplin, Mrs. J. Gardiner, Mrs B Hanks, Mrs. G Holloway, Mr R Knight, Mr F Lawrence, Mr D MacClausland, Mrs G McKay, Mrs D Neilson, Mrs P Savage, Mr & Mrs R Sharp, Ms K Staff, Mr & Mrs C Stafford, Mrs E Wood

Woodchurch Surgery: Dr J Hickey, Ms K Harris

Guest Speaker: Karen Mannering

Apologies: None

Chair's Welcome:

Philippa welcomed everyone, introduced Karen as her new Vice Chair and also tonight's guest speaker. She then outlined the Agenda for the meeting.

Minutes of Last meeting (17/11/2025)

Accepted

Matters Arising:

There were no matters arising.

Karen Mannering

Karen started by introducing herself and her background in HR consultancy, psychology and is also a trained hypno-psychotherapist. She is primarily involved in work that includes different forms of coaching and counselling, and deals with many change projects, largely in the NHS and local government sectors. Tonight she was speaking about the problem of anxiety and what we can do to manage the condition within ourselves.

Karen spoke about the fact that anxiety is a natural state and that in some instances can help us in our lives, but that there are times when it can become all consuming. She also explained that anxiety isn't just about us but also the people in our families and friends – everyone can be touched by anxiety at some point in their lives.

Karen then proceeded to outline some practical management techniques based around immediate techniques, short term tactics and longer term strategies. She guided the group through two breathing exercises (box breathing and counted breathing techniques) and gave an insight into mindfulness. She finished by listing many of the resources available to everyone (including within our village, the NHS and specialist services). As part of her presentation, she also invited Keeley to outline her role as Social Prescriber and Keeley gave examples of where she has interacted with individuals and groups to extend help. She also reminded everyone that she is in the HUB on the first Thursday of each month.

Karen finished by offering a handout summary that is attached to these minutes.

Woodchurch Surgery update from Dr Jack Hickey

Jack advised nurse Jackie has now retired and her replacement, Claudia, will start in early April. Currently, the surgery doesn't have any GP trainees but Dr Parisa Tarannum will be returning from maternity leave and back on placement in May. The PCN also has new mental health nurse, Alison, who supports 18-24 year olds. She sees patients at all four PCN practices.

AOB

None

Next meeting:

Monday 20th. April 2026

Thanks to Liz Wood and Jean Gardiner of the "Heavenly Helpers" for providing refreshments.

The meeting was closed at 7.10pm

Managing Anxiety: Understanding, Normalizing, and Navigating It

What Is Anxiety?

Anxiety is a normal, biological response—your body’s alarm system, not a personal flaw. It can affect anyone, often triggered by stress, uncertainty, workload, social pressure, or past experiences. Each person’s experience is unique.

How Does Anxiety Feel?

Physical signs: Racing heart, tight chest, restlessness, sweating—your body preparing for perceived danger.

Cognitive signs: Worry loops, catastrophizing, difficulty concentrating—thoughts that feel real but are often exaggerated.

The Anxiety Cycle

Anxiety often leads to avoidance, which feels good short-term but reinforces fear in the long run. Breaking this cycle is key to resilience.

Practical Strategies for Managing Anxiety

Immediate Techniques

- **Box breathing:** Inhale, hold, exhale, hold—repeat along four ‘sides’ of your ribcage.
- **Sensory grounding (5-4-3-2-1):** Notice 5 things you see, 4 you feel, 3 you hear, 2 you smell, 1 you taste, or engage in mindfulness.
- **Connect with friends:** Sharing experiences and social support is powerful.
- **Relaxing activities:** Read, listen to music, meditation or enjoy nature. Close your eyes and go to your safe or happy place.

Short-term Cognitive Tactics

- Name the thought: Identify what's worrying you and name it eg 'Black dog'.
- Check the evidence: Is the worry realistic?
- Reframe: Find a more balanced perspective.
- Shrink the catastrophe: Imagine the worst-case scenario and how you'd cope.

Longer-term Behavioural Strategies

- Gradual exposure to feared situations.
- Avoid known triggers when possible.
- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT).
- Maintain a healthy sleep routine.
- Eat healthily and limit stimulants (like caffeine).
- Behaviour change builds resilience over time.

Resources and Support

- Friendship groups, community organizations, volunteering, self-help books, faith, breathing apps, your GP, and mental health services.
- No matter whether you are extrovert or introvert connection is vital—being part of a supportive community can make a big difference.

Remember:

- Anxiety is normal and manageable.
- Small strategies can make a big difference.
- Support is available—just ask!