BRIEFING NOTE

To: Members of Community Affairs

Subj: Parish Community Life Plan 2016 – 2021 - Action Plan, Communications (2): Develop a programme of Councillor Surgeries in locations around the Parish

1. The purpose of this note is to present and discuss the answers needed for the development of Parish Councillor Surgeries, and identify a Councillor that will lead on this project and take it forward, with the help of the Assistant Clerk.

2. Background.
Q30, Regular Surgeries with just one or two Parish Councillors in Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common, instead of speaking to a full council meeting, would be useful and informative. 61.4% said 'Strongly agree/Agree'; 34.2% said 'Neither agree or disagree'; 4.4% said 'Strongly disagree/Disagree'.

This Action is listed in the Parish Community Life Plan 2016 – 2021- Action Plan, Communications, because the majority of questionnaire respondents were favourable to developing Councillor Surgeries.

To hold routine Councillor Surgeries would enable residents to speak with Councillors in a comfortable and more confidential manner than that found at a Council meeting. Councillors would not be able to made decisions but they could bring back the residents' concerns and suggestions to the Council. In addition if residents have better communication with Councillors, they will understand better what the Council does and how to help make changes.

Contact has been made with other local Parish Councils (Cuckfield, Lindfield and Hassocks) – none of these Councils currently have a programme of Councillor Surgeries; however Cuckfield PC and Lindfield PC both said that if it worked for us, they would consider it as well.

3. Other Surgeries held countrywide by UK Parish Councils:
- Street PC – 2 Councillors, 1st Wednesday of month *except Aug and Dec*, 11am – 12noon, in Street Parish Rooms, P Councillors only.
- Warfield PC – 1st Saturday of month, 10 am – 12 noon, in Parish Office, P Councillor and ward Councillor.
- Galleywood PC – Saturdays, 10 am – 12 noon, in library, P Councillors only.
- Ruddington PC – Saturdays, 10 am – 12 noon (*except Aug or Dec*), in Committee Room, P Councillor, Borough Councillor, County Councillor.
- Healeyfield PC – last Thursday of month, 6:30 pm (*except Aug or Dec*), in Village Hall prior to PC meeting. P Councillors only.
- Audley Rural PC – 3rd Thursday of month, 6:30 pm before Council meeting. Asked to make appointment before. P Councillors only.
- Markyate PC – Saturdays, Y2K Hall, 10:30 am – 12 noon, and Wednesdays Methodist church Hall, 2 – 4 pm, alternative months. Listening basis only, no comments, suggestions, agreements or disagreements at time but will be brought to full Council for consideration and/or discussion. P Councillors only.
- Thorngumbald PC – Surgeries discontinued due to lack of interest. Used to be held in PC office for past 16 years. Now concerns or matters can be discussed with Councillor outside meeting or matters raised at Council meeting.

4. Questions to be answered:
a. Where would we have the surgeries? Varying locations or one place? Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common? Lively local spot to capture residents passing by (e.g. local pub or café) or in a quiet spot better for conversation (e.g. library or Conference Room)? How to ensure confidentiality?
b. How often? Once a month or twice a month or once every three months?
c. What day and time? Same time of day or varying times?
d. Who would attend? Parish Councillors: same Councillors each time or a rota of Councillors and how to select the Councillor(s)? District and/or County Councillors also?
e. PC office staff to attend?
f. Should we have people with specialist knowledge there, i.e. PCSO, WSCC Highways Officer? (but will this focus the questions to be solely about police issues or highways issues)
g. Should this be a pilot for 1 year?

RECOMMENDATION: that the Committee identifies a Councillor to lead on this project and take it forward, together with the help of the Assistant Clerk.

Roberta Taylor, Assistant Clerk
11 November 2016