

Item 15: Parish Council Drop-in Surgeries'

For decision

Coddenham Parish Council undertook fortnightly 'Drop-in Surgeries' at the Coddenham Community Shop on Tuesday afternoons from the beginning of June until the end of September, to make councillors more accessible and to improve engagement with residents. This was a trial exercise both to test the concept and to see if there was demand for it. The result is that the Parish Council can resource surgeries and that it has a mechanism for processing requests / comments, but there was minimal demand for it on a Tuesday afternoon in the summer months of 2022.

Drop-in surgeries are offered by some other parish councils, but they are uncommon. Where they seem to have had an extended life, they have either been on Saturday mornings or before the meeting of the parish council and include district councillor and/or the Police and Crime Commissioner representation, be in larger parishes and held no more frequently than monthly.

In light of our experience, we might now say, "we tried this, it didn't work, we should now draw a line". That would be a shame and not really support the ethos of being accessible to assist residents.

My proposal is:

1. to hold 1:2:1 monthly surgeries, ideally on Saturdays, either in the Shop or piggy backing off the coffee mornings at St. Mary's, if that is acceptable to the PCC,
2. supplemented by a 'beefed up' general Q&A session before each Parish Council meeting to include John Whitehead and/or Tim Passmore, if they are amenable and
3. promotion of an e-mail address / online form where residents can ask questions / seek advice, including how to navigate SCC/MSDC services.

We should run this through to the end of April and review at May's meetings (including the Parishioners' Annual Meeting).

Cllr Nick Mills