

REPORT TO ALL MEMBER WORKING GROUP COUNCIL SURGERIES



Report Reference C-20-04
Meeting Date 5th July 2021
Agenda Item 7
Prepared by Cllr Matthew Robertson

1.0 BACKGROUND

Public surgeries were an integral part of Knutsford Town Council's engagement with residents until 2016. Initially set up in Over ward in the latter half of the 2000s, surgeries were held at 106 Longridge.

Surgeries were then introduced for the whole of Knutsford and usually held at the public library but were later held at the Makers Market.

The surgeries were stopped in 2016 due to the following reasons:

- 1) There was rarely any attendance by the public and often there were more councillors than members of the public present.
- 2) Engaging with the public has changed considerably over the last 10-15 years with social media and email now being the prime method of communication.

2.0 PROPOSAL

It is proposed that surgeries should be reinstated but in a different format, more suitable for the current times. For surgeries to be successful Knutsford Town Council needs to understand what the public wants and what format they should be in.

The proposal is to reintroduce surgeries but with a maximum 2 councillors at a time and be from different wards (where possible).

- Surgeries should be well advertised and plenty of notice given to residents. Social Media should be used to publicise when surgeries will be held. An online booking option will be provided for residents who wish to book a slot, but residents will also be able to *drop in* to any surgery.
- They should also be moved around the different wards but ensure that they are easy to find and arrive at. A 12-month calendar will be published to show where and when surgeries will be held. Appendix A contains a list of potential locations for the ward-based surgeries.
- Every other meeting should be held virtually so there would be 6 virtual meetings and 6 'Real' meetings a year. Of the 6 in physical surgeries, two would be held in Over Ward and two in Nether Ward; the former as it is the largest ward and the latter as it covers the town centre.

- Rules and guidelines will need to be provided to councillors advising them of disclosable information and current topics.
- Surgeries would be set for up to two hours. The Town Mayor would not be expected to staff a surgery during their term but all members would be expected to staff at least one surgery per civic year.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the working group:

- a) Approves the reintroduction of monthly councillor surgeries
- b) Determines when surgeries should commence
- c) Discusses the potential days/times surgeries should be held
- d) Discusses the potential locations of surgeries

APPENDIX A POTENTIAL LOCATIONS FOR WARD BASED SURGERIES

Ward	Potential Locations
Bexton	5 th Knutsford Scout Hut, Leisure Centre
Nether	Library, Council Offices, 1 st Knutsford Scout Hut
Norbury Booths	Toft Cricket Club
Over	The Welcome, Fire Station, St Cross Church, 2 nd Knutsford Scout Hut