HURSTPIERPOINT & SAYERS COMMON
PARISH COUNCIL

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Professor Colin Mellors OBE
Chair of the Commission
The Review Office (Mid Sussex)
Local Government Boundary Commission (England)
14th Floor, Millbank Tower
LONDON
SW1P 4QP

21 May 2021

Dear Professor Mellors,

Electoral Review of Mid Sussex District Council 2021

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your electoral review of Mid Sussex District Council 2021. The Parish Council discussed the matter at its 29 April meeting and I have been asked to send you our comments.

We note the decision by Mid Sussex District Council to reduce its size from 54 councillors to 48, to take effect from the May 2023 election and that you are minded to support it. We are happy to help you draw up a pattern of wards to accommodate the 48 councillors as requested.

We note the three legal criteria that you are required to comply with namely:

i) each councillor should represent a similar number of electors;
ii) wards should reflect the interests and identities of local communities; and
iii) arrangements should provide for effective and convenient local government.

The current boundaries of Hurstpierpoint & Sayers Common Parish Council are within the MSDC 'Hurstpierpoint and the Downs' ward. The ward covers an area far greater than the boundaries of our Parish Council and extends to the Pyecombe, Fulking and Poynings villages.

We note the expected electorate of Mid Sussex in 2027 is 130,211. With 48 councillors that quates to an average of 2,712 electorate per councillor. The current number of ward councillors for MSDC's 'Hurstpierpoint and the Downs' ward is three (3 x 2,712 = 8,136). The projected ward population for 2027 is 6,897. We therefore support the continuation of three councillors for the ward.

Please note the observations on the identities and interests of our local community are set out below:

- The geological border that helps define the parish to the south is the South Downs. The chalk hills which create the South Downs runs along the southern boundary of the parish. The weaker clays to the north form the Low Weald. Water courses do not play a significant role in the immediate topography of the area but more recent man-made physical boundaries include two main roads.

- The A23 cuts through the parish in a north / south direction separating all the old footpaths and bridleways between Albourne, Sayers Common and Hurstpierpoint. The new A2300 dual carriageway which is currently under construction also cuts off the northern part of the Parish at Goddards Green.

- Settlements have existed since the Doomsday Book (1291) with the splendid 141 room Grade-One Elizabethan mansion of Danny House (1582) and Pakyns Manor (1703) being the most significant today. More recently, housing developments have expanded the population of the parish primarily through the 140 home development at Iden Hurst and 17 homes in Layton Fields. As well as 38 homes in Talbot Mead and Hurst Beech, north of Chalkers Lane and 61 homes south of Chalkers Lane off Mildred Durrant Way. There is also a further 'soon to be occupied' 133 homes off the London Road in Sayers Common, plus a 70 bed care home. Burgess Hill housing developments continue to enlarge the population within the north east of our parish boundary with another 925 homes planned ("the northern arc").

- Vital services support the residents of the parish namely the Health Centre in Trinity Road, Hurstpierpoint and the South East Coast Ambulance Service. The GP Surgery is part of a wider Mid Sussex service with three health centre and 12 GP's serving over 20,000 patients. Hospital Service are provided by the newly formed University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust, managing seven local hospitals.

- The St Lawrence Primary School and the Library are also in Trinity Road, Hurstpierpoint. (Hurstpierpoint College provides a private education for ages 4-18 year olds.) The main local authority maintained secondary school of choice is the OFSTED rated "Outstanding" Downlands School, Hassocks for 11-16 year olds. Safe cycling access to Downlands School is vital as the single lane Hurstpierpoint High Street and Stone Pound crossroads into Hassocks Railway Station can create congestion and gridlock traffic at rush hour.

- The nearest train stations are at Wivelsfield, Burgess Hill and Hassocks on the London Victoria Line. Traffic coming from the west into Hassocks railway station is severely restricted by access through Hurstpierpoint High Street and the Stone Pound Crossroads where the A273 meets the B2116 (Hassocks Road / Wickham Hill / High Street). The two main bus companies routes are Compass and Stage Coach which provide limited services.

- The Anglican churches of Holy Trinity Church, Hurstpierpoint and Christ's Church, Sayers Common provide regular church services. There is also the Methodist Church in Cuckfield Road, the Evangelical Church in the High Street and the Point Church which runs drop-in coffee shop and advice sessions at various venues. The Hurstpierpoint Food Bank is managed by St John's Church, Burgess Hill.

- Hurstpierpoint High Street is home to numerous independent businesses including a butcher, green grocers, baker and delicatessen and many unique and quirky gift shops. The Post Office, Lloyds Chemist and Co-Op provide other vital services. More restaurants, three pubs, two off-licences, a range of take-aways and an exciting new coffee shop provide refreshments. Sadly, the Nationwide has recently closed its branch permanently, making the post office even more necessary, yet it too has now removed its ATM.

- Sayers Common has an excellent pub and a combined community shop, village hall and cafe which opened in April 2014 to meet the needs of local residents. It is managed as a Mutual, by the community for the community with a paid manager and then staffed by volunteers.

- Further village halls and community centres are available at the Village Centre in Trinity Road and Court Bushes Community Hub off Willow Way, Hurstpierpoint. The Scout Hut off Browns Twins Road, the Cadet Hall and the Guide Hut, Trinity Road, can also be hired. These venues all have an extensive range

of parent and toddler groups and clubs that provide a vast range of community activities from karate, gymnastics, knitting, embroidery and computer programming. Holy Trinity Church is also changing its internal layout to provide more flexible space for hire.

- An annual Hurst Festival, St Lawrence Fair, visiting Circus and programme of events at the Players Theatre provide a plentiful supply of artistic and cultural activity. Further leisure groups include choirs, parent and toddler groups, slimming groups and adult education courses.

- Hurst Colts Football Club cater for all ages of young people and Fairfield Cricket Club have youth, men and women's teams in Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common. Hurstpierpoint Lawn Tennis Club and the Hurstpierpoint Bowling Club are also thriving in the centre of Hurstpierpoint.

- There is an abundance of walking opportunities in and around the parish from the National Trust's Wolstonbury Hill to the 50 acre Hurst Meadows just to the north of Hurstpierpoint. These Meadows, owned by the Parish Council, support volunteering opportunities such as green gyms, a community orchard, butterfly monitoring and great crested newt surveys. The Meadows are managed as countryside open space to provide residents with access to an attractive landscape for walks and quiet enjoyment of the breath taking views to the north. This amenity has been the life-blood of Hurstpierpoint during the COVID lock-downs and a victim of its own success. It has undoubtedly provided users with much needed fresh air and exercise and just as importantly, a boost for users' mental health.

- Finally, the Parish Council supports a number of excellent environmental initiatives in partnership with local groups and volunteers, such as litter-picking, terracycle recycling and reducing the mowing of verges in May. The Hurstpierpoint Society and the Sayers Common Village Society work tirelessly to protect and improve the village environments.

I hope this supporting evidence demonstrates the parish constitutes a coherent, self-sufficient and vibrant community. The Mid Sussex District Council Settlement Sustainability Review in May 2015 identified Hurstpierpoint as a Category 2 settlement and Sayers Common as a Category 3 settlement. The acknowledged hierarchy reflects that there is a mutually supporting infrastructure in place as the residents of Sayers Common and Goddards Green look to the larger village of Hurstpierpoint for some of their educational, health and social activities and wider shopping experience.

With the construction of the new A23 and the widening of the A2300 together with the northern arc development, these man-made constructs may change the behaviour of residents going forward and in turn we recognise that they may influence the boundaries of the parish.

We look forward to reviewing your draft recommendations when you publish them on 3 August 2021 and commenting on them again before 11 October 2021. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Miss Sarah Groom
CLERK TO THE COUNCIL