SPRINGFIELD PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE EXTRA ORDINARY MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY 23RD JANUARY 2023
7.00P.M. SPRINGFIELD PARISH CENTRE

Chairman: Cllr S Sullivan
Vice-Chairman: Cllr C Garrett

Cllrs: G Brazendale, S Byrne-Lagrue, R Carson, A Chong, I Fuller, M Girling, N Gulliver, D Havell, B Jeapes, R Lee and R Moore.

In attendance: Clerk to the Council

60 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received and approved from Cllrs A Potts and Y Spence.

61 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & DISPENSATION

Members were reminded of minute 45 of the meeting held on 12th December 2022, where a dispensation had been granted to all members. No other declarations were made.

62 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chariman informed those in attendance that the Finance Officer had tendered their resignation and would leave their employment in early February.

63 MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING – 12 December 2022

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2022, be approved and signed as a correct record.

64 FEBRUARY 27TH COUNCIL MEETING

Members were advised that the Clerk to the Council would be on annual leave for the next scheduled full council and Chelmer Village Trustee meetings on 27th February.

RESOLVED: that the date of the February 2023, Council meeting and Chelmer Village Trustee meeting be transferred to 20th February.

65 SPRINGFIELD PARISH PRECEPT

Further to minute 53 of the council meeting held on 12th December 2022, a meeting between the Chelmer Village Shadow Council and appointed representatives from Springfield Council had taken place. The terms of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), had taken place at that meeting.

The terms had agreed to share administration services on a % basis depending on the level of service required for each council. Following the agreement to share

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administration/service costs the appointed Springfield representatives Cllrs Fuller and Garrett (Cllr Carson did not attend) met and discussed the precept requirement for Springfield Parish. There was a recommendation from the representatives that the precept should be retained at no more than a 5% increase or a £60 maximum per household charge.

The committee requirements would see an increase of a 68.5% on a Band D tax base (£88.79). The parish appointed rep's felt this to be an unreasonable sum to impose on residents. Discussion associated with the required precept of £257,809 ensued.

The situation causing the severe increase had been the Community Governance Review conducted by Chelmsford City Council. The tax base for Springfield Parish had reduced from 8210.47 in the current year to 2903.53 for the forthcoming (23/24) year.

During a lengthy debate members considered reserves and assets and how these might be distributed after 1st April along with the implications on the parish precept.

Members were reminded of the Councils reserve policy which states:

General Funds

i. *The council shall maintain a prudent level of general reserves sufficient to ensure it can meet its on-going commitments, respond to any need for emergency or unplanned expenditure, and overcome any cash flow difficulty which might arise.*

ii. *The council will normally aim to maintain general reserves at a minimum of 9 months running costs. Net budgeted annual running costs means the expenditure which each committee has estimated it will spend on its on-going services in the following year, less the income it expects to receive, after any adjustments to the budgets have been made by the Finance & Policy Committee.*

Retaining the precept increase at a low level, as recommended, hi-lighted several complications including depleting reserves and creating the need for a large council tax increase the following year with no reserve to underpin a further low increase.

At the present time parish councils are not bound by the referendum principles when setting their precept, however, should government review this and bring parishes into the legislation this would add further pressure on the future precept setting.

Options to reduce services provided by the Council were tabled, the majority of members felt this would be detrimental to the residents of Springfield and its environs. The Parish Centre and its facilities were used by many residents of the local area for a variety of social and educational activities.

In conclusion it was:

RESOLVED: that (a) the MoU between Springfield Parish Council and The Village Council of Chelmer will be signed for a 2 year period, commencing on 1st April 2023 and would contain information related to the sharing of administration and staffing costs for that period;

(b) asset separation and financial reserves will be discussed at a later date, should the Village Council of Chelmer submit a request for transfer once it is a formal body;

(c) when put to the vote (8 in favour 2 against) members agreed to the retention of two fulltime handypersons;

(d) a sum of £50,000 would be taken from the Parish reserve to off-set the 2023/24 precept;

(e) when put to the vote 8 members voted in favour and 1 member voted against (remainder abstained) the precept requirement to be submitted to Chelmsford City Council will be £207,809 as detailed on the attached information.

Meeting closed 8.15 p.m.

Cllr S. Sullivan....... [redacted]
Chairman

Date 20/2/23

2022 / 2023	Committee	Precept 2023 / 2024
82,125	Parish Centre	83,169
238,140	Finance & Policy	128,574
34,163	Environment & Leisure	15,185
61,055	Public Works Loan x 2	30,881
15,000	Beaulieu Community	0
430,483	Sub Total	257,809
£52.67 Tax base 8210.47	The Community Governance Review undertaken by Chelmsford City Council significantly decreased the parish tax base for the 23/24 year. Tax base 2903.53	An extra ordinary meeting of the Council held on 23rd January 2023, agreed to use less **£50,000 from reserve funding** to offset a 68.5% increase. Bringing the final **precept requirement to £207,809** **£71.57** (35.88 %)