

Springfield Parish Council

Minutes of the Full Council

The Council met at 7pm on Monday 26th February 2024 in the Council Chamber, Springfield Parish Centre, St Augustine's Way, Springfield, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 6GX.

Councillor R Carson chaired the meeting.

Present: Cllrs: E Aluko, G Brazendale, S Byrne-Laguer, B Chadwick, A Chong, N Dudley, R Lee and I Fuller.

Agenda

57. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted for Cllrs S Sullivan, J Pioli, K Hine and D Havell.

58. Nomination for Minuting Meeting

As there was no Clerk Cllr R Carson nominated Cllr S Byrne-Laguer to clerk the meeting.

59. Declarations of interest

Cllr N Dudley declared a non-pecuniary interest on item 66, Play in the Park, by virtue of being the Cabinet Member for Play in the Park. Cllrs A Chong and S Byrne-Laguer declared an interest by virtue of being Parish Councillors for Chelmer Village Parish Council. No other interests were declared.

60. Chairmans announcements

- i. An e-mail had been sent to Sage to terminate the contract, but it now needs a letter from the Chairman to terminate the contact as soon as possible.
- ii. It has been discovered that the contract with Edge is for five years and if the Council wishes to break said contract it will cost £1,179 20% of the contract. There will be difficulties about leaving this system and uploading a new system and it is not clear which figures from Sage were transferred to Edge. There is a need to have accurate figures which at present is still causing problems. It has been agreed to wait until the end of year figures are available and then to discuss what the Council will do.
The expenditure up to the end of January is £156,882.11 as against 259,917.22 and the full budget reads £130,079.72 as against £160,897.00.
- iii. The Chairman is going to appeal the HMRC figures as he cannot understand how the previous Clerk arrived at the disputed figures. It requires research into how the Clerk arrived at her figures and to find if that payment was incorrect. Cllr Aluko agreed to look into the matter further and try to come to a conclusion. The council was also worried that it may be charged interest on what was owed, that whilst the Council were sorting out the problem the interest may still be accumulating.
- iv. The café is doing a brisk trade and has no problems that need attention.

- v. There was a regrettable incident on Friday 23 February when a group managed to damage the front door. They also overstayed their time but after speaking to them agreed to pay for the damage and the extra time. It has now been decided that all party hirers must pay a £200 deposit a week before the event, and failure to do so will result in denied access to the building. There are also changes to the booking form to ensure that if hirers bring their own equipment, it is first authorised by the Premises Manager before it is brought into the Centre. There will now be a written record of every £200 deposit which will need to be signed both by the Centre staff when received and again by the Hirer when the event is over.
- vi. A question was raised about having a notice board in the front entrance as there is a lot of footfall and people can see whether a vacancy is advertised or information on a forthcoming event. Cllr S Byrne-Laguerre will mention this to the Premises Manager.

61. Public Question Time.

There were no members of the public present.

62. Minutes of the Council Meetings

Minutes of the meeting held on the 10 January 2024 were agreed and signed.

63. Minutes of Committee meetings

Minutes of Finance and Policy Committee held on the 12 February 2024 were agreed and signed.

64. Parish Sign

The council was asked that the Springfield sign currently in situ in Pollards Green be moved into the workman's building until such time as a suitable spot can be found in Springfield Parish. It will be moved when a new handyman is appointed.

65. Staff Update

a. The council has lost a handyman as from the beginning of February, and an advert for a new person is underway. It has been noted that the council does not require two handymen at certain times of the year. The recruitment is for 25 hours on a fixed one-year contract reason being that there is only a year to go before the Memorandum of Understanding comes to an end and if Chelmer Village decide to break the Memorandum, then it will mean that there is not enough work for two people.

b. The Council's motor insurance policy requires two named drivers. At present one of the named drivers is the Handyman who has left the Council. To employ a person as and when needed is not a viable option. The contract hours will be agreed between Phil and Rob.

c. An initial offer had been made for the Booking Clerk vacancy, but the person had declined the offer. Fortunately, another person was interested and had an interview on the 27 February 2024 and is due to start on the 11 March 2024. Pay scale is SCP 9 for 25 Hours.

66. Play in the Park.

Owing to the unfortunate situation regarding the Clerk, the Play in the Park was not taken up for the Easter Holidays. Cllr Lee explained what Play in the Park involved in activities which young children could be involved in a morning or afternoon session. There is nothing to be done about the forthcoming Easter holidays but by a unanimous decision Springfield will host Play in the Park for Summer Holidays. Cllr Dudley did not vote as she has a non-pecuniary interest.

There being no other business the meeting finished at 8.20.pm.

Signed.....Date.....