



SPRINGFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Springfield Council recognises that it is uniquely placed to represent the views of its constituents and provide community leadership. This strategy sets out how it engages with the local community to identify its needs and aspirations and how it can improve community engagement to give people a voice and involve them in decisions affecting their quality of life.

1. Springfield Town Council aims to:

- Represent and promote the interests of Springfield and its people of all ages in all its activities.
- Provide the best possible amenities and services by the efficient use of available resources.
- Actively involve local people in decisions affecting activities in the local area.
- Promote equality of opportunity and oppose discrimination.
- Be open and accountable in all it does.
- Enhance quality of life by protecting and enhancing Springfield ecological and environmental assets.

2. In order to achieve these aims, the Council will:

- Work closely with residents, local businesses and community groups.
- Engage with as many people as possible who want to participate in decision making, monitoring services and planning for the future (particularly those hard-to-reach groups).
- Ensure, that through the use of a wide range of approaches to public involvement and community engagement, we actively encourage the involvement of residents to capture their views and learn their concerns, and effectively use those views as an integral part of the decision-making process.
- Ensure that residents have opportunities to be heard at every stage, and the capacity to be effective citizens.

3. Defining the community

The Parish Council considers the community of Springfield to consist of:

- All residents of the town.
- Users of the Parish Council's services.
- Those who work or own businesses within the Parish.
- Young people who live and/or go to school within the town; and local voluntary organisations, clubs and societies and any group or organisation that represents some or any of the members of the above sections of the community.
- Additionally, the Parish Council recognises that there are certain bodies that are crucial to the quality of life in Springfield and aims to maintain excellent working relationships with these bodies, including Chelmsford City Council, Essex County Council, the Police and the neighbouring Town and Parish Councils.

4. How community engagement is facilitated

The Parish Council provides the following:

- A website with full details of the Council's work.
- Regularly updated noticeboards promoting the work of the Council, its partners and other local organisations.
- Residents may contact the Parish Council offices in person and by telephone during opening hours, with an answerphone provided for messages outside these hours.
- Details of how to contact the Parish Clerk's office and Councillors are provided on the noticeboard and website.
- Ensuring all meetings of full Council and Committees are open to the public and press with a period set aside for residents to speak.
- Councillor surgeries could be held to address important issues affecting the community; Consultation events provide opportunities for residents to give their views on plans for new facilities or services in the town.
- Holding a wide range of community events which provide opportunities to engage with the public and raise community spirit.
- Press releases to manage the media effectively to promote and defend the Council.
- Use of the Council logo to promote the work of the Council.
- Good internal communications – making sure staff and members are informed and give out consistent messages and representations on behalf of the community.
- Parish Councillors represent the Council on various outside bodies to ensure good two-way communication with regular reports
- Councillors provide informal opportunities for residents to speak to them.

5. Improving community engagement The Parish Council will:

- Publicise the positive results from working with the community and other partners.
- Work closely with local Youth Groups to ensure the views of young people are taken into account.
- Identify new opportunities to work with local community groups.
- Make full use of modern communication methods.
- Review the Community Engagement Strategy annually to ensure its relevance.

6. Third party requests

- Springfield Council is committed to openness and transparency, requests for information from anonymous parties will not be responded to.