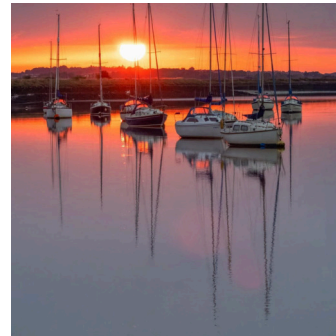


Annual report 2026



Town Mayor's Report - Here's what has happened in the last year!



Another year of serving the community of South Woodham Ferrers draws to a close, and it has been both a privilege and an honour to represent our town as Mayor.

This has been a particularly significant year for your Town Council. Having previously achieved the Bronze Award, we were delighted to be recognised with the Silver Award for Local Council governance. This accolade reflects our commitment to exceeding our legal responsibilities in governance, strengthening community engagement, and striving for continuous improvement. We are proud of this achievement and are already working towards Gold accreditation in the future.

In September 2025, the Council was further honoured to receive the High Sheriff's Award in recognition of the valuable service we provide to our community. This was a proud moment for the town and a testament to the dedication of our Councillors and staff.

This year also marked the 30th Anniversary of our town's Garden of Remembrance. It has been especially meaningful to work alongside the Finley James Fund, a baby loss awareness charity, to install two permanent Christmas trees. These trees provide families with a special place to hang Christmas stars in memory of loved ones whose lives were far too short. We are also one of the few councils to offer a "Letters to Heaven" post box, which has been warmly received and widely appreciated by residents.

Over the past year, I have had the pleasure of attending more than 29

engagements and community events. Each occasion has highlighted the vibrancy, resilience, and generosity of spirit that defines South Woodham Ferrers.

On a personal note, it was a great privilege to welcome and shake the hands of our local lifeboat crew when they made a special journey up the River Crouch from their base in Burnham-on-Crouch. The Royal National Lifeboat Institution has been one of my chosen charities over the past two years. These dedicated volunteers receive no direct government funding and rely entirely on public generosity to continue their life-saving work. I would encourage everyone, where possible, to support them.

Among the many memorable moments of the year was the wonderful opportunity to attend a resident's 100th birthday celebration — a joyful reminder of the rich history and strong community spirit within our town.

As my mayoral year draws to a close, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to my Deputy Mayor, Councillor Lisa Kelly, my fellow Councillors, and our hardworking Town Council staff. Their dedication, professionalism, and commitment to our community make everything we achieve possible.

It has been an immense honour to serve as your Mayor, and I look forward to seeing South Woodham Ferrers continue to flourish in the year ahead.

TOWN MAYOR COUNCILLOR ALAN SHEARRING

This Annual Report will cover:

Town Mayor's Report

Planning & Environment Committee

Events, Community & Leisure Committee

Champions Manor Hall

Finance & Projects Committee

Councillors and Council



PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Chairman: Councillor Murrough O'Brien
Vice Chairman: Councillor Scott Wilson

The following matters are reserved and delegated to the Environment Committee: Issues in and around South Woodham Ferrers to include the following: Traffic Management, Litter Control, Roads, Pavements and Footpaths, Signage, Public Transport, Garden of Remembrance, Millennium Place and the town sign, Woodham Fenn, hanging baskets and sponsored roundabout.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS & CONSULTATIONS

The Committee holds monthly meetings to review local planning applications submitted to Chelmsford City Council, with an average of around five applications considered per meeting. During the year, the Committee also responded to Maldon District Council as part of its review of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) submitted under application 25/00926/SOR.

WOODHAM FENN

Works at Woodham Fen included the removal of the old cattle fence, along with the repair and replacement of bridges to improve safety and accessibility.

JOHN COX

The Council secured 420 saplings from the Woodland Trust to establish a new woodland area at John Cox Middle Field. Planting will take place during the appropriate season. Thanks are extended to Meadowcroft Garden Centre for storing the saplings.



TREE WORKS

Planned tree maintenance continued throughout the year at Woodham Fen, in line with recommendations from Essex Wildlife Trust. In addition, emergency tree works were carried out on Uniform Youth Road in June 2025. 400 trees donated by the Woodland Trust were planted at John Cox in April 2026.



SLUICE GATE

Following incidents of graffiti on the sluice gate wall at Inchbonnie Road, a local artist was commissioned to create a wildlife-themed mural, transforming the area and enhancing the local environment.

ALLOTMENTS

The Council would like to thank the Allotment Association for their ongoing commitment and hard work in managing the sites. The allotments remain well subscribed and continue to operate a healthy waiting list.

HANGING BASKETS AND PLANTERS

Seasonal floral displays were provided in the town centre and other retail areas, with hanging baskets adding vibrant colour throughout the town. The Council also continued its sponsorship of the Inchbonnie Road roundabout.



GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE

The Garden of Remembrance marked its 30th anniversary in 2025 with a re-dedication ceremony in September. A new plaque and a "Letters to Heaven" memorial post box were unveiled. Two pot-grown Nordmann Fir trees were planted to commemorate children and babies lost. The garden remains a valued space for residents and families. For further information, contact the office on 01245 321817.

EVENTS, COMMUNITY & LEISURE COMMITTEE

Chairman: Councillor Russ Crosbie

Vice Chairman: Councillor Bob Massey

The following matters are reserved and delegated to the Events, Community & Leisure Committee: Children's Play Area and Blue Cage Hullbridge Road, the Bowling Green, Allotments, the Bandstand, leisure facilities and delivery of the Town Council's annual programme of events.

SWIMMING POOL

The Town Council contributed £10,000 towards the ongoing operational costs of the swimming pool at the Leisure Centre, helping to ensure continued access to this important community facility.

PLAY IN PARK

The Town Council funded the Play in the Park schemes organised by Chelmsford City Council in South Woodham Ferrers. These free sessions were held at Saltcoats Park during the summer months.



REMEMBRANCE DISPLAYS

An exceptional display of hundreds of hand-knitted and crocheted poppies, generously donated by South Woodham Ferrers residents, was showcased at the Bandstand. This year, the display was also placed on a Tommy figure located on the bench outside Champions Manor Hall for Remembrance Sunday and will return again for the forthcoming commemoration.

SUMMER YOUTH EVENTS

The summer of 2025 saw the return of summer youth activities during the school holidays. A total of six events were held, made possible with the support of the Bowls Club, Steve Bonsor, Essex Kids Camp and Primal Martial Arts.

VE DAY 80 ANNIVERSARY

The 80th anniversary of VE Day was commemorated in May 2025 with two well-attended events: a Beacon Lighting Ceremony and a Seniors' Sing-a-long, both of which were enjoyed by the community.

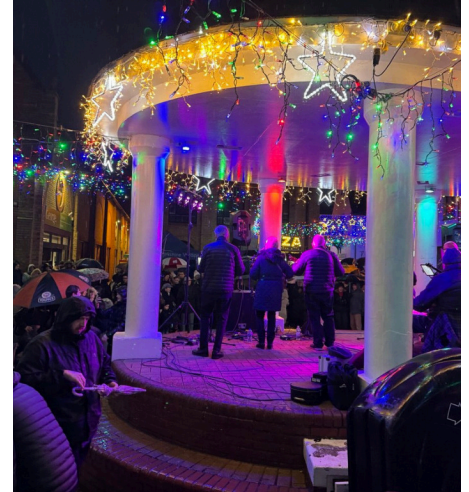


80'S SUMMER EVENT

A highly successful 80's Summer Event brought the local community together for an afternoon of food, refreshments, live music and children's activities, creating a lively and inclusive atmosphere.

SENIOR'S COACH TRIP

A popular Senior's Coach Trip took place in July, visiting Great Yarmouth. Despite less favourable weather conditions, the trip was thoroughly enjoyed by all those who attended.



CHRISTMAS LIGHTS AND FESTIVE ACTIVITIES

The Town Council arranged for the Christmas lights to be installed throughout the town centre, with a contribution from Asda. The annual Christmas Fayre proceeded as usual and attracted a strong turnout from residents. In addition, the Senior's Christmas Lunch was well attended, and the annual pantomime, Dick Whittington, was enjoyed by audiences.

OTHER EVENTS

Throughout 2025/26, the Town Council continued to support a wide range of regular community activities, including:

- a weekly Toddler Group on Monday mornings;
- a monthly Seniors' Film Club;
- a Children's Halloween Party; and
- Summer Fun sessions at Champions Manor Hall.
- Youth Club, held on Tuesday evenings and operated by the YMCA on behalf of the Town Council

EASTER ACTIVITIES

A free Easter Egg Hunt took place across the town centre, with children collecting their chocolate prizes from the Easter Bunny.

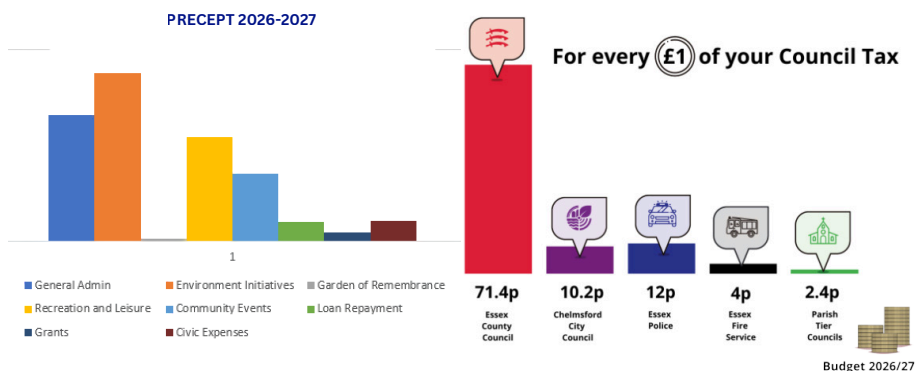
FINANCE & PROJECTS COMMITTEE

Chairman: Councillor Darren Thompson
Vice Chairman: Councillor Donna Eley

The Finance & Projects Committee is responsible for Town Council land and premises as well as civic affairs and public relations, including;

- Agree and review council policies and procedures for full council to consider
- Agree financial policies and budgets for full council to consider
- Consider new projects to enhance the local community

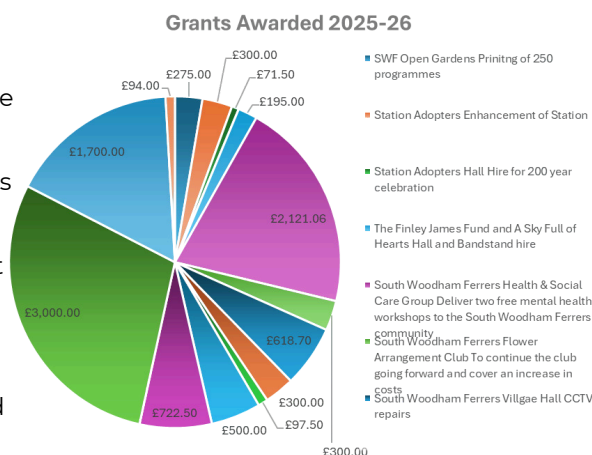
The Committee co-ordinates the budgetary process and recommends a precept to cover the annual expenses of the Council, which is determined at a Council meeting in January each year. For the financial year 2026/2027 the Band D Precept has increased by £0.07 to £76.34 an increase of 0.09%. The precept for 2026/27 is £468,080.



GRANTS AWARDED

For the financial year ending 31 March 2026 the grants shown on the chart were awarded under the Town Council's Grants scheme.

If you have a project that you think may meet the Town Council's criteria please contact the office on 01245 321817 or visit our website to download an application form.



COUNCILLORS BY WARD

CHETWOOD WARD

Councillor Bob Massey
 Councillor Alan Shearring
 Councillor Russ Crosbie
 Councillor Alicia Cash

COLLINGWOOD WARD

Councillor Peter Ferry
 Councillor Scott Wilson
 Councillor Malcolm Sismey
 Councillor Darren Thompson
 Councillor Mia Barnett

ELMWOOD WARD

Councillor Jackie Birch
 Councillor Murrough O'Brien
 Councillor Lisa Kelly
 Councillor Terry Sherlock
 Councillor Frances Knox

WOODVILLE WARD

Councillor Keith Bentley
 Councillor Donna Eley
 Councillor Ian Roberts
 Councillor Toni Perham Lake
 Councillor Pauline Price

THE COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE SYSTEM

The Town Council's Committees meet throughout the Council year to assist in progressing the Council's business. Notices of all meetings are published on the Town Council website, noticeboards and in the Focus column.

PROJECTS

- Repairs made to Town Council Sign at Millenium Place
- Repairs to CCTV cameras at the Village Hall
- Decorative Railings to be installed on the Bandstand.



NALC AWARD

South Woodham Ferrers Town Council achieved the Silver Award in December 2025.



Champions Manor Hall

PARTY BOOKINGS & REGULAR HIRE

As in previous years, this year has again seen a high volume of party bookings, particularly at weekends. In addition to the usual celebration events, the hall has also been hired for a variety of occasions, including charity fundraising evenings.

Champions Manor Hall strives to accommodate all booking requests, and our staff are always happy to assist with any questions you may have. For further information, please call **01245 321817**.

We have welcomed regular hirers throughout the year, with an increasing number of groups choosing our facilities for their activities. We look forward to continuing this growth and providing an even wider range of opportunities for our residents.