



# South Woodham Ferrers Town Council

## Business and Action Plan

**2026 - 2029**

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## **Introduction**

The South Woodham Ferrers Town Council will have a long-term strategy by means of a Business and Action Plan which is developed every 3 years. Electors are actively encouraged to attend all meetings and discuss ideas and projects and other priorities in the town that can be incorporated within this plan when agreed by Council and committees.

The plan is designed to form a long-term vision for the Town Council to follow; many of the issues identified may take several years and a significant amount of money to achieve. Some issues may require the help and resources of external bodies, and this will be dependent on the available resources.

The Plan contains Key Themes and Priorities for the current year which will be a rolling document, reviewed every 6-8 months and amended as the various Themes and Priorities are achieved and new ones identified. It forms part of a future framework to aid the direction we wish to take.

## **Background**

South Woodham Ferrers is a Town in the county of Essex, with a population of approximately 16,000 residents which equates to around 6,600 households. In 1889, a new railway station opened in South Woodham Ferrers around which housing development, in the form of plotlands, took place. The first period of major growth in South Woodham Ferrers took place in the 1960s and early 1970s, focussed along the north-south spine of the Hullbridge Road. At this point the population of South Woodham Ferrers was approximately 4,500 people.

As a part of the New Town movement, Essex County Council led the large scale, comprehensive expansion of South Woodham Ferrers, planning this to be a 'new country town on the River Crouch.' The first major stage of development resulting from the new town programme took place to the north of the town, with later development from the mid-1980s onwards taking place to the south of the railway line. The pace of development has been more limited since the turn of the century, but plans are currently in place for major developments to the north of the town in future years. In 1981 HM Queen Elizabeth II opened the town square, which is named after her.

## Green Mission Statement

Our aim is to create a sustainable green community that values its natural environment and promotes economic growth while preserving our natural resources. We will strive to reduce our ecological footprint by minimizing waste, conserving resources, and creating green processes to ensure that long-term health of our planet. Inspiring green solutions for a healthy community. Helping to protect our planet and securing our future. "Environment, Ecology, Enterprise"

## Objectives

South Woodham Ferrers Town Council will work continuously to improve the social and economic well-being of the community and to provide accountable efficient and effective services; through engagement with the community and to work in partnership with other public service providers, local businesses and the voluntary sector.

1. To encourage community cohesion, community pride and enthusiasm. To work with the residents of South Woodham Ferrers to better understand their needs and in turn explain how we will address those needs within the resources and powers on the Council.
2. To provide a democratic representational voice for the South Woodham Ferrers community.
3. To support and contribute to the economic and social life of the town and regeneration of the local community, in partnership with residents, other tiers of local, regional, and national government, voluntary agencies, groups and individuals to meet the needs and aspirations of the community.
4. To encourage and promote the economic and commercial vitality of the town and help strengthen and diversify the local economy by where possible source goods and services from the Canvey area.
5. To preserve the unique identity of South Woodham Ferrers and promote its heritage.
6. To help to create a socially inclusive and caring community which embraces all its residents, irrespective of age, gender, culture, income, race, or religion and which seeks to develop their well-being, knowledge, understanding and mutual co-operation.
7. To organise, promote and manage a variety of events within South Woodham Ferrers that positively enhances the social, economic, educational, leisure and tourism aspects of town vitality. In addition, to also support and advise in the facilitation of current events and to assist with the bureaucratic nature of such as activities.
8. To protect and improve the environment of the town and promote sustainable development of the town to meet the needs of the present residents without jeopardising the needs of future generations.

9. To be accountable, approachable, and visible and to ensure that the resources at the Council's disposal are used to the most effective degree possible and to the greatest possible benefit to the town ensuring cost effectiveness and value for money.
10. To continue valuing and developing employees thereby stimulating innovation for the benefit of the town.

### Facts about for South Woodham Ferrers



Figure 1 <https://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/your-council/data-and-statistics-about-chelmsford/parish-tier-profiles/south-woodham-ferrers/>

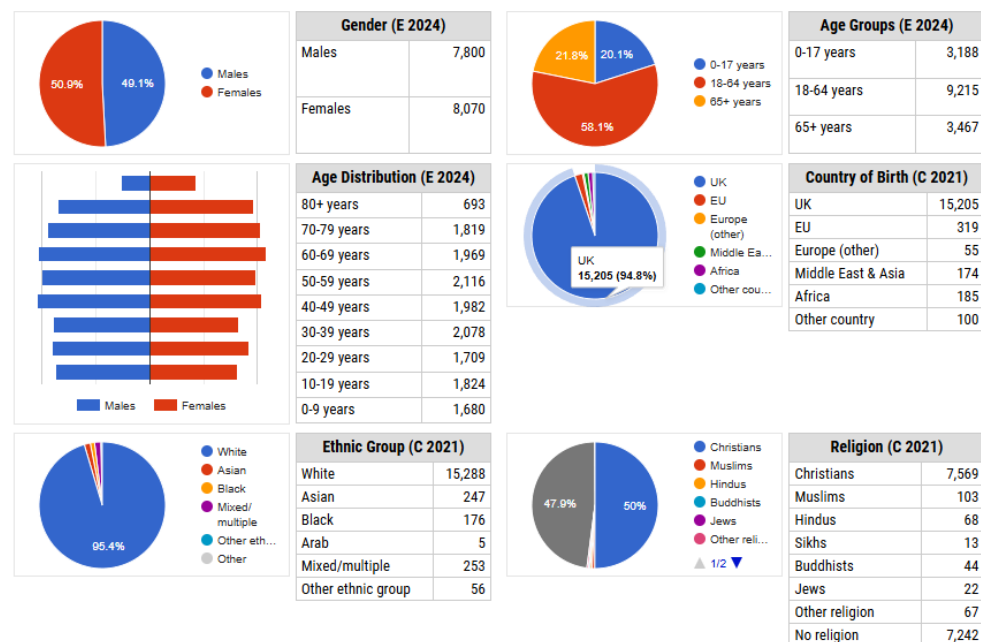


Figure 2 [https://www.citypopulation.de/en/uk/eastofengland/admin/chelmsford/E04003972\\_south\\_woodham\\_ferrers/](https://www.citypopulation.de/en/uk/eastofengland/admin/chelmsford/E04003972_south_woodham_ferrers/)

## The Council

The Town Council levies a tax (Precept) to pay for its local services and for 2026/27 the Precept is £468,080.00. The Precept covers the cost of running the Council and providing services.

The Council Tax calculation for 2026/27 for a Band D property is £76.34, a rise of 0.09% for 2026/27.

As South Woodham Ferrers Town Council provides many services in town. A comprehensive list can be found on our website.

South Woodham Ferrers Town Council consists of 20 Councillors who are elected by its constituents in May every four years. The last election was in May 2023.

The Council operates on a non-political party basis. The duty of its members is to carry out their roles and responsibilities in accordance with relevant legislation and the needs and wishes of the community.

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A full schedule of meeting dates of Council and Committee meetings can be viewed on the Town Council's website together with current Agendas and past Minutes from Meetings. Copies of the Town Council's governance documents including Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Committee Terms of Reference, together with key policies can also be viewed on the Town Council's website.

[www.southwoodhamwerrerstc.gov.uk](http://www.southwoodhamwerrerstc.gov.uk)

## **Budgets**

South Woodham Ferrers Town Council's budget preparations begin in September/October of each calendar year. It is reviewed by each committee and submitted to the Finance & Projects Committee to make recommendations to Full Council. The final budget is set in the December/January of the next year. Once the budget is agreed all spending is kept within budget. Should any further financial requirements be needed it is requested at Full Council by the Town Clerk.

Budgets are monitored by the Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer and reported to the Finance & Projects Committee at its committee meetings where the accounts and monthly payments are verified by the committee. General and Earmarked Reserves are set as part of the annual budget process.

## **Duties and Responsibilities**

The Town Council has a range of specific powers which can be used if and when required to do so.

- The Council must carry out what the law requires it to do.
- The Council may only do what the law says it may do.
- The Council cannot do anything unless permitted by legislation.

The Council has a duty to:

- Comply with its obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Equality Act 2010
- Publish annual accounts, notice of meetings, agendas and meeting notes.
- Comply with the relevant Local Government Transparency Code

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- Comply with employment law.
- Consider the impact of decisions on reducing crime and disorder in the area.
- Have regard to the protection of biodiversity in carrying out functions.

The Council must:

- Appoint a Chairman of the Council
- Appoint officers as appropriate to carry out its functions.
- Appoint a Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) to manage the Council's financial affairs.
- Appoint a competent and independent internal auditor.
- Adopt a Code of Conduct
- Hold a minimum of 4 meetings a year, one of which must be the Annual Town Meeting

#### **a) Engagement and Partnership**

Aim to seek community engagement through:

- Work with residents, businesses and community organisations.
- Encourage people to participate in decision-making processes.
- Use the views of the community as part of our decision-making process.
- The Town Council is a Consultee in the planning process with Chelmsford City Council being the principal planning authority.
- Engage and develop links with partner organisations and authorities such as – Chelmsford City Council, Essex County Council, Police Authority
- Keep residents informed of Council business through social media, the Town Council's website, noticeboards and in the local magazines – The Focus and Our Town
- Supporting local community by providing events throughout the year
- Annual Meetings
- Issuing an Annual Report
- Councillor representation on outside organisations to ensure good communication.
- Support local organisations through Town Council's grants scheme.

#### **b) Services**

The list below details some of the services provided by the Town Council:

- 5 Town Council Noticeboards situated at the following:

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Champions Manor Hall, Asda Queen Elizabeth Square, Warwick Parade, Collingwood School & the Curlew Public House

- Champions Manor Hall
- Garden of Remembrance
- Allotments
- Bleed kits
- Defibrillators
- Village Hall Play Areas and Blue Cage
- 2 ESO Operatives
- Community Events
- Employment of staff
  - Town Clerk (full time)
  - Environmental Services Operative (full time)
  - Street Service Operative (part time)
  - Administration Assistant (part time)
  - Environment & Leisure Officer (full time)
  - Events & Marketing Officer (part time)
- Communication with local authorities and groups
- Weekly Youth Club managed by the YMCA.
- Weekly term time Toddler Group
- Seniors monthly Film Club

**c) Other work of the Town Council**

Monitoring and Reporting:

- Consultee in the planning process
- Road and utility works (Essex County Council and Utility companies)
- Street Lighting (Essex County Council)
- Footpaths and Verges (Essex County Council)
- Potholes and Pavement maintenance (Essex County Council)
- Fly tipping (Chelmsford City Council)
- Crouch Harbour Authority

#### **d) Achievements**

South Woodham Ferrers Town Council continues to organise and manage various events throughout the year for the benefit of residents. During the last 36 months, the following achievements were made:

- Lifebuoy installed along the Fen pathway nr Celeborn Street.
- Coronation events in May 2023
- Works on Phase 1 of the John Cox recreation ground works
- Refurbishment works Champions Manor Hall with painting inside spaces and railings.
- 5 Blood loss kits in units installed around locations in the town in March 2024
- Provides Christmas lights in the Town Centre on a three-year contract 2023-2025.
- Grant funding for community groups (yearly)
- Annual Town Meeting held on 23 April 2024 & 21 April 2025
- Summer Fun events held in both Champions Manor Hall and Compass Gardens during 2023 - 2025
- Youth Month during August 2025
- Great Garden Competition June 2025
- Attendance at Annual Remembrance Parade – November 2025
- The new role of a SSO started, with the pilot program to clear litter and vegetation from pathways and pedestrian areas. This became official from the end of January 2024 and is a continuing role, and the feedback has been very positive. A Town council lease vehicle has been agreed with an EV Charge Point at Champions Manor Hall.
- Attendance of the Mayor or his deputy at a number of events during 2025/26
- Restoration of youth services via the setting up of a Youth Club
- Christmas Fayre and Christmas Lights switch in November each year.
- Replacement Bridges on the Fen 2025
- Replacement of the oak post - Town Sign Millenium Place 2025
- Installation of a vehicle EV point and the lease of an EV van to assist the SSO Duties 2025
- Supplying equipment for our SSO
- Tree works completed 2025/26
- Applied for funding through the RPA.
- Completion of John Cox Projects
- Footpath/maintenance repairs, surveying for The Fen
- Garden of Remembrance- painting of Rotunda, rose bed project.
- Solar Panel Project at Champions Manor Hall 2025
- Street furniture maintenance
- Open spaces maintenance
- Play area maintenance.

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- Garden of Remembrance 30 Year Anniversary Event 2025 – and opening of the 'Letters to Heaven' post box
- Installations of coloured lighting at the Bandstand

**e) Planned Projects for 2026/27 - 2029**

- Development of a 'Business & Action Plan' for South Woodham Ferrers
- Completion of future John Cox projects
- Play area at Village Hall
- Three-year Tree survey 2026
- Applying for funding opportunities
- Repairs, surveying for the Fen
- Clubhouse at Champions Manor Hall
- Railings on Bandstand and repainting of Bandstand 2026
- Collingwood Pond

**f) Events in 2024 -25**

- D Day 80 celebrations – June 2024
- Summer Fun Events during the school summer holidays.
- Weekly Youth days over the month of August 2024/25
- Halloween Event for Children
- Christmas Panto 2025
- Christmas lights switch on and Christmas Fayre
- Summer 80s Town Event July 2025
- Senior Citizens Christmas buffet lunch
- Garden of Remembrance 30 Year Anniversary

**g) Planned Events for 2026/27**

- Country & Western Event July 26
- Fun at Champions Manor Hall
- Youth Month in August
- Seniors' day Trip to Clacton and Tiptree Museum
- Easter Fun day
- Easter Egg Hunt
- Play in The Park
- Children's Halloween Event

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- SWF Carol Service
- Christmas Fayre
- Seniors Christmas Party
- Toddlers Christmas Party

**h) Proposed New Events 2027**

- Summer event 2027
- Mayors Charity Events

**i) Marketing 2026-2029**

- Champions Manor Hall
- Bandstand Hire
- Garden of Remembrance
- Town Council Achievements
- All Town Council Events

## **Strategic Plan - Key Themes and Priorities**

### **Key Issues**

The Town Council has identified the following key strategic issues where it will focus its efforts on behalf of the community:

To improve transparency and public understanding, actions within the Business Plan will be prioritised and monitored through a traffic light reporting system. Each action will be identified as either Capital or expenditure. Revenue projects will also indicate whether they create an ongoing budget commitment or are fixed term initiatives. This approach enables members and residents to understand delivery process, project priority and future financial implications at a glance.

**Green** completed

**Amber** in progress

**Red** to be started/considered /agreed by council

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- Planning, community facilities and infrastructure
- Partnership working with Chelmsford City Council & Essex County Council
- Community engagement and events
- Street cleansing
- Public Realm Improvement
- Promotion of the town, supporting local businesses
- Improving communication and input into the decision-making
- Sourcing of additional funding and identify income streams.

Priority	Current Actions	Planned Actions
Structure for a clubhouse use at Champions Manor Hall – Capital	Champions Manor Hall Working party.	Ongoing communication at each stage of the process until completion. Liaise with Chelmsford City Council Planning Department
New improved Website Capital	Investigations ongoing for a new provider	To obtain 3 quotes to bring to Council to improve the current website
Infrastructure – ongoing Capital	Travel Transport – bus and train. Cycling routes Car parking	Continue to engage with Essex County Council and our County Councillor Neighbourhood Plan Bus Grant Application with ECC – application submitted.

<p>Partnership working</p> <p>Operational Expenditure</p>	<p>Working with community groups and organisations to deliver events and projects such as South Woodham Ferrers Christmas Fayre, Remembrance Parade</p> <p>Liaising with Chelmsford City Council and Essex County Council to support services provided. by both authorities</p>	<p>To encourage more co-operation in the community through the development of community events and community engagement.</p> <p>To expand co-operation with other Town and Parish Councils in the surrounding areas</p>
<p>Community engagement and events</p> <p>Operational Expenditure</p>	<p>Organising community events on a regular basis Communicating by holding an Annual Town Meeting, contributing to the local magazine – The Focus</p> <p>Council website and social media used for information sharing</p>	<p>Target hard to reach groups by better publicising Council work in the community – improve marketing.</p> <p>Host a calendar/diary for events.</p> <p>Planned events for 2026:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summer event Country &amp; Western themed 11<sup>th</sup> July 2026</li> <li>• Youth events</li> <li>• Fun at Champions Manor</li> <li>• Halloween Children’s event</li> <li>• Christmas Fayre</li> <li>• Senior citizens Christmas hot lunch</li> <li>• Seniors’ day Trips</li> </ul> <p>Examine possibilities for other events, in future.</p>

<p><b>Street cleansing</b></p> <p>Operational Expenditure</p>	<p>Continue to work with Chelmsford City Council for regular street cleaning</p> <p>Reporting quarterly to Chelmsford City council with work completed by the SSO.</p>	<p>Use of our SSO in targeted areas reported by residents to office</p> <p>Repair/replace old and damaged street furniture, including bins and seats.</p> <p>Asset Register review and update 26/27</p>
<p><b>Promotion of the town</b></p> <p>Expenditure</p>	<p>Raising profile of the town via community events, social media and website</p>	<p>Events &amp; Marketing Officer to plan and action</p>

<p>Improving communication and input into the decision-making</p> <p>Operational Expenditure</p>	<p>Joining Committees Working together</p>	<p>More information to be made available on the Town Council's website and South Woodham Ferrers Focus and Town Talk magazine. Liaise with Chelmsford City Council and Essex County Council</p>
<p>Sourcing of additional funding and identify income streams</p> <p>Income</p>		<p>Additional income streams to be identified. Grants</p>

### **Engagement and Partnership to communicate with residents**

We shall ensure that sustainability is at the heart of how we manage the Town Council and its functions.

The Town Council will continue to engage with residents and local stakeholders to ensure that community priorities are reflected within the Business and Action Plan. Consultation methods such as surveys, public meetings, online engagement, and feedback from community events will be used to help inform future projects and spending priorities. The Council will also seek to improve transparency by distinguishing between capital and revenue expenditure and by introducing a prioritisation and progress monitoring system for key actions and projects.

Residents and electors are involved in shaping Council priorities.

For example a survey regarding the adaptation of the Garden of Remembrance, survey responses and wider community consultation exercises influence future priorities within the Business and Action Plan.

Possible methods of engagement could include:

- Public surveys and consultations
- Annual Town Meeting

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- Community workshops/ hub or drop-in sessions where Councillors are present
- Online engagement through the Council website and social media
- Feedback gathered through Council events and partnerships

Aim			Budget 2026/27	Responsible Committee	Progress to date
1.1	To encourage engagement, participation and to inform residents of the actions of the Town Council	Hold events throughout the year  Town Council's Grants Scheme – twice a year in March and October. Small grants under £300 applications considered all year	£41,200  EMR Events £10,000.00  £8,000.00	Event, Community & leisure – Council  Finance & Projects Committee	Ongoing throughout the year.  Allocation events 2026-2029  03 <sup>rd</sup> March 26 & 13 <sup>th</sup> October 26 meeting at 7.30pm.
1.2	Work with residents, businesses and community organisations	Volunteers at toddler group and monthly seniors film club.	£1,800.00	Events, Community & leisure - Council	Ongoing throughout the year. New Sensory Toddler equipment and general expenditure  Working with local businesses to be included in our events
1.3	Encourage people to participate in decision making processes	Publish all meeting Agendas and Minutes  Public survey regarding the adaption of the garden of Remembrance to	£3,000 Marketing Budget	All Committees  Planning & Environment Committee	Ongoing  Completed. Feedback received from residents from an online survey and survey in the Focus magazine.

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		include the Pet cemetery.			
1.4	Engage and develop links with partner authorities – Essex County Council, Chelmsford City Council, Essex Police Maldon District Team	Hold regular 'Let's Talk' police events in town and at Champions Manor Hall.  ECC councillor and CCC councillors attend Town Council meetings and give regular updates.	£3,000  Marketing Budget	Council	Updating at Council meetings and highlighting any issues raised by the Police for discussion and action.
1.5	Keep residents informed of Council business	Noticeboards, website, Facebook and Instagram. Office open 9-4pm every weekday.  Annual Town Meeting	Annual Report Circulated to all residents £300	Ongoing	New Instagram page, updated website, Facebook page update, new media person. Look at new YouTube Channel to use for items such as Hall Hire Tips and Do's and Don'ts
1.6	Raise the profile of the Town Council	Annual Report, focus magazine monthly page sent to all residents. Events and marketing Officer to promote Town Council business.	£3,000 Marketing Budget  Operational expenditure	See also 1.3 1.4	See also 1.3 1.4
1.7	Raise awareness of the work completed by the Town Council	On all media platforms and Focus magazine. Create new Email newsletter to promote events, show what we do and inform residents of things happening.	£3,000 Marketing Budget  Operational expenditure	Select agreed platform and promote during 2026	Report with options to be discussed at a future committee meeting

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1.8	Monthly /Quarterly Tea and chat/ Community Hub sessions to engage with residents and also to deal with loneliness	Find a suitable time to book the MPR room for the session, supply tea and coffee. Possible guests such as health, police, fire services, banking advice, councillors	To be agreed in Budget within 2026/27.  Operational expenditure	Based on numbers attending	To be considered at a future Events Community & Leisure meeting 14/4/2026.  Agreed to proceed with the project. Dates to start quarterly hub in July/October & December 26.
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### Services to keep the Town clean and tidy

Aim	Action	Budget 2026/27	Responsible Committee	Progress to date	
2.1	Review all Town Council bins and Locations	Repair, install, or replace for example with a bigger bin	£3,500.00 Operational expenditure	Planning & Environment	ESO – Environment Support Daily checklist – Asset Register Reconciliation
2.2	Local Litter Picks  Adults & families	Encourage residents to do litter picks, with support from the Town Council	N/A Chelmsford City Council supply to the Town Council  Marketing Expenditure	Planning & Environment	Ongoing with local volunteers held bimonthly.

2.3	Local Litter Picks Schools	Encourage schools to do litter picks, with support from the Town Council	N/A Chelmsford City Council supply to the Town Council.  Marketing Expenditure	Planning & Environment	Ongoing with local schools and volunteers, two completed 2025 & Events organised with local schools for Great British Spring Clean 2026.
2.4	Deep Cleaning / Weed tidy	Deep Cleaning of areas such as Trinity Square  The area should look nicer and better for residents	£2,500.00  Operational Expenditure/ Staff Training	Planning & Environment	SSO Town Council employee and Chelmsford City Council do a Quarterly clean of the town centre
2.5	Adoption of Flower Beds In Warwick Parade	Plant with seasonal plants to discourage the area being used as a rubbish dump  View and monitor, request local shops help keep tidy	£13,000.00  Capital	Planning & Environment	Ongoing new three-year contract agreed along with hanging baskets contract and existing planter displays. Min C25-250 20/1/26.

### Duties & Responsibilities to Maintain and Review

Aim	Action	Budget 2026/27	Responsible Committee	Progress to date
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3.1	Promote use of Champions Manor Hall and more enticing offerings	New advertising, leaflets, local promotion. Tea and Coffee or offer catering packages for weekday conferences	£3,000.00 Expenditure	Council	Ongoing marketing and promotion. Increase in bookings
3.2	Promote the Garden of Remembrance with marketing sensitive to the subject	Social media continued promotion of memorials and new heaven post box	£3,000.00 Expenditure	Planning & Environment Committee	Increased use – ongoing promotion
3.3	Promote the infant loss trees	Work with the local charity to promote use. Mayor to hold PR event with group	£5,000.00 Expenditure	Planning & Environment Committee	Also to offer more permanent memorials

### **Future Projects –Ideas & Budget Considered November 2026 -2029**

We shall work with the community and other stakeholders to encourage environmental best practice.

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Aim	Action	Budgets 2026/27	Responsible Committee	Progress to date
4.1	Interactive 'welcome' totem or Kiosk screen for entrance to CHM, with touch screen interaction, and information about what's on, where and when in the halls	Install unit and software to control from the office  Capital	£2000-£3200  Capital	Finance and Projects  To be considered end of 2026
4.2	New sound and speaker system for both halls	New speakers/mics, control boxes as req'd	£3000-£4000  Capital	Finance and Projects  Completed
4.3	Replacement of dead downlighter bulbs in main hall	Erect tower and replace dead bulbs or replace all to improve future reliability	£1000 - £2000  Capital	Finance and Projects  Completed
4.4	Update of playground	Replace worn out parts, replace completely end of life units	£50,000-£100,000  Capital	Finance and Projects/Council  On re-opening
4.5	Explore updated Keyless system for CHM	New Door locking system and apps	£2000.00  Capital	Finance and Projects  On commissioning

4.6	Collingwood pond	Improve the nature aspect of it, with planting, improved safety signs, removing items dumped in pond, removing and re-planting trees as required	£2000-£4000 Capital	Planning & Environment	When completed
4.7	Updated signs on Town Council land such as Fenn Park, John Cox, the Fen, Victoria fields, Collingwood Pond, blue finger signs etc	New signs to replace missing, damaged or incorrect signs	£3000-£4000 Capital	Planning & Environment	Ongoing
4.8	Deep clean of the brickwork, and walls at the Garden of Remembrance, including the Peter Pan Wall. Repaint entrance sign and info sign	Deep cleaning by commercial company and painting	£1000-£2000 Operational expenditure	Planning & Environment	When completed
4.9	Pet Scattering Copse	Fenced off area away from main GOR	£2000-£3000 Capital		When installed and open
4.10	Support the setting up of a community speed watch group with radar gun	Supply equipment, and training	£1000-£2000 Capital		When operating

4.11	EV Charging Points at Champions Manor Hall	To be considered	£2000.00 Capital		Discussion with CMH Working Party to be scheduled.
4.12	Millenium Place refurbishment, deep clean repainting of bins and benches, replacement of lighting or repairs and recommissioning of lights by repairs or installation of additional solar lighting	Repairs, repainting and installation	£3000-£5000 Capital		On completion of project

### Monitoring and Review

This is a living document which means the budget, themes and priorities may change during the three-year period.

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**The Business and Action Plan clearly states that the current financial forecast covers only the present financial year unless otherwise specified**

The Plan is a statement of the Town Council's intentions over the next three years and will be subject to review every 6-8 months. Elements of the Plan will be controlled through Council meetings held throughout the year. This will ensure that the Plan is carefully monitored and that it aligns with the aspirations of the Town Council.

Review Date:	19 November 2026
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