



# South Woodham Ferrers Town Council

## Forward Plan

**2024- 2027**

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## Contents

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Background.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Green Mission Statement .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Facts about South Woodham Ferrers .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The Council .....</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Duties and Responsibilities .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>a) Engagement and Partnership.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>b) Services.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>d) Achievements .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>e) Planned Projects for 2024 .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Strategic Plan - Key Themes and Priorities .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Monitoring and Review .....</b>	<b>10</b>

## Introduction

The South Woodham Ferrers Town Council will have a long-term strategy by means of a Forward Plan which is developed every 3 years.

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 Forward Plan contains Key Themes and Priorities for the current year which will be a rolling document, reviewed every 6 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"

## Facts about for South Woodham Ferrers



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

### The Council

The Town Council levies a tax (Precept) to pay for its local services and for 2024/25 the Precept is £449,200.00. The Precept covers the cost of running the Council and providing services. The Council Tax calculation for 2024/25 for a Band D property is £73.45, a rise of 1% for 2024/25.

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.

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)

## **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
- 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 magazine – The Focus
- 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:  
Champions Manor Hall, Asda Queen Elizabeth Square, Warwick Parade, Collingwood School & the Curlew Public House
- Garden of Remembrance
- Allotments
- A Street service Operative (part time)
- Community Events
- Employment of staff
  - Town Clerk (full time)
  - Environmental Services Operatives (full time & part time)
  - Administration Assistant (part time)
  - Environment & Leisure Officer (full time)
- Communication with local authorities and groups

## **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)
- River Crouch River 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 12 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
- Annual Town Meeting held on 23 April 2024
- Summer Fun events held in both Champions Manor Hall and Compass Gardens during 2023
- Youth Week during June 2023
- Great Garden Competition June 2023
- Attendance at Annual Remembrance Parade – November 2023
- 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 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 her deputy at a number of events during 2023/24
- Restoration of youth services via the setting up of a Youth Club
- Christmas Fayre and Christmas Lights switch in November each year.

#### **e) Planned Projects for 2024**

Development of a 'Forward Plan' for South Woodham Ferrers

- Installation of a vehicle EV point and the lease of an EV van to assist the SSO Duties
- Supplying equipment for our SSO
- Tree works to be completed.
- Applying for funding through the RPA
- Completion of future John Cox Projects
- Footpath repairs, surveying for The Fen
- Garden of Remembrance- painting of Rotunda, rose bed project.
- Solar Panel Project at Champions Manor Hall
- Street furniture maintenance
  - Open spaces
  - Play areas

#### **Planned Events for 2024**

- D Day 80 celebrations – June 2024
- Summer Fun Events during the school summer holidays.
- Weekly Youth days over the month of August 2024
- Halloween Event for Children
- Christmas Panto
- Christmas lights switch on and Christmas Fayre
- Senior Citizens Christmas buffet lunch

#### **Proposed Events 2025**

- **Summer event for 2025**

#### **Marketing 2024-2027**

- **Champions Manor Hall**
- **Bandstand Hire**
- **Garden of Remembrance**

## 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:

- 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
Solar panel project	Collaboration with Chelmsford City Council to agree the best quote from a reputable company.	Ongoing communication at each stage of the process until completion.
Town Council office at Champions Manor Hall	To seek to maintain and upgrade the office with new Wifi and equipment and VOIP telephone systems	



<p>Infrastructure - ongoing</p>	<p>Travel Transport – bus and train Cycling routes Car parking</p>	<p>Continue to engage with Essex County Council and our County Councillor Neighbourhood Plan</p>
<p>Partnership working</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>Organising community events on a regular basis Communicating by holding an Annual Town Meeting, Meet your Town Councillor, 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</p> <p>Host a calendar/diary for events</p> <p>Planned events for 2024:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• D Day 80 6<sup>th</sup> June 2024</li> <li>• Summer event D Day themed 8<sup>th</sup> June</li> <li>• Youth events</li> <li>• Fun at Champions Manor</li> <li>• Panto 2024</li> <li>• Halloween Childrens event</li> <li>• Christmas Fayre</li> <li>• Senior citizens Christmas buffet lunch</li> </ul> <p>Examine possibilities for other events, in future</p>
<p>Street cleansing</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</p> <p>Repair/replace old and damaged street furniture, including bins and seats</p>

Promotion of the town	Raising profile of the town via community events, social media and website	
Improving communication and input into the decision-making	Joining Committees Working together	More information to be made available on the Town Council's website and South Woodham Ferrers Focus magazine. Liaise with Chelmsford City Council and Essex County Council
Sourcing of additional funding and identify income streams		Additional income streams to be identified Grants

### **Monitoring and Review**

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

The Plan is a statement of the Town Council's intentions over the next three years and will be subject to review every 6 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 2024
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