



South Woodham Ferrers Town Council

Forward Plan

2024- 2027

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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 6-8 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"

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 2025/26 the Precept is £465,465.00. The Precept covers the cost of running the Council and providing services. The Council Tax calculation for 2025/26 for a Band D property is £76.27, a rise of 3.84% for 2025/26.

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

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
- 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
- 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)
- 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 24 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
- Summer Fun events held in both Champions Manor Hall and Compass Gardens during 2023
- Youth Month 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 his deputy at a number of events during 2024/25
- 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.
- Replacement of the oak post - Town Sign Millenium Place
- 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 completed.
- 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
- Street furniture maintenance
- Open spaces maintenance
- Play area maintenance.
- Garden of Remembrance 30 Year Anniversary Event

e) Planned Projects for 2025/26

Development of a 'Forward 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
- Collingwood Pond

Events in 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

Planned Events for 2025/26

- Summer 80s event
- Fun at Champions Manor Hall
- Youth Month in August
- Seniors’ day Trip to Great Yarmouth
- Play in The Park
- Garden of Remembrance 30- Year Anniversary
- Children’s Halloween Event
- SWF Carol Service
- Christmas Fayre
- Seniors Christmas Party
- Toddlers Christmas Party

Proposed Events 2026

- Summer event for 2026

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
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Structure for community use at Champions Manor Hall	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	Investigations ongoing for a new provider	To obtain 3 quotes to bring to Council to improve the current website
Infrastructure - ongoing	Travel Transport – bus and train. Cycling routes Car parking	Continue to engage with Essex County Council and our County Councillor Neighbourhood Plan
Partnership working	Working with community groups and organisations to deliver events and projects such as South Woodham Ferrers Christmas Fayre, Remembrance Parade Liaising with Chelmsford City Council and Essex County Council to support services provided. by both authorities	To encourage more co-operation in the community through the development of community events and community engagement. To expand co-operation with other Town and Parish Councils in the surrounding areas

<p>Community engagement and events</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 2025:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer event D Day themed 12th July 2025 • Youth events • Fun at Champions Manor • Panto/Panto/another event 2025 • Halloween Children’s event • Christmas Fayre • Senior citizens Christmas hot lunch <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>
<p>Promotion of the town</p>	<p>Raising profile of the town via community events, social media and website</p>	<p>Events & Marketing Officer to plan and action</p>
<p>New location for a potential men’s Shed in SWF</p>	<p>Working party to be formed</p>	<p>To look at any opportunities within SWF for an ideal location. Ongoing.</p>
<p>Improving communication and input into the decision-making</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 magazine.</p> <p>Liaise with Chelmsford City Council and Essex County Council</p>

Sourcing of additional funding and identify income streams		Additional income streams to be identified. Grants
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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 6-8 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:	21 October 2026
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