SOUTH WOODHAM FERRERS TOWN COUNCIL

LORDS OF THE MANOR OF CHAMPIONS

SWF Transport Hub Blog November 2026

SWF Transport Hub is part of South Woodham Ferrers' commitment under the Love Your Bus programme to improve local awareness of bus services, promote sustainable travel, and support the enhanced 336 route. This blog provides clear, friendly updates to help residents make the most of local public transport.

Changes to bus services at the start of November

From **1 November 2026 reminder**

Timetable adjustments will come into effect on two Chelmer Valley routes. The **702 Chelmer Valley Park & Ride – Chelmsford City Centre** will see its first three morning journeys moved five minutes earlier to improve connections with trains at Chelmsford Rail Station. All other journeys will continue to run to the existing pattern.

The **703 Broomfield Hospital Shuttle** will also operate to a revised timetable. During the middle part of the day the service will be run by First Essex Buses, while Ugobus will continue to cover the early morning, late afternoon and evening periods. Both operators have aligned their schedules to maintain a consistent link between Chelmer Valley Park & Ride and Broomfield Hospital throughout the day.

Other changes to bus services in Essex can be found on the Travel Essex Website

Community360 to Enter Administration After Nearly 60 Years of Service

Community360 has announced that it is set to enter administration following a period of significant financial difficulties, despite extensive efforts to secure the charity's long-term future. The organisation, which has supported communities across Essex for almost six decades through a wide range of services, confirmed that the Board of Trustees has taken the difficult decision to appoint administrators, with the formal process expected to begin next week.

The announcement is likely to cause concern among service users, employees, volunteers and partner organisations across the county. Community360 has stated that it is working with professional advisers to explore what services, if any, may be able to continue under alternative arrangements.

There is some positive news for users of Community Roots services, which will continue operating. However, they will no longer form part of Community360 and will instead transfer to a newly established company. Further details are expected to be released in due course. At this stage, Community360 says it will provide further updates once administrators have been formally appointed and more information is available regarding the future of individual services.

The charity has thanked staff, volunteers, partners and supporters for their contribution to its work over nearly 60 years. Anyone with questions has been asked to contact the appointed advisers at Opus Business Advisory Group. This is a developing story, and we will provide updates as more information becomes available, particularly regarding any transport and community mobility services that may be affected.

Contact: nicki.millard@opusllp.com or elena.sostar@opusllp.com.

Bus 99 for Maldon.

Since the launch of the 99 service between South Woodham Ferrers and Maldon, the feedback has been encouraging. Many residents have said how useful it is to have a direct weekday link again, especially for shopping, appointments and short leisure trips. Others have shared constructive suggestions about timings and connections, and those comments are being looked at carefully. But one thing is clear: the future of the 99 depends on people using it. Like any new route, it needs steady passenger numbers to grow, improve and remain part of the network. It really is a case of use it or lose it.

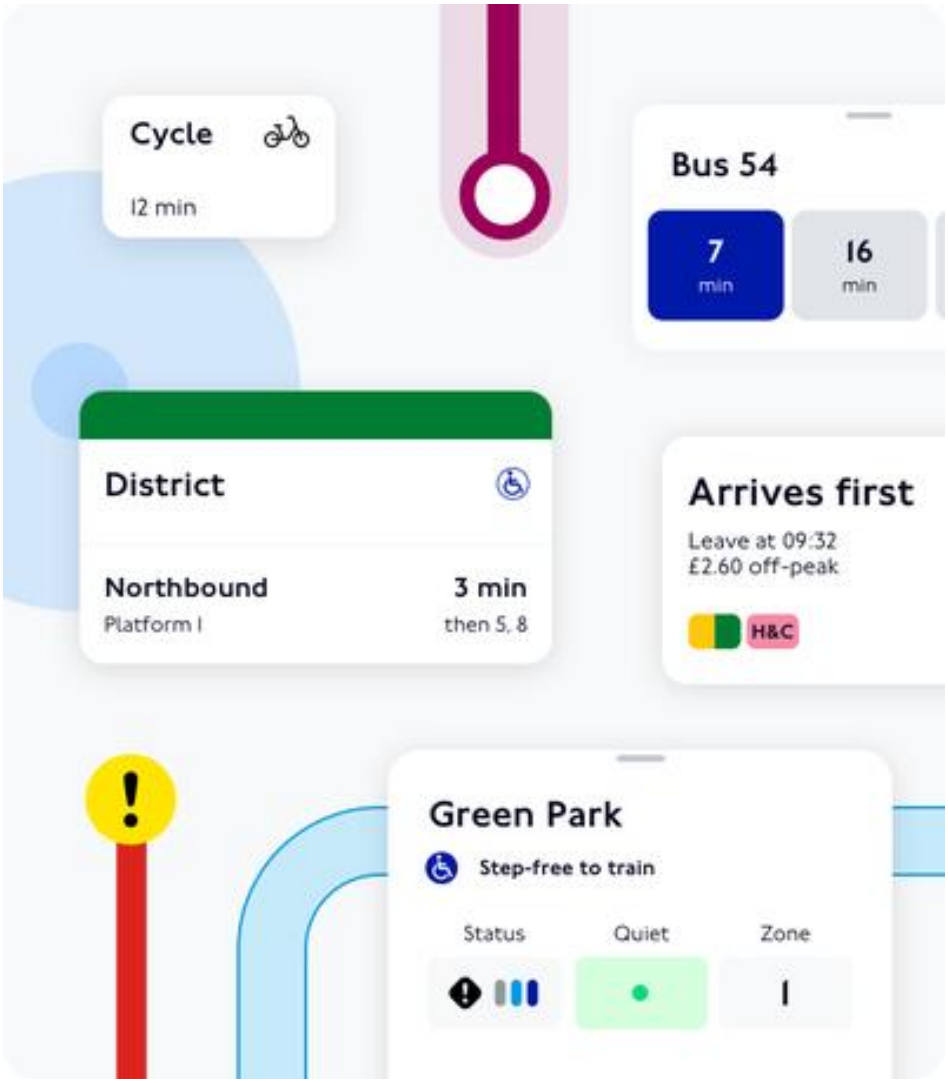
The timetable offers three convenient departures from South Woodham Ferrers Asda at 10:38, 14:10 and 17:35, calling at the rail station, the medical centre, Stow Maries, Cold Norton, Purleigh and into Maldon. For many people, that mid-morning journey is ideal. You can be at Maldon Morrisons by 11:09 or Tesco by 11:17, giving plenty of time for shopping, meeting friends or enjoying the High Street. The early afternoon run at 14:10 is perfect for a quieter visit, while the 17:35 departure offers a useful link for anyone finishing work or heading out later in the day, though please remember there is no return bus, so you will need to return via bus 375, and then 336.

The 99 is still new, and new routes take time to settle. But it already offers a practical, direct connection that many towns would love to have. If residents continue to use it — for shopping, appointments, leisure or simply avoiding the car — it strengthens the case for future improvements, more journeys and long-term stability.

So, if you haven't tried the 99 yet, now is the perfect time. Whether it's a quick shop at Morrisons, a wander around Maldon, or a visit to Chelmsford or Broomfield Hospital, the service is there to be used. And the more it's used, the stronger it becomes for everyone.



Travelling into London? The TfL Go App Is Worth Having



Although most of us in South Woodham Ferrers rely on local buses and trains for day-to-day travel, plenty of residents still head into London for work, shopping, theatre trips or Christmas events. And if you do find yourself navigating the capital's transport network, one of the most useful tools you can have is the **TfL Go app**.

TfL Go is Transport for London's official journey app, designed to make moving around the city much easier. It gives live information for the Tube, London Overground, DLR, Elizabeth line, trams and buses, all in one place. What makes it particularly helpful is how clearly it shows disruptions, delays and planned engineering works. Instead of guessing whether a line is running smoothly, you can see instantly what's happening and plan around it. It is available for Apple and for Android phones.

The app also includes live bus arrival times for every stop in London, which is invaluable if you're trying to make a connection or avoid long waits in bad weather. The map view is simple and easy to follow, showing nearby stops and stations with real-time updates. For anyone unfamiliar with London's layout, it's a reassuring way to keep track of where you are and where you need to go.

Another useful feature is accessibility information. TfL Go highlights which stations have step-free access, lifts, or alternative routes, making it much easier for passengers who need level boarding or want to avoid stairs. It also shows quieter times to travel, which can be helpful during busy periods like the run-up to Christmas.

Even if you only travel into London occasionally, having TfL Go installed means you're prepared. Whether you're heading to Winter Wonderland, Christmas markets, or simply visiting family, the app gives you a clear picture of the network before you even leave home. It's free, easy to use, and a reliable companion for anyone navigating the capital.

So, while it may not be an everyday tool for South Woodham Ferrers residents, it's certainly one worth keeping on your phone. A little preparation can make London trips smoother, quicker and far less stressful — especially during the festive season.

Travel over the festive period

As the clocks go back and the festive lights start appearing, November is the perfect time to think ahead about travel plans for Christmas and the New Year. Whether you're visiting family, heading to a Christmas market, or simply commuting through the season, planning early can save both time and money.

Rail operators across the UK typically release Advance tickets around 12 weeks before travel, though some routes open earlier and others later if engineering works are scheduled. That means many Christmas journeys are already available to book now, while others will appear in early November. Checking regularly helps catch the cheapest fares before they sell out — once the lower-priced tickets go, prices rise in stages.

It's also worth remembering that no National Rail services run on Christmas Day, and only a handful operate on Boxing Day. Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve services often finish earlier than usual, so it's wise to confirm times before travelling.

For local journeys, buses may run reduced timetables or finish early on Christmas Eve, and some routes pause entirely on Christmas Day. If you rely on public transport, keep an eye on operator websites and social media for updates as the festive period approaches.

Booking rail tickets now not only secures cheaper fares but also gives peace of mind — one less thing to worry about when December gets busy. So, before the decorations go up and the rush begins, take a few minutes to check your Christmas travel plans. A little preparation now can make the festive season run far more smoothly.

There is much in the press recently about AI, and although it can be very helpful for some people, if you're planning a bus trip, and especially if it is using more than one bus, it can give you the wrong information. As it searches for data on the internet, it can pick old, archived timetables which are no longer current or where the bus no longer exists. While it might be good for helping you, it is wise to check with a travel app, the information is correct. We will give more details about local bus service and rail shutdowns in the next issue.

Winter weather ahead.



Picture : stuck in the snow 1947; By Arthur Shaw

I know we all secretly hope for a white Christmas — that postcard moment when the town wakes up under a gentle layer of snow. And then, when we do get a couple of centimetres, we immediately complain that it's too slushy, too wet, or too inconvenient for the morning school run.

But spare a thought for the people of Essex in the winter of 1947. What we call “a bit of snow” today was, back then, a months-long siege of ice and bitter cold. Temperatures in Writtle plunged to –20°C, snow fell somewhere in Britain every day from late January to mid-March, and drifts swallowed roads, hedges and even small buildings. Buses struggled through deep snowbanks, routes vanished overnight, and drivers often had no way of knowing whether the next village was reachable or completely cut off. Services were cancelled not because anyone wanted to, but because the weather simply made movement impossible.

It’s worth remembering that even now, with better vehicles and better information, severe weather can still disrupt bus services. Snow is the obvious culprit, but high winds can bring down trees or power lines, blocking roads or affecting signals. Heavy rain can flood low-lying routes, and ice can make certain roads unsafe until gritters have been through. Modern buses are remarkably resilient, but they’re not invincible, and sometimes safety has to come first. So, in bad weather, check before travelling!

Christmas ideas



If you’re looking to get into the Christmas spirit this year, there are plenty of festive places you can reach easily by bus or train from South Woodham Ferrers. You don’t need a car to enjoy a proper Christmas day out — just a bit of planning and a warm coat.

The easiest option is right here at home with the South Woodham Ferrers Christmas Fayre. It’s a great community event with stalls, lights and music, and you can reach it on any local service without worrying about parking. If you want something just outside town, Meadowcroft is a lovely choice and sits right on the 94 bus route. Their Christmas events always have that cosy, local feel — lights, stalls, music, and the kind of atmosphere that makes you want to linger with a hot drink.

For families, Marsh Farm’s Father Christmas Experience is another great suggestion, and it’s right on the 336. It’s a proper Christmas adventure with elves, activities, and a very convincing Father Christmas. It’s close enough to be easy, but special enough to feel like a full day out — and the bus drops you right outside.

Battlesbridge is only a short ride away on the 94 or by train, and usually offers Christmas markets and seasonal evenings around the antiques centre, which always feels wonderfully atmospheric at this time of year. Chelmsford is another easy trip on the 336 and gives you a full city-centre Christmas experience, with decorations, market stalls and plenty going on. If you fancy something bigger, Southend is straightforward by train from SWF and usually puts on a strong Christmas programme with seafront lights, markets and family attractions.

For something more traditional, Billericay’s Christmas Fest is reachable directly by train from South Woodham Ferrers. It’s one of the best-known community Christmas events in Essex and makes for a very easy public-transport day out.

So, whether you want something local and cosy or a bigger festive trip, South Woodham Ferrers is well connected. A bus or train ride can take you straight into the Christmas atmosphere — without the stress of driving, parking or traffic.

More to come, come back soon!

The SWF Transport Hub Blog will continue to follow local transport developments closely and provide clear, practical updates to help you navigate changes with confidence. Your Town Council is working for you to improve public transport.

Please email your public transport questions to : david@southwoodhamferrerstc.gov.uk

Essex County Council

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Please note: Information was correct at the time of publication. Whilst every effort is made to ensure accuracy, South Woodham Ferrers Town Council cannot guarantee the completeness or accuracy of information supplied by third parties. Readers should confirm travel details with the relevant operator before making their journey.