SOUTH WOODHAM FERRERS TOWN COUNCIL

LORDS OF THE MANOR OF CHAMPIONS

SWF Transport Hub Blog October 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 end of October

From **1 November 2026**:

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

Have you used our new Sunday 336 bus service yet?

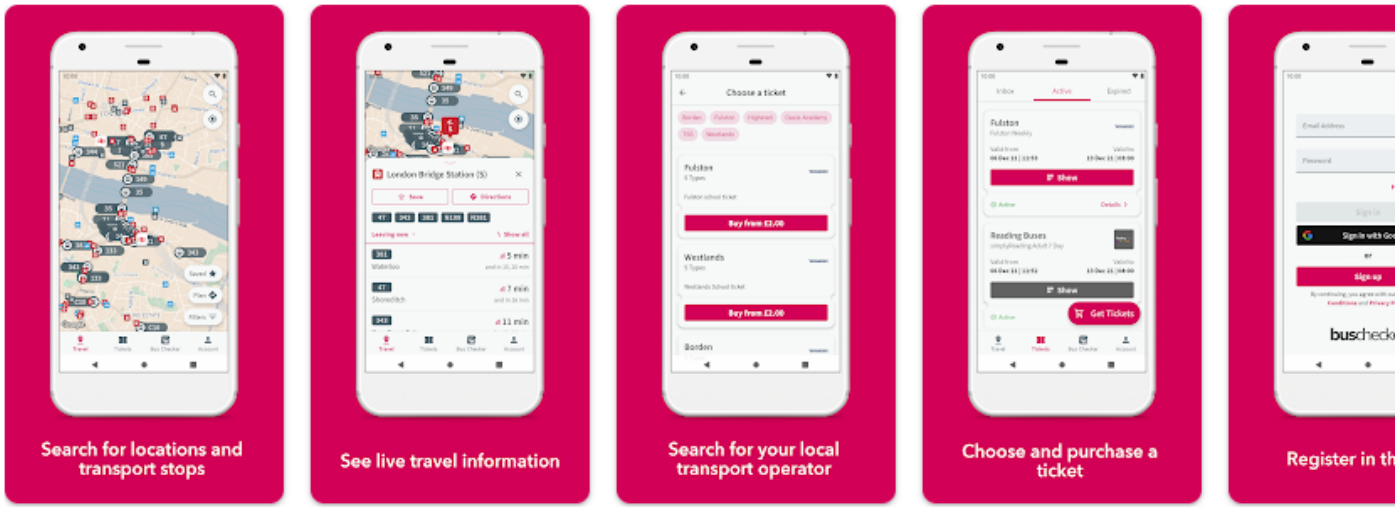
South Woodham Ferrers now has a Sunday bus again — and we want to make sure everyone knows about it. Thanks to funding secured through Essex County Council's Love Your Bus programme, the 336 is running every Sunday, giving residents a reliable link to Chelmsford for shopping, leisure, rail connections and meeting friends and family. As we get closer to the season of increased risks associated with 'Drink Driving' , have that glass or two of wine without the risk or worry.

If you haven't tried it yet, this is a great moment to make it part of your weekend. Travelling by bus is one of the simplest ways to reduce traffic, cut emissions and ease pressure on local roads. It's convenient, it's affordable, and it means you can relax on the journey instead of dealing with parking in the city centre. For many people, it also restores a sense of independence, especially those who don't drive or prefer not to use the car for short trips.

As with all supported services, continued use is essential. The more people who choose the bus, the stronger the case for keeping and improving Sunday provision. It really is a case of use it or lose it. Every journey helps secure the future of the route and demonstrates that weekend travel matters to our community.

We'd also love to hear what you think. Whether you've already taken a Sunday trip or you're planning to try it soon, your feedback helps us understand how the service is working and where it could be improved. Let us know your experience good, bad or somewhere in between — so we can keep shaping public transport that genuinely serves South Woodham Ferrers.

UK Bus Checker



If you're looking for a genuinely useful bus-planning app, the one that consistently works best for Essex travellers — including South Woodham Ferrers and Chelmsford — is **UK Bus Checker**. It's reliable, easy to use, and covers real-time information for most operators across the county, including First Essex, Stephensons, Vectare and the Park & Ride services.

The reason it stands out is simple: it brings together live bus tracking, stop departures, route maps and disruption alerts in one place, without needing to jump between different operator apps. For day-to-day planning, it's one of the easiest ways to check whether your bus is running on time, where it is on the map, and how long you'll be waiting at the stop. It's also helpful for planning connections in Chelmsford, especially if you're linking up with trains or switching between routes like the 336, 31 corridor or Park & Ride.

Helpful but sometimes misleading

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.

Essex Interesting fact : The public bus you cannot use

Foulness Island near Southend, remains one of the most unusual places in Essex to be served by a bus — and yes, the service still runs. Unlike any other route in the county, the bus operates entirely within a Ministry of Defence controlled area, meaning access is tightly restricted and passengers must pass through security to reach the island. It's a genuine public service, but one that most members of the public will never ride, simply because entry to Foulness is limited to residents, authorised visitors and those with specific permission, mostly local school children.

For the people who live there, the bus is still an essential link to the mainland, providing access to shops, medical appointments and wider transport connections. For transport enthusiasts, it remains a curiosity: a fully timetabled bus route that operates behind fences, checkpoints and military signage. In the world of Essex transport, it's one of the last surviving examples of how public services adapt to unique local circumstances, and it continues quietly, week after week, serving a community that relies on it. You can visit Foulness Island, certain times of the year, but sadly not by bus.

Spooky Bus Trip



Chelmsford For You is bringing something wonderfully atmospheric to the city centre this Halloween.

The Witches of Chelmsford, created in collaboration with The Essex Witch Museum, invites visitors to step back into the city's bewitching past and explore the stories behind Essex's historic witch trials. Many of those trials took place right here in Chelmsford, outside what is now Shire Hall, making this one of the most fitting places in the county to rediscover that history.

From Monday 27 October to Sunday 2 November, families can wander through Chelmsford and take part in the city centre Witch Trail. Children can pick up or download their own spellbook, hunt for witch-themed inflatables and murals hidden around the streets, and uncover the tales behind each object. Completing the trail reveals a magical spell word and earns an exclusive set of Witches of Chelmsford stickers, making it a fun and free activity for the half-term break.

It's also incredibly easy to reach by public transport. The **336** runs directly from South Woodham Ferrers into Chelmsford, and from the city centre stop it's only a short walk to the start of the trail. Travelling by bus means no parking worries, no traffic stress and a chance to enjoy the day at your own pace. As always, choosing the bus helps support local services — use it or lose it remains as true as ever.

Travel Alert: Late-Night & Early-Morning Southminster Line Alterations (October 2026)

If you are catching the last trains home or the first services out of South Woodham Ferrers, take note of upcoming evening and early-morning disruptions. Network Rail is carrying out essential stabilization, track tamping, and speed restriction work across the branch line to combat recent clay ground movement.

The upcoming affected dates run from Monday 26th October through Wednesday 28th October during late-night and early-morning windows.

For South Woodham Ferrers passengers, this means late-night services from Wickford or direct Shenfield trains may finish early or face timing alterations. Rail replacement buses will operate through South Woodham Ferrers during these late-night hours to connect passengers down the line. If you are traveling after 21:30 or before 06:00 on these dates, ensure you check the live National Rail or Greater Anglia journey planners before heading out.

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 transport questions to : david@southwoodhamferrerstc.gov.uk

Essex County Council

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