

AGENDA

You are summoned to a Meeting of the

COUNCIL

**to be held at 7.30 p.m. on Tuesday 18th March 2025
at Champions Manor Hall**

Local residents are welcome to attend this meeting. At the meeting, your elected Councillors will take decisions affecting YOU, the Community and the Town. The public may participate for up to 15 minutes for this purpose. If you have any queries, please telephone the Town Clerk on 01245 321817. Please join us.



Karen Atkins
South Woodham Ferrers Town Clerk
12th March 2025

- 1. To RECEIVE and ACCEPT** any apologies for absence.
- 2. Dispensation considerations**
To consider any dispensations, as required. Standing Order 12.
Dispensation requests shall be in writing and submitted to the Town Clerk as soon as possible before the meeting, or failing that, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.
- 3. Declarations of Interest**
Any Member declaring an interest is asked to state whether this is a pecuniary, registerable or non- registerable interest. Clarification, if required, can be sought prior to the meeting with the Chairman or the Town Clerk.
Members must not participate in any discussion on the matter in which they have declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or other Registerable Interest or participate in any vote, or further vote, taken on the matter at the meeting and must withdraw from the room unless the Member has received a dispensation in relation to the matter.
- 4. Confirmation of Minutes**
To **APPROVE** the minutes of the Council meeting held on 14th January 2025 as a true record.
- 5. Public Questions**
In accordance with Standing Order 3.e to allow up to 15 minutes for members of the public to make representations, answer questions and give evidence in respect of any item on the agenda. At the close of this item members of the public will no longer be permitted to address the Council.

6. Co Option Procedure

In accordance with Standing Order 5.j.xvii to xviii Council to review and consider the procedure attached to the agenda.

7. Councillor Co-option Vacancy

Council to consider the attached application forms for the Councillor Vacancy in the Collingwood Ward.

8. Distinguished Honours Award

Council to discuss and select a nomination for the annual Distinguished Honours Award, to be presented at the Annual Town Meeting on 15th April 2025.

Nomination form is attached to the agenda.

9. Annual Town Meeting

Council to **NOTE** the arrangements for the Annual Town Meeting on the 15 April 2025.

- All community groups, City & County Councillors, the local MP, Grant recipients 2024-25, Town Mayors Charity and Essex Community Policing Team have been invited to attend.
- The guest speakers for the Annual Town Meeting 2025 will be the Town Mayors Charity RNLI and the Essex County Council Cabinet Member Councillor Cunningham, for Highways, Infrastructure and Sustainable Transport.

10. Reports from Committees are attached to the agenda.

10.1 Planning & Environment Committee

To note that a meeting was held on 28th of January, 18th of February & 25th of February 2025.

10.2 Events, Community & Leisure Committee

To note that a meeting was held on the 11th of February 2025.

10.3 Finance & Projects Committee

To note that a meeting was held on the 4th of March 2025.

10.4 Staffing Committee

To note that a meeting was held on the 22nd of January & 11th of February 2025.

11. Review of Policies

In accordance with Standing Order 5.j.xvii to xviii Council to review and agree new policies attached to the agenda.

- Civil Protocol Policy
- Procurement Policy
- Biodiversity Policy recommended by Planning & Environment on 25/2/25.
- Safer Recruitment policy recommended by Staffing Committee on the 11/2/2025.

12. Clerks Report

Council to receive a report from the Town Clerk.

13. Outside Maintenance Contract

Council to consider the recommendation from the Planning & Environment Committee on 25/2/25 to continue with our current open maintenance contractor on a rolling two-year contract on the grounds of quality and price. Financial Regulation 5.12 iii. Contract to be circulated prior to the meeting.

14. Love your Parish Days

Due to a deadline request of 21st March 2025 from Chelmsford City Council, Town Council to consider the attached completed form and consider any additional locations.

15. Devolution

Town Clerk to give an update on devolution and attached information from recent Clerks Forum meeting with EALC.

16. Local Council Award Scheme (LCAS)

The Town Clerk is applying for the Silver Quality Level of the Local Council awards scheme. Minute Ref C24-52.

Council to resolve that the Town Council has all the documentation and information in place for the Silver Award and where applicable is published on our website.

17. Chelmsford City Council / Essex County Council

- Council to consider the presentation of reports from County and Borough councillors.
- To consider report(s) to Council from City Councillors/County Councillor concerning matters of interest to South Woodham Ferrers.

18. Town Mayor's Announcements

A note a list of recent events attended by the Town Mayor is attached to the agenda.

19. Media Release

To consider whether any items on the agenda warrant a media release.

20. Next Meeting

The next Council meeting will be Annual Council held on 13th May 2025 at 7.30pm.

Any member who is unable to attend the meeting should send their apologies and reason to the Town Clerk prior to the meeting.

South Woodham Ferrers Town Council

Co-option Procedure 2025

1. In the event of a casual vacancy (see below for reasons for a casual vacancy occurring) being deemed to have occurred on the Town Council, the Town Clerk will declare that such a vacancy exists without recourse to a meeting of the Town Council.
2. The Town Clerk will notify the Electoral Services at Chelmsford City Council and will publicly display a Notice of Vacancy. In the case of a casual vacancy occurring due to death, the notice may be delayed for a respectful period.
3. If a casual vacancy arises within 6 months of the day when the Councillor whose office is declared vacant would ordinarily have retired, then no byelection may be demanded. As the Town Council is permitted to either advertise the vacancy for co-option or to leave the office vacant until the date of the next ordinary election, the Town Council will be asked at its next suitable meeting which option it wishes to pursue.
4. If, in the period of time required by legislation following the publication of the Notice of Vacancy (at present 14 working days) the Returning Officer at the City Council receives 10 letters from electors claiming a by-election, the election process will commence and a by-election will take place within 60 days of the notice of vacancy. The City Council will make all the necessary arrangements for such a by-election.
5. If the Returning Officer does not receive ten letters from electors calling for an election to be held, then the co-option procedure will commence with step 6.
6. It is required that the vacancy be filled as soon as practicable after the expiry of the notice period in step 4 above and the Town Clerk will normally invoke this procedure without further recourse to a meeting of the Town Council.
7. The vacancy to be filled by co-option will be advertised on the Town Council's noticeboards, website and social media within 21 days of the end of the time for the notice period in step 4. The co-option advertisement notice will give interested parties 14 working days to notify the Town Council that they wish to be considered for co-option.
8. All candidates will be expected to put their request for consideration in writing with a summary about themselves, which may include: reasons for wishing to be a councillor; previous community or council work; any other skills they can bring to the Council; their interests and recent career history. Redacted statements will be provided with the Town Council agenda. All candidates must also confirm their eligibility for the position within the statutory rules outlined in the Co-option Application Form.

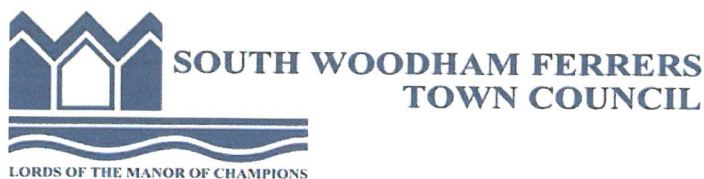
9. Candidates found to be offering inducements of any kind to members or officers of the Town Council will be disqualified.
10. Applications for co-option will be considered by the next suitable meeting of the Town Council, following the expiry of the co-option advertisement notice.
11. Candidates will be expected to make every effort to attend the meeting at which the Town Council proposes to appoint the co-opted member.
12. Discussion about the applications will take place in Council session without intervention from the candidates or public.
13. A vote will then be taken and all candidates will be considered.
14. If there is more than one candidate, the candidate with the least number of votes cast will be deleted and the vote taken again until the number of candidates equals the number of vacancies. The successful candidate(s) must have received an absolute majority vote of those present and voting.
15. The Town Council reserves the right not to make a co-option.
16. Candidates will be furnished with a full agenda of the meeting at which they are to be considered for appointment. The successful candidate(s) will be appointed and sign their Declaration of Acceptance of Office and can act as a Councillor in line with the normal election procedures.
17. The Register of Member's Interest will then be completed within 28 days and a copy provided to the Monitoring Officer at Chelmsford City Council. The newly appointed Councillor will be provided with an induction pack to include the Code of Conduct, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations of the Council.

Reasons for a casual vacancy:

- a) When a councillor fails to make the declaration of acceptance of office within the proper time
- b) When a notice of resignation is received
- c) On the day of his/her death
- d) In the case of disqualification under the Audit Commission Act 1998 or under the Local Government Act 2000 s79 or by virtue of a conviction on the day when either the time for appeal or application for relief expires, or such appeal or application is dismissed or abandoned
- e) In the case of an election being declared void, upon the date of the report or certificate of the election court
- f) Where a person ceases to be qualified, or becomes disqualified for any reason other than conviction or order, or is persistently absent from meetings, upon the date when the office is declared vacant by the High Court or Council as the case may be

Date effective from: 18 March 2025


Review date: March 2027



Town Councillor Application Form

Name	Mia Louise Barnett
Address	
Contact Number	
Email Address	
Why do you want to be a Town Councillor for South Woodham Ferrers Town Council ? (please continue on separate sheet if necessary)	<p>Having spent the entirety of my life in South Woodham Ferrers, supported by so many people in our town, I would love the opportunity to give back to the community. After attending most council meetings for the last year I've seen what a positive impact councillors can have on the lives of others and I've seen how rewarding it can be even when decisions get tough. Since being elected Deputy Head Girl at William De Ferrers after spending 5 years on the school council I've spent huge amounts of time advocating to give young people a voice in our school, presenting speeches on recycling and equality alongside organising fundraising events and if made a councillor, it would allow me to continue to represent young people across the town. My mother has lived here all her life and my father has lived here for 40 years, whilst one set of my grandparents have lived here since the early 1970s so I have a wide range of knowledge on all stages of the town within my family and would utilise this alongside my own experiences to be a voice for people of all ages. I've always been a committed person and am currently a member of Girl's Brigade at the local Evangelical Church having been a member for the last 11 years of my life and this has also given me a chance to get to know a wide variety of people in the community and taught me key values of service and respect which I would carry with me if granted the privilege of becoming a councillor. I have also continued to support the local library,</p>

	volunteering there for the last three summers and had a great time helping out at the town council stall during the Christmas Light switch on too!
What qualities do you have to offer the Town Council? (Please continue on separate sheet if necessary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have excellent IT skills having studied computer science at GCSE and now have my own active social media pages, with a community of over 5k followers which I have consistently used to create a safe space for people to voice their own political views. • I am a hard worker studying 5 subjects at A level which are: politics, history, maths, further maths as well as an extended essay project on the Titanic. • I am well versed with national and global political issues having completed work experience in the Commons and the Lords before completing my first TV interview last year on the American election. • I value democracy and implemented one of my pledges as part of the deputy head student team by holding a mock election last year to encourage students to engage with the voting process and prepare them for future life. • I'm a good communicator and enjoy public speaking in front of large groups of people but I also really value listening and discussing with smaller groups of people and am not afraid to change my stance or views especially if i feel theres a need for a compromise in order to achieve a better outcome for all.

Which Ward are you applying for	Collingwood
If your first choice is not available would you consider representing another ward:	Please circle:  Yes No

Completed applications must be received by the Tuesday prior to the week of the Council meeting where the application will be considered.

Return to:
 Karen Atkins – Town Clerk
 South Woodham Ferrers Town Council
 Champions Manor Hall
 Hullbridge Road
 South Woodham Ferrers
 Essex CM3 5LJ

I declare to the best of my knowledge and belief that I am not disqualified from being elected by reason of any disqualification set out in Section 80 of the Local Government Act 1972 or any decision made under Section 79 of the Local Government Act 2000, copies of which sections are enclosed and I do not hold a politically restricted post, within the meaning of Part 1 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, within the meaning of that Part.

This Page is Strictly Confidential and information will not be shared

Please tick one box

- ☐ I am registered as a local government elector for South Woodham Ferrers Town Council

- ☐ I have during the whole of the twelve months preceding my application occupied as owner or tenant the following land or other premises in South Woodham Ferrers

- ☐ My principal or only place of work during those twelve months has been in South Woodham Ferrers at

- ☒ I have during the whole of the twelve months resided in the Parish or within 3 kilometres (3 miles) of it (state full address)

- Woodham Ferrers, Essex

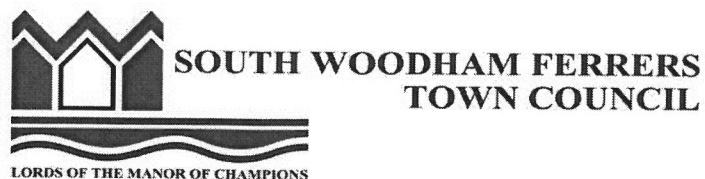
Do you _____?

Yes ☐ No ☒

Please tell us if there are any 'reasonable adjustments' we can make to assist you in your application

N/A

Signature *[Signature]* date 11/02/25



Town Councillor Application Form

Name	Daniel Brown
Address	
Contact Number	
Email Address	
Why do you want to be a Town Councillor for South Woodham Ferrers Town Council ? (please continue on separate sheet if necessary)	I am applying for the role of town councillor as I want to make a difference in the local community and be a voice for residents. I would like to bring new ideas and offer my support to the town council to maintain the peaceful town we live in.

<p>What qualities do you have to offer the Town Council? (Please continue on separate sheet if necessary)</p>	<p>I am a resident of Collingwood ward and have been since I move to the area, 8 years ago.</p> <p>I have a young child at a local primary school, where my wife is on the PTA.</p> <p>We as a family are engrained into the local community and as our daughter is growing, we want to maintain the peaceful and fun community we have come to enjoy.</p> <p>I am a shift worker for my 'day job' and as such, am aware I will not be able to attend all meetings but where possible, I will be as involved as I can be.</p> <p>I am passionate about fairness and democratic processes and believe that by listening to and learning from residents, we can maintain and build upon this wonderful town.</p>
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<p>Which Ward are you applying for</p>	<p>Collingwood</p>
<p>If your first choice is not available would you consider representing another ward:</p>	<p>Please circle:</p> <p>Yes No</p>

Completed applications must be received by the Tuesday prior to the week of the Council meeting where the application will be considered

Return to:
 Karen Atkins – Town Clerk
 South Woodham Ferrers Town Council
 Champions Manor Hall
 Hullbridge Road
 South Woodham Ferrers
 Essex CM3 5LJ

I declare to the best of my knowledge and belief that I am not disqualified from being elected by reason of any disqualification set out in Section 80 of the Local Government Act 1972 or any decision made under Section 79 of the Local Government Act 2000, copies of which sections are enclosed and I do not hold a politically restricted post, within the meaning of Part 1 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, within the meaning of that Part.

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Please tick one box

☐ I am registered as a local government elector for South Woodham Ferrers Town Council

☒ I have during the whole of the twelve months preceding my application occupied as owner or tenant the following land or other premises in South Woodham Ferrers

☐ My principal or only place of work during those twelve months has been in South Woodham Ferrers at

☒ I have during the whole of the twelve months resided in the Parish or within 4.8 kilometres (3 miles) of it (give full address)

Woodham Ferrers, ES

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

Yes ☐ No ☒

Please tell us if there are any 'reasonable adjustments' we can make to assist you in your application

N/A

Signature



date 04/02/2025



**SOUTH WOODHAM FERRERS
TOWN COUNCIL**

Distinguished Community Service Award

Nomination Form

1. Nominee Details

a) Full names: Martin Holden and Jane Holden

b) Home address

a) Contact number

b) Jane Holden

c) Email address

2. Your Nomination

Unusually for this award I am nominating a married couple who have together selflessly supported youth work in the town for over 40 years and are still continuing this work today. Both are members of the South Woodham Ferrers Evangelical Church and have run the local Boys' Brigade Company over this time. Martin took over as Captain 36 years ago although he was involved in the work before this date. Jane joined the Company as an officer in 1986 and they were married two years later. It would not be unfair to say that they have been wedded to Boys' Brigade ever since. Over this time literally hundreds of boys have been through the ranks of the company where they have been taught Christian values and to become well rounded individually and good citizens.

There have been many highlights over the years: Summer camps, expeditions and the Company band, but perhaps one of the most important aspects that comes from Jane and Martin's work is the inclusion and warm welcome of boys of all ages and abilities.



**SOUTH WOODHAM FERRERS
TOWN COUNCIL**

There was a young lad who was blind and who yet went on to receive his Queens Award from Sir Alf Ramsey at the Eastern District BB centenary.

Recently a young man with considerable learning difficulties again progressed from Anchor Boys section of the Company to the Company Section even though he required one to one support.

In our own family our son, Jonathan, who was a member of the Company when he became a wheelchair user, also benefitted from their kindness, dedication and support.

I believe the recognition this award would bring is thoroughly merited and I wholeheartedly commend it for your consideration.

3. Proposer's Comments and details

Name: Nigel Coggan

Address:
Essex CM

ers,

Contact 1

Your signature:

Date: 29th January 2025

Any additional comment (*optional*): A lifetime of service to the young people of South Woodham Ferrers.



**SOUTH WOODHAM FERRERS
TOWN COUNCIL**

4. Seconder's Comments and details

Name: Elaine Coggan

Address:

Contact :

Your signature:

Date: 29th January 2025

Any additional comment (*optional*):

I totally support this nomination, and would add that Jane Holden has also been the Musical Director for our local handbell team, Absolutely Chiming, for many years. A very talented lady who gives generously of her time.

*Please return the completed nomination to Karen Atkins Town Clerk,
South Woodham Ferrers Town Council, Champions Manor Hall
Community Centre, Hullbridge Road, South Woodham Ferrers, Essex
CM3 5LJ*

For further assistance please call the Town Council on 01245 429446

Responsible Officer	Town Clerk	Date effective from	January 2024	Review date	January 2025
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Reports to Council 18 March 2025

10.1 Planning & Environment Committee

It was noted that a meeting was held on 28/1/25, 18/2/25 & 25/2/25

- The intention to apply for funding for the additional 336 bus.
- Biodiversity Policy
- Outside Maintenance Contract
- Response to Chelmsford City Council Local Plan
- Love Your Bus Grant submission
- Great British Spring Clean
- The planning guide with the SWF local plan

10.2 Events, Community & Leisure Committee

It was noted that a meeting was held on 11/2/25.

- Easter Events
- VE day
- Fun at Champions Manor Hall
- Summer Event
- Christmas Fayre 2025
- Disband of the Carers Film Club

10.3 Finance & Projects Committee

It was noted that a meeting was held on 04/03/25.

- Grants Awarded February 2025.

10.4 Staffing Committee

It was noted that a meeting was held on 22/1/25 & 11/2/2025.

- Approval of new staff member in the role of Events & Marketing Officer.
- Safer Recruitment Policy

CIVIC PROTOCOL POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The Civic Protocol is designed to assist the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor to understand their roles and responsibilities and provide some useful information, which may be of assistance when undertaking civic duties.

The protocol at Appendix A is also designed to ensure a consistent approach when dealing with issues connected to the civic function. The object of the information is to try and ensure that the mayor's civic year runs as smoothly as possible. Not all eventualities will be covered by this protocol and assistance is always available from the Town Clerk.

BACKGROUND TOWN MAYOR

Section 245 (6) of the Local Government Act 1972 gives Town Councils the power by resolution to allow themselves the title of Town Council and the Chairman of a Town Council is entitled to the style of 'Town Mayor'.

A Town Mayor has the same rights and duties as a Town Council Chairman. The office and leadership role of Town Mayor must be respected by all members of the Council, at all times.

THE COUNCILLOR BECOMING MAYOR

The mayor, by virtue of the Office, can and should seek to use his/her influence and standing in the role to stimulate community pride, encourage business, and promote the voluntary sector. The mayor is also likely to have many meetings with various other dignitaries, other engagements, and will be in the public eye for the full year.

The mayor is formally elected by the Council at the Annual Council Meeting held in May. A Deputy Mayor is also elected at this meeting. The new Mayor is required to make the following declaration when accepting the Term of Office at the Annual Meeting:

"I.....having been elected to the Office of Mayor for the Town of South Woodham Ferrers, hereby declare that I take the said Office upon myself and will duly and faithfully fulfil the duties thereof according to the best of my knowledge and ability. "

The mayor's term in office is for one civic year and during this time the mayor continues to be a member of the Council and presides over the meetings of the Full Council. In the event of more than one nomination being put forward, the meeting shall select the successful candidate in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders.

ROLE OF THE MAYOR

Duties which the mayor may carry out include:

- a) Organising events to raise funds for the mayor's chosen charities
- b) Acting as host on behalf of the Council at functions organised by the Council
- c) Attending functions within South Woodham Ferrers, or on occasions outside the town as a ceremonial representative of the Council
- d) Undertaking official openings or presentations within South Woodham Ferrers on behalf of the Town Council
- e) Representing the Council during royal visits to the town

The mayor will choose their own consort who can be either a partner, fellow Councillor, or a family member or friend. If the consort is female, she may be referred to as the Mayoress.

The mayor also has a number of statutory functions as set out below:

- a) The mayor, when present, must preside over meetings of the Full Council and the Annual Town Meeting.
- b) The mayor has a casting vote in the event of an equality of votes
- c) The mayor should ensure, together with the Town Clerk, that the Council makes legal decisions
- d) The mayor has a duty to ensure the agenda is followed correctly and that Standing Orders are properly applied.

SUPPORT FOR THE MAYOR

Day to day support for the mayor is provided by the Office Admin Assistant, under the general direction of the Town Clerk.

The Office admin Assistant is an employee of the Town Council who, as well as carrying out other duties for the Council, assists the mayor with organising their term in office.

The Office Admin Assistant and Town Clerk will arrange a meeting with the new Mayor once elected to plan his/her Civic Year. This will involve any fundraising events the mayor wishes to hold. Once planned, the dates will be communicated to minimise potential clashes with other events.

The Office Admin Assistant receives invitations for the mayor and consults with the mayor before accepting/declining invitations.

The Office Admin Assistant is responsible where necessary for arranging transport to the events. The mayor (or the Deputy Mayor if deputising for the mayor) will normally use their own transport to attend Civic functions within South Woodham Ferrers. Depending on the circumstances, alternative means of transport may be considered for engagements out of the town.

If the Mayor is unsure of anything or requires some guidance, then this should first be raised with the Office Admin Assistant who will provide the necessary information, occasionally this may also require the assistance of the Town Clerk.

MAYOR'S CHARITIES

The Mayor's Charity traditionally raises funds for one or more local charities or worthy causes. It is advisable to choose the organisations to be supported at an early stage. The mayor may

decide to support as many organisations as they wish. It is preferable to announce the chosen charity as part of the Full Council meeting following election.

Support will be given by the Town Council staff.

The chosen organisation(s) will be notified and all funds raised at the events to be held by the mayor will be donated to the chosen organisation(s) at the end of the Civic year.

Funds raised for the mayor's charities cannot be used for any other purpose other than as a donation to the charity identified when the funds were raised, save for to cover all reasonable costs to raise the funds.

Charity events vary with individual Mayors. Any events the mayor wishes to organise should be organised with support from the Town Council Office.

CHEQUE PRESENTATION

The Office Admin Assistant will coordinate a cheque presentation and associated publicity. The mayor will announce the total amount raised for their charity at the Annual Meeting.

SUPPORT BY DEPUTY MAYOR

The Deputy Mayor will support the mayor throughout the year by representing the Council when the mayor is unavailable or has another engagement. If the Mayor is not present at a Full Council meeting, the Deputy Mayor shall preside. In effect, the Deputy Mayor has no standing as Deputy Mayor when the mayor is present but assumes the precedence and standing of the mayor when they are deputising for the mayor rather than acting as Deputy. Notwithstanding the presence of the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor is permitted to wear insignia at Council Meetings and Civic Events within the Town.

Invitations to the Deputy Mayor should be dealt with as follows:

- a) Invitations to functions should not be sent to (or solicited by) the Deputy Mayor. The Deputy Mayor should not normally attend functions in their own right, except when deputising for the mayor.
- b) All invitations should be sent for consideration by the mayor as First Citizen and, if the mayor cannot attend, it may be appropriate to 'pass down' an invitation firstly to the Deputy Mayor, then previous Mayor and then another Councillor chosen by the mayor.
- c) On the rare occasion when the Deputy Mayor is invited to a function in their own right, there should be a clear procedure whereby the invitation is shown formally by the Office Admin Assistant to the Mayor, in order that there is no misunderstanding.

INVITATIONS TO COUNCILLORS

Invitations to Councillors other than the Mayor or Deputy Mayor to represent the Town or the Town Council should be dealt with in the same way as invitations to the Deputy Mayor.

CIVIC INSIGNIA

The mayor's chain is the outward signs of the civic office held and shall be worn with the horse side showing i.e. its insignia. The mayor should wear the chain at ceremonial occasions, such as Remembrance Sunday, Royal visits etc. and if desired when chairing Town Council meetings.

The mayor may also wear the chain, when officially invited as Town Mayor, to external functions.

The mayor should not wear the civic insignia in another area without express permission from the Council for that area. Civic chains should never be worn with a military uniform.

PRECEDENCE AND PROTOCOL

The Town Mayor's should be addressed as 'Mr/Madam Town Mayor.'

A female Mayor should still be termed as Mayor, not a Mayoress. Precedence and protocol for visits and events is often set by custom and practice, with the exception of Royal visits.

RECEIPT OF GIFTS

In the course of the duty of being Mayor, often gifts will be offered to the mayor. It is suggested that all Members should treat with extreme caution any offer of a gift, favour or hospitality that is made to them personally.

As is the case with Town Councillors in general, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor remain subject to the Code of Conduct for Members which is in force at the time. The Code of Conduct requires Members, including Mayors, to register any gifts or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £50 to the Monitoring Officer, received in connection with their official duties as a member, and the source of the gift or hospitality. You must register the gift or hospitality and its source within 28 days of receiving it.

Be aware that this will be a non-pecuniary interest and if a matter under consideration is likely to affect a person who gave you a gift or hospitality that must be declared.

THE CIVIC YEAR

Below is a list of typical events which are organised during the Mayor's Year in Office. These dates should be discussed and arranged during a meeting with the Mayor, Town Clerk and Office Admin Assistant at the beginning of each New Year to suit the mayor's diary.

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

This is not the Annual Meeting of the Town Council. It is a legal requirement that all Parishes/Towns in England hold an 'Annual Town Meeting' to which all local electors are entitled to attend. It must be held between 1st March and 1st June each year and must start no earlier than 6pm. The Town Council usually holds this in April so the outgoing Mayor can report on their year of Office. It is noted that Councillors are expected to also attend the Annual Town Meeting. This is not a meeting where the mayor's insignia is worn. If the Mayor is in attendance it is he/she who chairs the meeting.

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

Remembrance Sunday is held on the Sunday nearest to the anniversary of Armistice Day which is on November 11th. The Town Mayor lays a wreath at the War Memorial. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor chains of office shall be worn.

MAYOR'S RECEPTION/EVENTS

Invitees will include Civic Dignitaries from the County and District Councils and neighbouring Town and Parish Councils, Town Councillors and representatives of local organisations. Other

invitees will be at the discretion of the Town Mayor. The date of the reception will be at the discretion of the Town Mayor, but every effort will be made to avoid any clash with a similar event organised by a neighbouring authority.

CHARITY EVENTS

Other events may be organised in the mayor's year. The option to hold a Mayoral event each year will be at the mayor's discretion and agreed by Council.

MISCELLANEOUS EVENTS WITHIN THE TOWN

Various miscellaneous events are attended by the mayor, examples of which are listed below:

- a) Presenting Awards and Prizes to individuals and organisations
- b) Entertaining guests and visitors at the Town Council Offices
- c) Presentations at local schools
- d) Christmas Lights Switch-on
- e) Attending and meeting Royal Visitors to the Town

EVENT PROCEDURE

All invitations are to include partners and to encourage an alternative representative of the body to attend, as necessary. The mayor shall advise officers each year which Parish/Town Councils and Community Groups should be invited to Civic events in their year in Office. The Town Council office should thoroughly update the Civic Invitee list every June.

MAYOR'S END OF YEAR

The outgoing Mayor needs to consider a number of matters:

- a) Thanks to support employees is always appreciated
 - b) Thanks to the Mayor's personal supporters - partner, family, friends, etc.
 - c) Thanks to the Deputy Mayor for support and assistance
 - d) Thanks to the Mayor's Charity supporters, those Councillors who have helped - and anyone else
 - e) Talking to the successor, when announced, giving advice and information
- The agenda of the Annual Meeting will be formatted to allow the outgoing Mayor to offer thanks.

ANNEX A – PROTOCOL MAYOR AND DEPUTIES GENERAL

- a) All invitations should be sent to the Mayor at the Town Council Offices.
- b) If the Mayor cannot attend then, with the agreement of the inviting body, the Deputy Mayor should be asked to deputise and then in their absence the previous Town Mayor. If the previous Town Mayor is unable to attend the current Town Mayor may choose a councillor as a representative.
- c) For events out of the town, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor may attend different functions on behalf of the Council.
- d) For events in the Town, it is envisaged that there may be occasions when the mayor is attending one function, and the Deputy Mayor or other representative could attend another.
- e) If an invitation to any function, in or out of the Town is sent directly to the Deputy Mayor then he/she should inform the Mayor's Secretary will inform the mayor and seek his/her views.

SPECIFIC EVENTS

As a general rule, the Deputy Mayor will not attend as Deputy at functions at which the mayor is present, save for those occasions set out specifically below:

- a) South Woodham Ferrers Town Council Civic Events: The Deputy Mayor should wear the Chain of Office.
- b) Royal Visits: The invitations will only go to the mayor. If the Mayor is unable to attend, then the Town Clerk will check with the Lord Lieutenant's office whether the Deputy Mayor can deputise. If the Deputy Mayor can deputise, then he/she will wear the Deputy Mayor's chain.
- c) Charity Nights If the Mayor wishes to hold his/her own charity night then he/she should discuss the proposal with the Town Clerk or Office Admin Assistant to be clear as to the full implications if so doing.

EXTRA CIVIC EVENTS

From time-to-time additional civic occasions may occur these include.

- a) A Royal Death and proclamation
- b) A Royal visit

SOUTH WOODHAM FERRERS TOWN COUNCIL

PROCUREMENT POLICY

South Woodham Ferrers Town Council, hereinafter referred to as “the Council,” is aware of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and has set out this policy to comply with relevant legislation. The Council will follow The National Associations of Local Councils Toolkit and the existing Financial Regulations for the Council.

Introduction

1. Every Contract by the Council or person acting on its behalf shall comply with this Procurement Policy.

2. A Contract is an agreement between the Council and an individual or organisation for the individual or organisation to provide works, goods, or services (including the engagement of consultants) for which the Council will provide consideration. The following contracts are exempt from the requirement of these rules:

- Contracts relating solely to disposal of acquisition of land
- Employment contracts
- Individual agency contracts for the provision of temporary staff

3. Persons involved with awarding the Contract on behalf of the Council must ensure that the best value for money is obtained. Prior to the commencement of procurement, it is essential that the person leading the procurement, usually the Clerk, has identified the need and fully assessed the options for meeting those needs. The Council will strive to use local suppliers from within the district where possible but not exclusively.

4. Exceptions from any of the following provisions of these Contract Procurement Rules may be under the direction of Council where they are satisfied that the exception is justified in special circumstances. Every exception and reason, therefore, will be recorded.

5. Specifications

Enquiries and invitations to Tender shall be based on a written specification. The specification shall adequately describe the requirement procedure in sufficient detail to enable effective procurement in accordance with these rules. Specification to be agreed by the Finance & Projects committee.

6. Supplier Pre-qualification and Due Diligence

The Council shall only enter a contract with a supplier if it is satisfied as to the supplier's suitability, eligibility, financial standing, and technical capacity to undertake the contract by conducting appropriate due diligence.

7. Requirement for Quotation/Tender and Public Advertising

Consideration shall be given to other costs associated with procurement (lifetime costings including, for example, maintenance costs and power consumption). Where these could be significant, such as in the final disposal of a product, appropriate arrangements shall be put in place to consider these costs against alternative options.

8. Contracts above £500 and below £3,000

The Clerk/RFO shall strive to obtain three estimates.

9. Contracts above £3,000 and below £30,000

Written quotations must be sought by not less than three individuals or organisations that could undertake the contract.

10. Contracts above £30,000

The Standing Order 17f stipulates:

The Regulations require councils to use the Contracts Finder website to advertise contract opportunities, set out the procedures to be followed in awarding new contracts and to publicise the award of new contracts. Thresholds currently applicable are:

a) For public supply and public service contracts in excess of E 209,000 Euros (£181,302)

b) For public works contracts in excess of E 5225.000 Euros (£4,551,413)

- A public notice must be made setting out any particulars of the contract and inviting persons interested to apply, within a period of not less than ten days, for opportunity to tender. This is advertised on the Town Council website, social media platforms and in the Focus magazine.

- After the expiration of the period specified in the public notice and on no receipt of tenders, invitations to tender shall be sent to not less than four individuals or organisations that could undertake the contract (or, if fewer than four apply, to those that are suitable).

- Tenders to be submitted and opened in accordance with Financial Regulations Appendix 1 – Tender process.

Where the council intends to procure or award a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract as defined by The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 ("the Regulations") which is valued at £30,000 or more, the council shall comply with the relevant requirements of the Regulations. The Parish Council must advertise on the .gov website: Contracts Finder - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

11. Contract Procedure Rules 8 and 9 shall not apply to the following but, wherever possible, alternative quotations shall be obtained:

- Purchase by auction or at public fairs.
- Contracts involving special, technical, scientific, or artistic knowledge.
- Contracts comprising spare or replacement parts of existing machinery or plant repairs to such machinery or plant.
- Urgent situations as agreed with the Clerk and Town Mayor where the Council is put at significant risk, or where significant costs could be incurred, by not taking urgent remedial action.

12. Every written contract will specify:

- The work, materials, matters or things to be furnished, had, or done.
- The price to be paid, with a statement of discounts or other deductions (if any).
- The time or times to be performed within the contract.

13. Every contract which exceeds £30,000 and is either for the execution of work or the supply of goods or materials shall provide for payment of liquidated damages by the contractor in case the terms of the contractor are not performed.

14. Submission of Tenders

Submission procedures for contracts above £30,000

- Where an invitation to tender is made, such invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare such a specification in appropriate cases. The invitations shall, in addition, state that tenders must be addressed to the Town Clerk in the ordinary course of the post. Each tendering firm returns the tender in a sealed envelope marked 'tender' and remain sealed until the prescribed dates for opening tenders for the contract.

- The tenders shall be kept in the custody of the Town Clerk until the time and date specified for opening.

- Tenders shall be opened by the Town Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer in the presence of at least two Member of the Council. Tenders shall be date stamped and signed on all pages containing price information.

- Quotations and tenders may be received electronically provided they are kept in a separate secure folder under the control of the Town Clerk which is not opened until the deadline has passed for the receipt of tenders.

15. Acceptance of Quotations and Tenders

- The tender that offers the best value in line with the specification of works to the Council shall be accepted. Each tender shall be evaluated for price and

quality to ascertain the most economically advantageous tender. Local companies should be encouraged to apply.

- For procurements over £30,000 the questions and scoring system used shall be written before tenders are received. The basis of this exercise shall be explained in any invitation to tender documentation.

Where the authorised person considers it in the best interest of the Council, he or she may negotiate with the tenderers whose tenders are being considered for acceptance. No negotiation on contracts whose value is in excess of £25,000 can take place without reference to the Town Mayor. Any negotiation which would distort competition is expressly forbidden. Details of the negotiation must be placed on the contract file.

- Arithmetical errors found in any tender when checking shall be dealt with as follows: The tenderer shall have the error pointed out to them and be offered the opportunity to stand by their original tender, or their corrected tender, or to withdraw it.

16. Signing and Sealing of Contracts

Every successful quotation/tender shall be accepted in writing. If the Town Council deems appropriate the services of a Solicitors can be obtained to determine and set out a formal contract document.

17. Nominated Sub-Contractors and Suppliers

Where a sub-contractor or supplier is to be nominated to a main contractor, the procurement of the services of the sub-contractor or supplier shall be the subject to these Contract Procurement Rules. In the event of Contractor nominating any sub-contractor for delivery of all or part of the services, the Council's contract will remain with the main contractor and the main contractor remains responsible for and liable for delivering the agreed contract. The main contractor holds responsibility for the delivery of the contract and any associated penalties, financial or otherwise, to the Council as agreed in the main contract.

18. Contracts Record

A record of all contracts in excess of £25,000 in value placed by the Council shall be kept by the Clerk. This record shall specify for each contract the name of the contractor, the works to be executed or the goods or services to be supplied, the contract value and contract period. It is the responsibility of the person authorising the contract to ensure that an accurate record is maintained.

19. Contract Project Management

Project management shall be practised at all times in undertaking procurement, using industry agreed project management and framework standards as appropriate to the work being undertaking (for example, but not limited to PRINCE 2, PMI, RIBA, RICS). Suppliers will be expected to demonstrate their Project Management, competency, and qualifications.

20. Contract Variations to Scope

Any necessary instructions to vary a contract shall be made in writing by the Town Mayor, Clerk/RFO or persons responsible for supervising the contract. Where a variation occurs during the currency of the contract that is material and cannot be met from within the original contract sum, an immediate report shall be made to the Council who shall decide what further action is necessary.

21. Insurances

Consideration must be given as to the appropriate type (employee liability, public liability, professional indemnity etc) and level of insurance requirements for each contract.

22. Termination of Contracts

The Council reserves the right to terminate any contract immediately for any of the following reasons: - Termination for Cause – where a supplier commits a material breach of the agreement to deliver services, or fails to deliver agreed services, in the agreed time limit without a plan to address the failings.

Agreed Council 18th March 2025
Review March 2026



SOUTH WOODHAM FERRERS TOWN COUNCIL

BIODIVERSITY POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the Duty imposed on parish and town councils by Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006, South Woodham Ferrers Town Council will take into consideration the protection and conservation of biodiversity within the town.

The World Wildlife Fund defines Biodiversity as all the different kinds of life that is found in one area - the variety of animals, plants, fungi, and even microorganisms like bacteria that make up our natural world. Each of these species and organisms work together in ecosystems, like an intricate web, to maintain balance and support life. Biodiversity supports everything in nature that we need to survive including food, clean water, medicine, and shelter. But as humans put increasing pressure on the planet, using and consuming more resources than ever before, we risk upsetting the balance of ecosystems and losing biodiversity.

The Environmental Improvement Plan was published in 2018 as a 25-year vision setting out Government strategies for improving the natural environment. In January 2023 the plan's first five-yearly update was undertaken placing a biodiversity duty on Parish and Town Councils.

The Town Council is required to understand what the biodiversity duty is and consider what it can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity by agreeing appropriate policies that can be delivered through an action plan. That plan must be reviewed within 5 years of its inception or previous revision, or more often if appropriate.

2. OVERVIEW OF COMPLIANCE

There are three strategies that must be considered as part of the Town Council's requirement to comply with its biodiversity duty:

Local Nature Recovery Strategies:

[Local nature recovery strategies - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Preparing local nature recovery strategies is a statutory requirement under the Environment Act 2021. Each strategy will agree priorities for nature's recovery, map

existing areas for nature and proposals for creating and improving habitat for nature and wider environmental goals.

Species Conservation Strategies:

These strategies will help safeguard the future of at-risk species, find the best ways to comply with existing obligations to protect species and improve their conservation status.

Protected site strategies:

These strategies involve protecting and restoring species and habitats in protected sites and provide ways to overcome off-site pressures, like nutrient pollution, in the wider catchment.

The biodiversity duty lies principally with Town and Parish Councils that own and run land and buildings. It requires them to foster opportunities for biodiversity issues to be addressed such that there is significant improvement both in existing environments and in new ones that are created by re-organisation or via planning permissions.

As the Town Council manages land and buildings, it will be required to initiate biodiversity strategies.

In addition, the Town Council will be expected, as appropriate, to influence 'biodiversity net-gain' by encouraging developers, domestic gardeners, nature conservancy organisations and other organisations and landowners to improve biodiversity.

3. SPECIFIC AREAS WHERE THE TOWN COUNCIL MAY INFLUENCE ITS BIODIVERSITY DUTY

Planning:

The Town Council, when commenting on planning applications, will support site and building design that benefits biodiversity through the conservation and integration of existing habitats or provision of new habitats. It will support protection of sensitive habits from development and will consider whether the development would mean the loss of important habitats for wildlife in respect of all applications.

Town Council Buildings and Land

The Town Council will, as far as is possible, conserve the biodiversity of the land it manages. It will adopt beneficial practices with regarding to cutting and removal of vegetation, application of chemicals and timing of maintenance work. Special care will be taken in the specification of its grounds maintenance planning to ensure that the work, whilst reaching acceptable standards, does not harm the natural environment.

Public Awareness:

The Town Council will, wherever possible, raise public awareness of biodiversity issues. It will, where possible, communicate information and raise awareness of biodiversity through its website, social media and Council publications.

Residents:

The Town Council will, where possible, encourage residents to enhance their biodiversity contribution by providing such things as nest boxes and bird feeders, holes in fences for hedgehogs and amphibians to pass, planting for butterflies and bees, wildlife ponds, corners of the garden and areas of grassland and wildflowers left to nature.

Specialist Groups:

Various areas will be protected by other legislation but the Town Council, where appropriate and welcomed, will find constructive ways of being involved in actions needed to improve site conditions in partnership with specialist groups such as the Essex Wildlife Trust and Bird Aware.

General Commitment:

South Woodham Ferrers Town Council undertakes to work in partnership with other organisations to protect, promote and enhance biodiversity within areas of the parish. The Town Council will, wherever possible, raise public awareness of biodiversity issues. It will, where feasible, involve the community in biodiversity projects on its land including tree planting, wildflower meadows, birdbox making.

Adopted by Council 18 March 2025

SOUTH WOODHAM FERRERS TOWN COUNCIL



Safer Recruitment Policy

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Town Council's (the Council) ability to provide quality responsive services to our community depends upon the skills, abilities and knowledge of our employees and the recruitment process is vital in ensuring that the best people are appointed.
- 1.2 The Council is committed to promoting the welfare and protection of vulnerable groups. This procedure should be used in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy. These policies and procedures are in place to ensure that the right people are hired and to minimise the risk to children, young people and vulnerable groups.
- 1.3 The procedure has been produced to assist those involved in recruitment and selection in making these appointments and aims to ensure that the process is carried out fairly, efficiently and cost effectively in accordance with relevant legislation.
- 1.4 The procedure applies to all employees of the Council when undertaking recruitment and selection activity and should be used in all Council recruitment.

This procedure applies to permanent, temporary, casual and voluntary vacancies.

- 1.5 Full guidance on the recruitment process and the necessary forms are available.

2. Stage 1 – What to do when a vacancy arises

- 2.1 When a position has or is going to become vacant, the first step is to review whether it needs to be filled and how the requirements have or may need to change. Whilst there is a tendency to replace like for like, the Council recognises that positions and service requirements can develop over time and this is a good opportunity to look at the different options available.

3. Stage 2 – Authorisation to fill

- 3.1 If it is decided that the position (either as it is or amended) needs to be filled, then the Town Clerk must review the position with the Staffing Committee
- 3.2 If a new job role is identified (or the existing post has changed significantly) then a job description should be submitted to the Staffing Committee so that job evaluation can be completed. This will determine the grading of the position, and the grade it will be advertised at.
- 3.3 The Town Clerk will then be required to gain authorisation from the Staffing Committee.
- 3.4 A proposed advertisement text, a copy of the job description and person specification will be provided to the Staffing Committee.

These documents will underpin the recruitment process and it is important that they accurately reflect what the Council will want someone to do and the skills, experience and knowledge that they will need to do this.

- 3.5 In the event that the vacancy is not authorised by the Staffing Committee the post may be removed from the Council's establishment.
- 3.6 The Staffing Committee will not proceed to advertisement without the job description and person specification.

4. Stage 3 – Advertising the vacancy

4.1 Selecting the advertising media/placement.

Once the relevant documentation is prepared, the Staffing Committee will look at the pool of employees for whom redeployment or relocation needs to be considered and identify anyone for whom the job could be a suitable alternative to the one currently held. Only when it is agreed that the job is not suitable for someone in this position, the Staffing Committee, in conjunction with the Town Clerk will decide the most effective recruitment method. This may include internal and/or external advertisement, or the use of recruitment and selection agencies.

All recruitment exercises must be co-ordinated by the Staffing Committee to ensure a corporate approach and compliance with employment legislation.

Personal recommendation or word of mouth recruitment will not be acceptable. This does not prevent friends or relatives of existing employees responding to advertised vacancies in the normal way along with other candidates.

4.2 Internal Advertisement

Positions should be advertised internally first before any external advert in order to encourage internal progression and provide opportunities for development. Only in exceptional circumstances should a position not be advertised internally first – and this should be with the agreement of the Staffing Committee.

Internal candidates will include all permanent and temporary employees of the Council.

External Advertisement

The Staffing Committee will liaise with the Town Clerk on the best choice of media. Decisions on the placement of adverts will be made based on the following criteria:

- Advice from advertising agency
- Cost of advertising
- Relevance of media
- Target audience
- Time of year

The Council is required to fund all specific external advertising in line with Financial Regulations prior to the placement of the advert. Specific media will require different deadlines for text and this should be considered when deciding closing date.

External signposting advertisements (detailing job title, grade / salary, closing date and where to apply only) can be placed. The costs for this advert must be met within the agreed budget.

4.3 All external adverts will be placed on the Council's website, social media and noticeboards, circulated via the Essex Association of Local Councils and/or any other appropriate agencies. Where employees do not have access to the internet the information can be made available in an alternative format.

4.4 Wording of Adverts – Safeguarding

Adverts should include a safeguarding message as per below and where appropriate should also notify applicants of the requirement of Disclosure and Barring Checks.

'South Woodham Ferrers Town Council is committed to safeguarding vulnerable groups and expects all employees to share this commitment. This includes obtaining references and ensuring compliance to the Disclosure and Barring Service process.'

4.5 Wording of Job Description - Safeguarding

Job descriptions should include the wording:

'You will be made aware and undertake training as required in line with your responsibilities set out in the Town Council's Safeguarding Policy.'

4.6 Recruitment and selection agencies

For short term temporary requirements (i.e. less than 6 months) which cannot be filled internally, the Town Clerk may use a recruitment agency. This must be approved by the Staffing Committee.

The recruitment agency will then be contacted to search a pool of applicants they hold on their books, or in some cases, search for applicants suitable for the role currently employed in other organisations to see if they are interested. Alternatively, it may be appropriate just to advertise on the Council's website, social media and noticeboards. The Staffing Committee will advise on the best course of action in these circumstances.

Where the Council is considering the use of agency temps for posts which require a Disclosure (see Para 6.2.3) they must ensure that the agency has evidence that these checks have been carried out at the appropriate level. The Town Clerk must also consider when the disclosure was obtained and for what purpose prior to accepting these checks. Further advice can be obtained from the Staffing Committee.

4.7 Recruitment Information

The Town Clerk will prepare a job pack for all Council vacancies. This will usually consist of:

- Application Form
- Job Description and Person Specification
- Information on the salary, hours
- Details of any special requirements e.g. DBS disclosures
- Details of interview dates

South Woodham Ferrers Town Council wants to ensure that candidates who apply for roles are clear about our commitment to safeguarding. As such all adverts and recruitment documentation will highlight the recruitment process.

The Town Clerk will manage the issuing and receipt of all application packs to ensure that appropriate monitoring can take place.

CVs will not be accepted on their own. Anyone submitting a CV will be contacted and asked to complete an application form.

If the vacancy is for a Town Clerk, the Staffing Committee will manage these functions.

4.8 Duration of Advertising

Deadlines for receiving completed applications will be clearly outlined on the advertisement. For internal advertisements, the deadline will generally be one week after advertisement. For external advertisements this will generally be two weeks after advertisement. However longer periods can be agreed in liaison with the Staffing Committee.

Applications received after the closing date will only be considered in exceptional circumstances by agreement with the Staffing Committee and the Town Clerk. This is to ensure fair treatment for all candidates.

5. Stage 4 – Selection Process

Short listing

5.1 Short-listing is the process by which candidates' applications are reviewed and selected for interview. This must always be completed against the person specification which has been prepared for the post.

Once the closing date has passed, the Town Clerk will prepare the completed applications for short-listing. As part of this process the Town Clerk will remove all monitoring information.

Short-listing must be carried out by at least two individuals and should ideally be the same people who will sit on the interview panel.

The Town Clerk is responsible for ensuring that short-listing occurs in accordance with the recruitment procedure. If any proposed panel member is related to an applicant, or has a close relationship (married, co-habiting, dating, relation, close or family friend) with him/her outside work, they must not take part in the selection process.

For Town Clerk appointments, a panel of Councillors must be fully involved in the short-listing and interview process.

Wherever short-listing should occur within two weeks of the closing date.

When short listing, Councillors should be aware of:

- Incomplete sections in application
- Unexplained gaps in employment history
- Employment history inconsistent with referees
- Reasons for leaving past employment.
- Career changes without any clear career or salary progression
- Moves from permanent to temporary positions.

These elements are important as they may suggest that information is being withheld.

Once the short-listing has been completed and Councillors have decided on the most appropriate assessment methods, the short-listing and interview schedule forms should be completed and circulated to all Members of the Staffing Committee.

It is important to make notes of the reasons for selection and non-selection. This will be useful if any concerns about the selection process are raised by candidates at a later stage.

The Town Clerk will advise candidates who have not been successful after the shortlisting stage.

If the vacancy is for a Town Clerk, the Staffing Committee will manage this function.

5.2 Assessment Methods

For all advertised vacancies, receiving a response that are shortlisted the Council will be required to conduct an interview. However, the use of other assessment tools, in addition to the interview, is recommended as this can help to improve the robustness of the selection process.

The Council need to think carefully about how they intend to assess each element of the person specification and decide on the most appropriate method. This may be via interview questions but can also include, for example, psychometric testing, work sample tests and presentations etc.

Any tests must be related to the requirements of the job/person specification and be shown to be valid as part of the selection process.

The Staffing Committee should determine the selection and application of tests.

For some tests, a trained administrator or assessor will be required.

5.3 Interview Preparation

The dates for interviews can be advertised with the vacancy and those candidates who have been successful at the shortlisting stage will be contacted by the Town Clerk with an interview time.

If the vacancy is for a Town Clerk, the Staffing Committee will manage this function.

5.4 The Town Clerk is responsible for ensuring that the appropriate arrangements have been made for their interviews i.e.:

- Ensuring that a suitable room is available (this should be fully accessible)
- Booking and setting up any equipment required i.e. laptops for presentations.
- Ordering refreshments

Interview timetables are available to view by all Councillors. The Town Clerk will enquire with each applicant of any special requirements that may be required.

The Town Clerk will prepare interview packs for all interviews. There will be one per panel member and will include:

- List of all interviews including dates and times
- Copy of each candidate's application form
- Interview questions/Assessment forms.
- Job Pack for the vacant post
- List of appropriate documentation to evidence eligibility to work in the UK

The Town Clerk will update all monitoring information.

5.5 Interview Panel

The interview panel must consist of at least two people who should be the same people who completed the short-listing. It is desirable that at least one member of the panel has been trained in interview techniques.

If any proposed panel member is related to an applicant or has a close relationship with him/her outside work, they should not take part in the selection process.

Consideration should also be given to the composition of the Panel to ensure that this is balanced and reflective of the main equality strands (age, gender, race, ethnicity, disability etc).

Interviews should, where possible, be conducted face to face, even if there is only one candidate.

5.6 Interview Questions

A set of questions matched to job requirements/person specification needs to be agreed by the panel prior to the interview. This is to help ensure that the interview is conducted on an equitable basis and means that all candidates are asked the same questions. This does not prevent the panel from asking follow-up questions or additional questions related to the candidate's application form.

Panel members must avoid questions which could be interpreted as being unfairly discriminatory and potentially unlawful e.g. about marital status, family/domestic arrangements. It is essential to concentrate on job requirements and ensure that candidates' evidence that they can meet them.

Panel members should review application forms thoroughly before interview and highlight discrepancies or gaps in employment history so that these can be discussed with the candidate during the interview.

5.7 At the Interview

Before the interview commences a member of the Panel will introduce themselves and their colleagues to the candidate and will ensure that the candidate understands the format that the interview will take.

At least one panel member must take notes throughout each interview. Candidates can request to see their assessment forms and interview notes so panel members must ensure that these are factually correct and do not include any subjective remarks. The notes will help in the completion of assessment forms and can be referred to at a later stage to assist in the fair comparison of candidates. Interview notes should be legible and factual as they could be requested by a third party as part of legal action.

At the end of the interview candidates should be asked if there are any questions which they wish to ask about the job or the appointment process. Finally, the candidates should be informed when a decision is likely to be made and how this will be conveyed to them.

Assessment forms should be completed for each candidate interviewed. These should be completed jointly by the panel with evidence for each mark clearly indicated.

If it becomes apparent that a candidate does not meet all of the essential criteria, he/she/they should **not** be appointed.

The person with the highest assessment against the essential criteria should generally be the person whose application should be progressed to the next stage.

However, this needs to be considered along with the results of any selection testing used. In the event of a tie, the panel should review the marks against the desirable elements.

Ensure that any gaps in employment history or discrepancies highlighted in preparation stages have been asked and clarified, detailing answers so these can be attached to application form to ensure that questions are not asked unnecessarily at the vetting stages.

5.8 Checking Documentation

The Town Clerk will collect and check any documentation which the candidate has been asked to bring with them. This will include:

- Criminal conviction form, where required.
- Evidence of essential qualifications.
- Documentation to prove that they have eligibility to work in the UK.

The Town Clerk must check the original documentation and take a photocopy for the Council's records, ensuring that they write 'This is a true Copy,' sign, print name, state Job Title and then date.

****Please note, if the successful applicant does not hold a British passport, the right to work documentation will need to be seen by the Town Clerk.**

All copies of documents will be stored by the Town Clerk or destroyed in accordance with the Council's Document Retention Policy.

The Staffing Committee will review the criminal conviction form, where required and will inform the Town Clerk of any information which is relevant to the post.

6. Stage 5 – Appointment Process

6.1 Offer of Appointment

Once a decision has been made the Town Clerk will contact the successful candidate and a verbal offer can be made subject to references, pre-employment medical questionnaire and if applicable, a DBS disclosure.

The commencing salary will be agreed by the Staffing Committee.

NB When making a verbal offer it must be clear that the offer is conditional and subject to successful pre-employment vetting. Verbal offers have the same contractual status as those in writing.

The Town Clerk will send out a conditional offer of employment letter along with DBS forms (if applicable to the post). A provisional start dates will be provided subject to the pre-employment vetting being completed.

The Town Clerk will co-ordinate all pre-employment checks and will inform the Staffing Committee when these have been completed. No individual should start employment with the Council until these checks have been cleared.

6.2 Pre-Employment Vetting Checks

All posts require pre-employment checks to ensure there are no known reasons why a candidate should not undertake the role they have applied for. Some checks will be specific to posts that have contact with children or vulnerable people.

6.3 References

For all permanent appointments or temporary appointments over 3 months in duration, two references must be obtained. These should include the present and/or most recent employer and must cover a 2-year period. If the two references that have been requested do not total the 2-year period, then a third must be obtained. In the case of first-time employees, references may also be sought from their school or other educational institution. Friends and family members will not be accepted as referees except in a professional work capacity.

Telephone references may be taken up in order to avoid delay. However, the questions should be restricted to those asked for all candidates and must be followed up in writing, either by the Town Clerk noting the responses or by the referee completing a pro forma and sending this on at a later date.

As part of the Data Protection Act 2018, if a candidate requests to see their reference, then the Authority is legally required to provide them with a copy of any information that the Council stores about them. However, the contents of a reference may only be disclosed to a candidate with the referee's permission. As our obligation is to provide information rather than documents, if the referee has not consented to the disclosure, then the third party's information must be obscured or removed from the document, (Data Protection Act 2018).

When requesting sickness details on reference forms, absence periods relating to pregnancy or gender re-assignment should not be included.

6.4 Pre-Employment Medical Questionnaire:

Pre-Employment Medical Questionnaires should be completed for all employees, whatever the duration of the contract.

The Pre-Employment Medical questionnaire will be sent to the successful applicant by the Town Clerk with the conditional offer of employment letter. The basis of this document will decide the needs of the post and if the applicant's health fits this requirement.

6.5 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks:

In line with the Council's commitment to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable groups it may be necessary that in certain roles we carry out a Disclosure and Barring check.

Where a DBS disclosure is required, the applicant will be sent a Disclosure Application form to complete (in accordance with the processing requirements).

No employee will be able to start until a satisfactory disclosure from the DBS has been received if this is required.

The Disclosure and Barring Service has introduced an Update Service enabling portability of checks between organisations. Where an employee has subscribed to this service the Council can, with the employee's consent, check that the information is still current online.

Disclosure and Barring checks are only valid on the day of issue. Consequently, employees may be subject to a further disclosure request every three years.

6.6 Checks for Agency Staff appointed to Council employment:

Where agency staff, apply for and are offered posts within the Council the above pre-employment checks will apply.

The Town Clerk is responsible for ensuring that these checks occur in accordance with the recruitment procedure.

Agency staff will not be able to transfer from the agency to the Council's employment until all necessary checks have been successfully carried out.

Once references, medical clearance and a satisfactory DBS check (where appropriate) have been obtained, the Town Clerk will arrange a start date in liaison with the Personnel Committee and candidate and will send out a contract to the new employee.

7. Employment of Young People

7.1 Under the Health and Safety (Young Persons) Regulations 1997 it is necessary to review the risk assessment of the intended work activity for any person under 18 years before they

commence. This review should take into account specific health and safety considerations and procedures, which apply to such young people. For more information, please contact the Town Clerk.

7.2 Specific regulations also apply to the employment of persons below school leaving age.

8. Employing people with disabilities

8.1 The Council actively promotes employing disabled people.

8.2 The Council guarantees interviews to all applicants with a disability who meet the essential requirements of the post as set out in the person specification.

8.3 To ensure consistency the Town Clerk will identify all appropriate candidates.

8.4 The Town Clerk can also assist in making any special interview arrangements for candidates with a disability.

8.5 If at the interview stage the Town Clerk is unsure if the applicant will be able to fulfil all aspects of the job, then the following should be considered:

- Whether any of the duties they may find difficult can be reallocated / removed from the post.
- Offering a temporary work trial, this will show more than an interview if the person can fulfil the role.
- Seek advice from Access to Work. They can assist with and fund adaptations to work equipment, transportation to and from work and the provision of assistants/mentors etc.

9. Casual Enquiries

Casual enquiries received about job opportunities will not be used to fill long term temporary or permanent posts. These persons will be notified of any current potentially suitable advertised positions and with regard to future vacancies advised to look in relevant journals and local newspapers as well as the Council's website. CV's will not be kept by the Council.

10. Induction

Good Induction will ensure that new employees understand how their role fits into the organisation.

Appendix 1: Employing Disabled People and People with Health Conditions

Please note that this information is taken from the guidelines produced by the Department for Work and Pensions

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/employing-disabled-people-and-people-with-health-conditions/employing-disabled-people-and-people-with-health-conditions>

Definition of disability

Equality Act 2010 - physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on one's ability to perform normal daily activities.

- 'Substantial' – is more than minor or trivial, e.g. takes longer to complete a daily task.
- 'Long-term' – means 12 months or more, e.g. a breathing condition that develops as a result of a lung infection.¹

The benefits of employing disabled people

1. Increase the number of high-quality applicants available.
2. Create a workforce that reflects the diverse range of customers it serves and the community in which it is based.
3. Bring additional skills to the business, such as the ability to use British Sign Language (BSL), which could result in large savings.
4. The benefits of retaining an experienced, skilled employee who has acquired an impairment are usually greater than recruiting and training new staff. It is also good for individual.

Help with employing disabled people

1. Make reasonable adjustments.
Make reasonable adjustments so disabled job applicants and employees can overcome any substantial disadvantages they may have doing their jobs and progressing in work (Equality Act 2010). An individual can take you to an employment tribunal if they think you have not made reasonable adjustments.

Many reasonable adjustments involve little or no cost and could include:

- Making changes to a disabled person's working pattern
 - Providing training or mentoring
 - Making alterations to premises
 - Ensuring that information is provided in accessible formats.
 - Modifying or acquiring equipment
2. Allowing extra time during selection 'tests'. Help with the extra costs disabled people face in work.

Access to Work usually provides a grant to pay for the cost of the support.

For example, it can provide funds towards:

• Special aids and equipment	• Communication support at interview
• Adaptations to equipment	• A wide variety of support workers
• Travel to and from work	

Access to Work also has a Mental Health Support Service. This can offer support to individuals with a mental health condition who are absent from work or finding work difficult.

3. Supporting disabled people to remain in work

You can get help from the Disability Employment Adviser and Work Psychology Services at Jobcentre Plus if an employee:

- Becomes disabled.
- Has a change in their impairment or health condition that could mean they face barriers to remaining in work?

Disability Law

Discrimination

You can discriminate indirectly with working conditions or rules that disadvantage a group of people more than another.

For example:

- Not hiring someone because of their disability
- Selecting a particular person for redundancy because of their disability
- Paying someone less than another worker without good reason


Dealing with performance issues


All employees, whether or not they are disabled, have changes in their performance levels. These could be problems with attendance, behaviour or conduct. Before starting action to deal poor performance, you must make reasonable adjustments to allow a disabled employee to improve their performance. If you do not, they could take you to an employment tribunal.


How to recruit disabled people		
Have accessible job adverts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a font that is easy to read and large enough to read. • Make sure that they do not exclude any section of the community. • State clearly that you welcome applications from all sections of the community and that you have an equal opportunity policy. • Include in your person specification only the skills and experience which are vital to the job 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not set criteria which automatically exclude certain groups, for example stating that applicants must have a driving licence when there is no requirement for travel within the role. • Offer alternative formats for applications, for example if the application is to be made online, provide a paper-based form as an alternative.

How to recruit disabled people

Conducting interviews	<p>Equality Act 2010 – you must not ask about a job applicant's health until you have offered them a job, except to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find out whether they need any reasonable adjustments during the recruitment process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find out if they can carry out an essential function of the job. Monitor whether applicants are disabled (this must be anonymous)
Reasonable adjustments to the interview process could include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring premises is accessible. Changing lighting or room layout Showing a visually impaired applicant to their seat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allowing extra time Allowing applications to complete a written test using a computer
When interviewing a disabled applicant, help them to perform to the best of their ability by:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speaking directly to them rather than any support worker Telling them about any flexible working patterns that you may be able to offer them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making sure that you ask each applicant the same questions, whether or not they are disabled.

Advice on specific conditions	
<p>Mental health conditions</p> <p>Mental Health conditions cover a wide range of illnesses which can affect how people feel, think and behave.</p> <p>They can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Depression Anxiety Bipolar disorder 	<p><u>Suggestions for reasonable adjustments</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Offering flexible working patterns, including changes to start and finish times and adaptable break times. ✓ Changing their working environment, for example providing a quiet place to work ✓ Working with them to create an action plan to help them manage their condition. ✓ Allowing them leave to attend appointments connected with their mental health. <p>For more information: [the Mind website] [Time to Change campaign]</p>

Advice on specific conditions	
Hearing impairment Someone with a hearing impairment may have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partial or complete hearing loss • Had their impairment from birth or it may have increased gradually over time. • Temporary or permanent impairment 	<u>Suggestions for reasonable adjustments</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Providing information in accessible formats ✓ Seating an employee in a quiet area, away from distracting noises ✓ Using adapted telephones with adjustable volumes and lights <p>For more information: [Action on Hearing Loss]</p>
Visual impairments There are almost 80,000 registered blind and partially sighted people of working age in the UK. The majority have some useful vision. They represent a huge pool of potential employees. Advances in technology mean that blind and partially sighted people can now overcome many of the barriers to work that they faced in the past. With the right training, skills and experience a blind or partially sighted person can do just about any job.	<u>Suggestions for reasonable adjustments</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Offering additional training about visual impairments for other colleagues ✓ Making alterations to the working environment ✓ Supplying documents in audio or Braille formats ✓ Carrying out a risk assessment of the workplace ✓ Arranging a tour of the workplace ✓ Providing software or technology that magnifies onscreen text and images or converts text to sound. <p>For more information: [RNIB website]</p>
Physical impairments A physical impairment is one which limits a person's ability to do physical activity such as walking. These impairments may be as a result of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amputation • Cerebral palsy • Injury • Muscular dystrophy • Multiple sclerosis 	<u>Suggestions for reasonable adjustments</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Providing assistive computer equipment such as modifications to hardware or voice activated software. ✓ Agreeing an emergency evacuation procedure with them if they require assistance. ✓ Making sure that the layout of the working environment is accessible and free from obstructions

Advice on hidden impairments Hidden impairments are conditions that are not apparent to others and are thought to affect 10% to 15% of the population. They include Autistic	
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spectrum conditions (ASCs), Dyslexia, Learning disabilities	
<p>Autistic spectrum conditions (ASCs)</p> <p>In the UK, half a million adults are thought to have an ASC. They may have difficulties with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Understanding the feelings of others • Meeting new people <p>People with an ASC may also have high levels of accuracy, attention to detail and a good memory for figures.</p>	<p><u>Suggestions for reasonable adjustments</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Maintaining a structured working environment and routine ✓ Avoiding language which is hypothetical or abstract. ✓ Avoiding making statements which could be taken literally. <p>For more information and support visit [The National Autistic Society website].</p>
<p>Dyslexia</p> <p>About 10% of the UK population are thought to be affected by dyslexia. People with dyslexia have difficulties with reading, writing and spelling. They may struggle with tasks such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing or structuring documents • Remembering instructions • Note taking. <p>Potential strengths of people with dyslexia include creative and innovative thinking and good communication skills.</p>	<p><u>Suggestions for reasonable adjustments</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Providing text-to-speech or speech-to-text software ✓ Allowing meetings to be recorded ✓ Giving instructions verbally ✓ Providing written information on coloured paper <p>For more information: [Dyslexia Action website]</p>
<p>Learning Disabilities</p> <p>It is estimated that up to 1.5 million people in the UK have a learning disability. They may have difficulties learning new skills and coping independently with everyday tasks.</p>	<p><u>Suggestions for reasonable adjustments</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Altering the recruitment process to allow work trials instead of formal interviews ✓ Using supported employment providers to offer in work support to help learn a role. ✓ Providing information in accessible formats <p>For more information: [Mencap website]</p>

Date effective from:	18 March 2025
Review Date:	March 2027
Minute ref	

LOVE YOUR PARISH DAYS

We request a visit from the Street Care Team to carry out the following work; please state the areas that require attention of special care: For example from – Top of First Avenue to the end of First Avenue” if it is off the street e.g. an alleyway, use WhatThreeWords.

Work required	Location	From	To
Footpath Sweeping	Scholars Walk		
Road sweeping	Front Collingwood School Along Brent Avenue & Woodville School		
Litter Picking	SWF Industrial Estates Cutlers/Bancroft/Drapers Rd		
Graffiti Removal	Green BT Box Ferrers Rd/Creekview Roundabout		
Chewing Gum Removal Vape Sticker Removal	Bins along Heralds Way/ Trinity Square		
Would you like to host a Community Litter pick Event with the Love Your Chelmsford team?	Y	Location Town Centre	Note: We can provide all equipment needed and let you assemble the volunteers from the community.
Parish Council Contact Name and Address	South Woodham Ferrers Town Council Champions Manor Hall 94-104 Hullbridge Road South Woodham Ferrers CM3 5LJ		

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Please state your preferred dates for our Street Care Team & Grounds Maintenance Team to visit to carry out the work. Dates will be assigned on a strictly first come, first served basis.

Available Dates in 2025	Please indicate preferred date/s (1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd)	Available Dates in 2025	Please indicate preferred date/s (1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd)
Thursday 3 rd April		Thursday 17 th July	
Thursday 17 th April	1 st choice	Thursday 7 th August	
Thursday 1 st May		Thursday 21 st August	
Thursday 15 th May		Thursday 4 th September	3 rd choice
Thursday 5 th June		Thursday 18 th September	
Thursday 19 th June	2 nd choice	Thursday 2 nd October	
Thursday 3 rd July		Thursday 16 th October	

We hope that we will be able to meet the majority of requests we receive and will get back to you shortly to let you know whether or not we will be able visit your parish on the requested date. For more information, please visit loveyourchelmsford.co.uk/volunteer/what-can-i-do/litter-picking

SWF Town Council's Town Mayors Engagements from 9th January 2025 to 12th March 2025

17th January 2025 – The Town Mayor attended the Trinity St Mary Art Display

24th January 2025 - The Town Mayor attended the Beach of Dreams Workshop at the Yacht Club.

30th January 2025- The Town Mayor attended Woodville School to discuss eco/environmental issues and initiatives in South Woodham Ferrers.

23rd February 2025 - The Town Mayor and Consort attended the Maldon Town Council - Civic Service: A service for Volunteers 2025 at All Saints Church, High Street, Maldon.

5th March 2025 - The Town Mayor and Consort along with the Deputy Mayor and their consort, Cllr. D Eley, attended the High Sheriffs Awards 2025 at Hylands House.