

SOUTH WOODHAM FERRERS TOWN COUNCIL
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

MINUTES of the Thirty Ninth Annual Town Meeting held on Tuesday 15 April 2025,
at 8.00 p.m. at Champions Manor Hall.

In the Chair

Councillor A Shearring, Town Mayor
South Woodham Ferrers Town Council

Also present:

The High Sheriff of Essex Mrs Julie Fosh, Town Councillors; Massey, Crosbie, Bentley, Barnett, Thompson, Kelly, Piesse, Wilson, Price, Sherlock, Eley, Ferry, Roberts, Birch & Chelmsford City Council Mayor Cllr Janette Potter & Mayoress Jackie Galley
Town Clerk K Atkins, Admin Assistant D Edwards & Leisure & Environment Officer D Smith

Guest speakers Cllr Tom Cunningham, Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Sustainable Travel and Sally Hutton, Community Manager and Anne Hendry, Branch Chair for RNLI.

20 members of the public

1. Welcome

The Town Mayor, Councillor A Shearring, welcomed everybody to the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Town Councillor Sismey, Perham Lake, John & O'Brien.

3. Minutes of the Thirty-Eighth Annual Town Meeting held on 23 April 2024

On a proposal by Councillor Massey, seconded by Councillor Sherlock the Minutes of the Thirty-Eighth Annual Town Meeting held on 23 April 2024, were approved as a correct record of the Meeting, and then signed by the Town Mayor.

4. Town Mayor's Introduction

Councillor Shearring thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. The Town Council are pleased to welcome our Guest Speakers, Cllr Tom Cunningham, Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Sustainable Travel and Sally Hutton, Community Manager and Anne Hendry, Branch Chair for RNLI.

Councillor Shearring welcomed all the recipients of the Distinguished Honours Award.

Welcome to Sally Hutton and the RNLI representatives as the charity has been the Town Mayor's nominated charity since October 2023.

Welcome also to the Mayor of Chelmsford Cllr Janette Potter & Mayoress Jackie Galley and a special welcome to you, our residents. Thank you so much for attending.

5. Guest Speaker: Cllr Tom Cunningham – Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Sustainable Travel

The guest speaker gave an informative and interesting presentation.

- Residents can report defects using the What3Words app to geolocate and send photographs of issues by uploading them to the website:
essexhighways.org/tell-us.
- Updates are published via “Highways Highlights” on the Essex Highways website which includes news, press releases, and progress reports.
- More works completed thanks to schemes like Priority One and Members Highways Initiative and this has resulted in:
 - 15% reduction in overall enquiries.
 - 40% fewer enquiries in Jan–Feb 2025 vs. 2024.
 - 47% drop in pothole reports.
- Priority 1 Work (Oct 2024):
 - Machine resurfacing on Woodham Ferrers Road, Chelmsford.
 - Clements Green Lane: Large-scale machine patching completed October 2024.
- Upcoming Schemes (2025–2026)
 - Ferrers Road: Carriageway micro surfacing.
 - Chamberlains Ride: Cycleway reconstruction.
 - Cornish Grove: Cycleway improvements.
- Capital Footway Works.
 - Scheduled refurbishments and reconstructions: Pertwee Drive, Albert Road, Melville Heath, Anson Close, Chamberlains Ride.
 - Works start between March and June 2025.
- Broader Transport Investments
 - £54m/year for school transport (14,000 children).
 - £16m/year for concessionary bus passes.
 - £11m/year for supported local bus services.
 - £9m BSIP+ grant for:
 - Parish council bus support
 - Improved services and journey planning
 - DigiGo continuation
 - £1.1m/year for 12 Community Transport schemes.
 - £1.5m/year for Park and Ride.
 - £0.4m/year for bus timetables and realtime screens.
 - £16m additional DfT funding to be announced.

Guest Speaker: Sally Hutton, Community Manager and Anne Hendry, Branch Chair for RNLI

The guest speakers gave a presentation on the RNLI Overview and more specific details about the local branch in Burnham-on-Crouch.

- Founded in 1824, celebrating 200 years of lifesaving in 2024.
- Over 146,000 lives saved — averaging 2 per day for two centuries.
- Evolved from rowing boats to modern jet-driven, self-righting lifeboats.
- Coverage & Infrastructure
 - 238 lifeboat stations across the UK and Ireland.
 - 448 lifeboats: 160 all-weather, 281 inshore, 7 hovercrafts.
 - Lifeguards patrol 235+ beaches.

- Essex coast stations include Harwich, West Mersea, Walton-on-the-Naze, Clacton, Southend, and Burnham-on-Crouch.
- Fleet Details: Lifeboat classes include: Shannon, Tamar, Severn, Trent, Mersey, Atlantic 85 (B Class), D Class, E Class, Hovercraft, and RWC (Rescue Watercraft).
- Recent Lifeboat Statistics: 9,192 launches, 10,734 people aided, 269 lives saved, 29 people on average are aided each day.
- All-Weather Lifeboat Centre (Poole): In-house lifeboat production, training, and tours.
- Inshore Lifeboat Centre (ILC): Builds and maintains over half of RNLI lifeboats; offers free tours and includes a heritage centre.
- Crew Equipment Costs
 - Drysuit: £805
 - Lifejacket: £590
 - Helmet: £350
 - Gloves: £25
 - Full kit (ALB): £1600
 - Training per crew member: £1400
- Recent Lifeguard Statistics: 19,979 people aided, 86 lives saved, 14,213 incidents actioned by RNLI lifeguards.
- Water Safety & Education
 - The Drowning Chain: A framework to prevent drowning through education, supervision, and rescue.
 - Water Safety Initiatives: 2,129 lifejackets checked, 446 interventions, 52,000 pieces of activity-specific advice and 93M+ views of safety TV ads.
 - Swim Safe: free summer water safety activity for children.
- Funding & Support: £191.2M charitable spend; 56% on lifeboats, property, and equipment and this money comes from 66% from legacies, 28% from donations. Rising costs: 25% increase in boat fuel, 9% in utilities.
- 97% of RNLI personnel are volunteers and this includes: 5,700+ lifeboat crew, 4,000+ shore crew, 119 lifeguards and 23,000+ fundraisers.

6. Presentation of Awards

Distinguished Honours Awards were presented to the following people:

- Martin Holden and Jane Holden to recognise their selfless support work for the youth of South Woodham Ferrers with the local Boys' Brigade Company.

Town Mayors Charity – Since May 2024 RNLI has been the Town Mayor's Charity. A cheque was presented to RNLI for £ 525.00.

Easter Colouring Competition Awards. The winners were:

Winners from Woodville School

- Age 4-6 Group: Darcey S and Skye A
- Age 7-8 Group: Rosanna and George L
- Age 9-11 Group: Mia and Isabella B

Winners from Trinity St Mary's

- Age 4-6 Group: Lucy B and Stanley D
- Age 7-8 Group: Charlie and Georgia
- Age 9-11 Group: Sophia and Ava K

7. Presentations by Chairs of Planning & Environment, Events Community & Leisure & Finance & Projects Committees:

Planning & Environment Committee – Councillor D Thompson Chairman gave an overview of Planning & Environment:

- The following matters are reserved and delegated to the Planning Committee:
 - To consider and comment on all plans, development briefs, planning, and tree preservation orders applications submitted for development within and around South Woodham Ferrers or in areas that could affect South Woodham Ferrers.
 - To respond to any issues regarding the development of land and property within and around South Woodham Ferrers. The Committee meets every month to agree comment on the various planning matters that arise.
 - Councillor visits to view sites was curtailed planning the committee submitted comments to Chelmsford on local planning applications from around SWF averaging nine each monthly meeting.
- A response to Chelmsford City Council's third and final stage of public consultation on the final draft Local Plan before they submit it for Independent Examination by a government appointed Planning Inspector.
- Litter picking - Something for the whole family as demonstrated by the all-age profile of our litter-picking volunteers this year. If you are keen to help us keep our roads and paths tidy, then look out for our ad in The Focus and Facebook for more details.
- Hanging baskets and planters - Another year of our planters and hanging baskets brightening up the summer months.
- Roundabout sponsorship -As in previous years we continue to sponsor the Inchbonnie/Ferrers Road roundabout with Chelmsford City Council providing the planting.
- A replacement gate was placed at John Cox allowing for continued access.
- The Garden of Remembrance has been upgraded with new gates and benches, and the rotunda has been painted. The decision to plant roses this year has already seen success with many people already wanting to adopt these in remembrance of their loved ones.
- OPM Caterpillars were identified on Woodham Fenn which could be hazardous to health and as a result these have been swiftly removed.

Events, Community & Leisure Committee – Councillor R Crosbie Chair of Events, Community & Leisure gave an overview of the committee and what they work on throughout the year and the achievements in 2024/25 which included:

- The Toddler Group continues to be a huge success every week and well attended. Any volunteers would be welcomed.
- The well-structured Youth Club operating in partnership with YMCA and fully funded by the Town Council has continued to grow.
- Film Club is running for the Senior residents. It costs £5.00 per year to join, and refreshments are provided. Look at the Town Council website for the films shown on the second Wednesday of each month.
- Play in the park - Once again we were able to offer play-in-the-park sessions in conjunction with Chelmsford City Council. These structured events offer something different from the ordinary in a safe and educational environment.
- This year saw a free First Aid Event offered to all residents and was well attended, with thanks to Steve Bonsor of Blue Phoenix Safety Solutions for offering his time.

- Summer fun at Champions Manor Hall ran every Thursday during the Summer holidays with a variety of children's entertainers including a storyteller. Much loved outdoor fun.
- Remembrance Sunday is always an important event in the calendar and this year we witnessed true community spirit with over a thousand poppies, having been knitted or crocheted by the public, donated to form beautiful nets which were attached to the pillars of the Bandstand. A thank you to all those who donated wool, knitted, crocheted or came along and helped attach all the poppies to the nets. A special thanks goes to Cllr. Birch for co-ordinating and organising the Parade for the Service.
- The 2024 Summer Events were in commemoration of the 80th Anniversary of D-Day. Thanks to all those involved who made both the Beacon Lighting and the Town event such a success.
- Summer Youth events were held throughout the summer holidays. There were multiple activities for all ages.
- Halloween Party - This event proved to be very popular, especially amongst our younger citizens. Free entertainment and everyone who came thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Even the staff, councillors and volunteers dressed up and got into the spirit of things!
- The Christmas Fayre this year almost didn't happen due to the extreme weather forecasts, but close monitoring and the Town's 'microclimate' gave us a break long enough in the weather to go ahead. There were last minute changes made for Health and Safety reasons but thanks to all involved and to those who braved the weather to come out and enjoy the festivities.
- The Senior's Christmas Party is an important part of our events calendar, and a Christmas get-together was much needed for those in our community that otherwise would not be able to meet up over the festive season. For those able to attend, good food, good entertainment and good company was enjoyed by all. A thanks goes out to Cllr. Kelly who works very hard each year to put on such an enjoyable event.
- Christmas pantomime Jack and the Beanstalk was a popular performance in December. This was held at the Willam de Ferrers School for a larger capacity crowd. This was very successful, and the Town council will be repeating again this year.
- Many events are in the diary for the coming year including an Easter Egg Hunt, VE Day 80 Beacon Lighting and Seniors sing-along, a summer event, and the return of the summer fun at Champions, Halloween Party, Christmas Fayre and Senior's Christmas Party.

Thanks to Karen, David and Debbie in the office for their hard work and for making councillor ideas a reality.

Finance & Projects Committee – Councillor Eley - The Vice Chair of the Finance & Projects Committee, this committee deal with the finance, precept, and allocation of grants for the Town Council.

Our membership is up to thirteen councillors, and we have a great mix of opinions and experience, which has allowed us to make informed decisions to benefit the council, and in turn, our local community.

Our role within the Council.

- Agree and review Council policies and procedures for recommendation to Council.
- To consider and agree financial policies and budgets for Full Council to agree.
- Consider new projects to enhance the local community.

Key proposals agreed.

1. Agreed budgets for key events.
2. Set precept and Council budget for 2025/26.
3. Installation of Solar Panels at Champions Manor Hall.
4. Upgrades to the intruder alarms at Champions Manor Hall.
5. New VOIP telephone system for the office.
6. Lease of new electric van for use by Town Council along with install of electric charge point.
7. New benches installed at Champions Manor Hall.
8. Agreed Grants for 2024/25.

7. Questions from Residents

A resident raised a question on the attendance of the Youth Club for the older children. The Clerk confirmed numbers are slowly increasing and hopefully will continue. The Youth Club send quarterly updates to the Town Council and these reports are posted on our website.

8. Town Mayor's Closing Remarks

The Town Mayor thanked all residents for attending and recipients of awards for attending our Annual Town Meeting.

The Mayor also thanked Cllr Tom Cunningham, Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Sustainable Travel and Sally Hutton and Anne Hendry for RNLI. for their presentations and thanked all councillors and volunteers for their hard work during the year.

The meeting closed at 9.18pm.

Signed
(Chairman of the Meeting)

Date: 21st April 2026