

## **SOUTH WOODHAM FERRERS TOWN COUNCIL**

**MINUTES** of the Council meeting held on  
Tuesday 20th January 2026  
at 7.30pm  
at Champions Manor Hall

### **Present:**

Councillor Shearring (Chair)  
Councillor Kelly (Deputy Chair)

Councillor Bentley  
Councillor Birch  
Councillor Crosbie  
Councillor Eley  
Councillor Knox

Councillor Massey  
Councillor O'Brien  
Councillor Sherlock  
Councillor Thompson  
Councillor Wilson

In attendance: Town Clerk and Chair of EALC, Mike Eldred

### **C25-237 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were **RECEIVED** and **ACCEPTED** from  
Councillors Sismey, Perham Lake, Ferry, Price, Roberts and Barnett  
**Absent:** Councillor Humphrey & John

### **C25-238 Dispensation Considerations**

No dispensations received.

### **C25-239 Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest received.

### **C25-240 Confirmation of Minutes**

The minutes of the Extra Ordinary Council meeting held on 2nd December 2025  
were agreed and signed as a true record of the meeting.

**Proposed:** Councillor Massey

**Seconded:** Councillor O'Brien

**Vote:** All in favour

The Town Mayor Councillor Alan Shearring requested to move agenda item 12 NALC  
Silver Award forward on the agenda

**Proposed:** Councillor Crosbie

**Seconded:** Councillor Kelly

**Vote:** All in favour

### **C25-241 NALC Silver Award**

The chair of Essex Association of Local councils (EALC) representing the  
National Association of Local councils (NALC) in Essex presented the Town  
Council with a Silver Award.

There are only 43 Councils out of 10,000 in England that presently hold  
that accreditation.

Receiving the Silver Award is an excellent achievement showing that South Woodham Ferrers Town Council achieves good practices in governance, community engagement and council improvement. Furthermore, this award shows that this council has gone above and beyond the legal obligations; leads the community and continuously seeks opportunities to improve and develop further.

#### **C25-242 Public Questions**

No public questions raised.

#### **C25-243 Appointment of members to Committees and Working Parties**

Councillor Francis Knox requested membership of the Events, Community & Leisure Committee and the Planning & Environment Committee.

**Proposal:** To agree Councillor Francis Knox membership of the Events, Community & Leisure and the Planning & Environment committees.

**Proposed:** Councillor Crosbie

**Seconded:** Councillor Kelly

**Vote:** All in favour

#### **C25-244 Reports from Committees are attached to the agenda.**

The following reports were **NOTED**.

##### **C25-244-1 Planning & Environment Committee**

To note that a meeting was held on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2025 and 6<sup>th</sup> January 2026.

##### **C25-244-2 Events, Community & Leisure Committee**

To note that a meeting was held on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2025.

The chair Councillor Russ Crosbie thanked all the councillors that helped at the Christmas Fayre event in November 2025.

##### **C25-244-3 Finance & Projects Committee**

To note that a meeting was held on 2nd December 2025.

##### **C25-244-4 Staffing Committee**

To note that no meetings have been held since the Staffing meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2025.

#### **C25-245 General Power of Competence**

**Proposal:** Council resolved it meets the criteria for eligibility for the General Power of Competence for 2026-2027, having both an electoral mandate of two thirds of members of the Council and a qualified Clerk.

**Proposed:** Councillor Bentley

**Seconded:** Councillor O'Brien

**Vote:** All in favour

#### **C25-246 Meeting Schedule 2026-2027**

Council considered the meeting schedule for 2026-27 attached to the agenda.

**Proposal:** To accept the meeting schedule as presented.

**Proposed:** Councillor Kelly

**Seconded:** Councillor Eley

**Abstain:** Three votes

**Vote:** Carried

### **C25-247 Budgets and Precept 2026-2027**

The Council considered the budget and Precept for 2026/27 attached to agenda following recommendation at Finance & Projects meeting on 2nd December 2025.

#### **C25-247.1**

**Proposal:** Town Council approves the budget of £468,080 for 2026/27 as recommended by Finance & Projects Committee on 02nd of December 2025.

**Proposed:** Councillor O'Brien

**Seconded:** Councillor Eley

**Vote:** All in Favour

#### **C25-247.2**

**Proposal:** The Town Council approved that a gross precept of £468,080 for 2026/27 is submitted to Chelmsford City Council. Based on a tax base of 6131.32 Band D would be an amount of £76.34. For the 2025 – 2026 financial year the band D amount was £76.27.

**Proposed:** Councillor O'Brien

**Seconded:** Councillor Bentley

**Vote:** All in Favour

### **C25-248 Electricity Contract at Champions Manor Hall**

Council considered three quotations for a new electric contract at Champions Manor Hall.

**Proposal:** To agree the quotation with British Gas for a two-year fixed contract.

**Proposed:** Councillor Shearring

**Seconded:** Councillor Bentley

**Vote:** All in Favour

### **C25-249 Christmas lights 2026-2028**

Following a recommendation from Events Community Leisure on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2025, Council considered continuing with the existing company for a further three-year lighting scheme incorporating the multi coloured lights. The annual hire of an artificial Christmas tree will be considered on a separate contract.

**Proposal:** Council agreed the three-year lighting scheme contract 2026-2028 incorporating multi coloured lights and upgrades with Lite.

**Proposed:** Councillor Sherlock

**Seconded:** Councillor Birch

**Vote:** All in Favour

### **C25-250 Floral Displays Contract 2026-2028**

Council to considered three quotations for the new three-year contract for the hanging baskets and floral planters in town.

**Proposal:** To agree the quotation from Windowflowers Ltd for 2026-2028 including all baskets, four planters and the watering of all displays including Inchbonnie sponsored roundabout.

**Proposed:** Councillor Bentley

**Seconded:** Councillor Eley

**Abstain:** one vote

**Vote:** Carried

### **C25-251 Town Clerk's Report**

Council **NOTED** the Town Clerks report.

### **C25-252 Items to Note**

Council **NOTED** the following items.

- Distinguished Honours Award - Council **NOTED** advertising and candidate's nominations for 2026 will start from 2nd February 2026 and close 2nd March 2026.  
**NOTED** that the recipient/s of this annual award will be selected by Council on the 24th of March 2026 and presented at the Annual Town Meeting on 21st April 2026.
- Parks and Green Spaces at Chelmsford City Council have donated bedding plants and daffodils for the community network to plant up the town centre planters for 2026.

### **C25-253 Review of Policies**

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

- Annual Investment Strategy
- General reserves Policy
- Internal Control & Internal Audit
- Review of financial Risk Assessment

**Proposal:** To accept all the policies as presented with no amendments.

**Proposed:** Councillor O'Brien

**Seconded:** Councillor Kelly

**Vote:** All in Favour

### **C25-254 Representative on Outside Bodies**

Councillor Wilson updated Council as representative on the Village Hall committee. A meeting was held in December 2025. Bookings are continuing well and monthly family nights are planned from February 2026.

### **C25-255 Chelmsford City Council / Essex County Council**

#### **Chelmsford City Council**

Council received report(s) from City Councillors/County Councillor concerning matters of interest to South Woodham Ferrers.

Councillor Terry Sherlock updated **Chelmsford City Council has closed its budget gap for 2026/27**. Thanks to more demand for its paid services and a better-than-expected Government grant. The leader & CEO lobbied (MHCLG) Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government hard on housing costs formula.

The South Essex Parking Partnership – ( SEPP ) I represent Chelmsford City Council on SEPP and Essex County Council has written to SEPP to ask if they would like a 1 year extension to the agreement, this will take the partnership up to 31st March 2028, after this date the functions carried out by SEPP will be carried out by the new Unitary Councils.

[Chelmsford ready to help with county elections if they go ahead | City Life](#)

Chelmsford City Council has written to the Government to support this year's Essex County Council elections going ahead as scheduled. We should hear from Government by early February 2026, if the elections are on. – I understand Essex County Council have also sent a letter, but the government replied and have asked for them to be clear about their request by the 20<sup>th</sup> of January 2026.

New Unitary Councils for example if the five model is chosen, which is the option supported by Chelmsford City Council, we should know spring 2026 if we are

joining up with Brentwood and Maldon or one of the other options, that would be a larger number of Councils.

Councillor Donna Eley reported that Chelmsford City Council has secured additional funding within the budget. This includes £100,000 allocated towards tackling anti-social behaviour across the district, alongside increased funding to expand the provision of dog waste bins and enhance street care services.

Prior to Christmas, a new raised floor was installed at the William De Ferrers Leisure Centre swimming pool. Funding has also been allocated for the installation of pool access pods - a raising platform, improving accessibility for residents with disabilities.

Within the SWF Community Orchard, a new picnic bench has been installed, and at Compass Gardens, a new bug hotel has been added to support local biodiversity.

The Community Safety Team will be delivering a presentation in March 2026. Invitations will be issued to city and town councillors. The presentation will take place at the school and will highlight the "Make Space for Girls" project, which has been designed by the pupils.

Councillor Murrough O'Brien nothing to report.

Councillor Bob Massey nothing to report.

### **Essex County Council**

Councillor Bob Massey updated:

#### **Local Government Reorganisation**

The Leader of Essex County Council has written to the Government's local government minister confirming that the Council is not requesting postponement of the elections postponed from May '25. Any decision to postpone would be made by HM Government.

It is expected that elections for the County Council - on new Division boundaries - will take place on May 7th.

### **Highways**

Essex Highways have advised that they will be attending to the fault on Burnham Road - approaching the Saltcoats roundabout - before the end of this month, weather permitting.

Similarly, Essex Highways have advised their intention to jet the gulleys at the Village Hall and on Marsh Farm Road, just beyond the allotments.

I have been advised that it is unlikely that repairs will be affected on the A132 this financial year, but I will continue to press the new Cabinet Member for Highways.

As always, I invite residents and members of this council to notify me of any highway or footpath issues that require urgent attention, including the appropriate Essex Highways Track It reference.

**C25-256 Town Mayor's Announcements**

A list of recent events attended by the Town Mayor attached to the agenda was  
**NOTED.**

**C25-257 Media Release**

- NALC Silver award
- Budget & Precept
- General Power of Competence
- Distinguished honours

**C25-258 Next Meeting**

The next Council meeting will be held on 24th March 2026 at 7.30pm.

There being no further business to discuss the Town Mayor closed the meeting at 8.37pm

Signed .....  
(Chair of the Meeting)

Date: 24th March 2026