

SOUTH WOODHAM FERRERS TOWN COUNCIL

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

MINUTES of the Fortieth Annual Town Meeting held on Tuesday 21 April 2026,
at 8.00 p.m. at Champions Manor Hall.

In the Chair

Councillor A Shearring, Town Mayor
South Woodham Ferrers Town Council

Also present:

Town Councillors; Massey, Crosbie, Bentley, Barnett, Kelly, Wilson, Price, Sherlock, Eley, Ferry, 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 Harry Allen, South Woodham Ferrers Resident and Worlds Toughest Row world record holder, Essex Police, PC Bell and William De Ferrers Head students.

30 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 Roberts, Perham Lake, O'Brien, High Sheriff of Essex, MP Sir John Whittingdale & SWF Army Cadets.

3. Minutes of the Thirty-Ninth Annual Town Meeting held on 15 April 2025

On a proposal by Councillor Shearring, seconded by Councillor Kelly the minutes of the Thirty-Ninth Annual Town Meeting held on 15 April 2025, 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, Harry Allen South Woodham resident and Worlds Toughest Row World Record holder, Essex Police PC Charlie Bell and William De Ferrers Head Students.

Welcome also to the Mayor of Chelmsford Cllr Jannetta Sosin & Mayoress Chris Shaw and a special welcome to you, our residents. Thank you so much for attending.

5. Guest Speaker: Harry Allen

The guest speaker gave an informative and interesting presentation. He is a young British ocean rower who gained international attention after competing in the World's Toughest Row Atlantic and setting a world record with his teammates.

The World's Toughest Row Atlantic is a roughly 3,000-mile unsupported ocean rowing race from La Gomera in the Canary Islands to Antigua. Competitors face extreme conditions including large waves, sleep deprivation, intense heat, and weeks at sea. Harry Allen was part of the team The Three Flying Fish, alongside Rowan Dally and Anna Dunk. The trio departed from La Gomera on 14 December 2025 to row across

the Atlantic Ocean as part of the World's Toughest Row. They completed the crossing in 42 days, 8 hours and 10 minutes. Their achievement earned them the world record for the youngest team ever to row any ocean, with the crew members aged 19–21 at the start of the challenge. The team also partnered with the Teenage Cancer Trust, raising awareness and thousands of pounds for young people with cancer.

Guest Speaker: PC Charlie Bell

A presentation was delivered by Essex Police on drug awareness and county lines activity. The presentation provided an overview of the risks associated with drug misuse and highlighted how organised criminal networks exploit vulnerable individuals, particularly young people, to transport and distribute drugs. Attendees were informed about the warning signs of exploitation, the impact of county lines on local communities, and the support available for those affected. The presentation was well received and raised awareness of the importance of prevention, early intervention, and community vigilance.

Guest Speaker: William de Ferrers Head Students

Two head students gave a presentation on the roles and responsibilities of Student Leadership Team at William de Ferrers School.

The Student Leadership Team (StLT), made up of elected and volunteer Year 12 and 13 students, continued to make a significant contribution to school life through leadership, fundraising, mentoring, and community engagement. The Head Student team organised a range of successful fundraising events throughout the year, including a sponge-the-teacher event, summer fete stall, staff car wash, bingo morning, festive candy cane initiative, movie night, quiz night, and Easter raffle, raising funds for school activities and charities. Department Leads supported subject areas through clubs, lesson assistance, event organisation, and outreach projects, including an environmental mural workshop with a local primary school. Charity, Environment, Diversity, and Mentoring sectors were highly active, supporting national charities such as Breast Cancer Now, Children in Need, Comic Relief, and November. Environmental initiatives included recycling schemes, achievement-point rewards, weekly environment club activities, school planting projects, and plans for a sensory garden. Mentoring students provided reading support, maths tutoring, and a peer mentoring programme linking Year 13 and Year 11 students. Collectively, these activities strengthened student leadership, enhanced the school environment, and fostered positive links within the wider community.

6. Presentation of Awards

Distinguished Honours Awards was presented to the Harry Allen in recognition of his achievement in the World's Toughest Row.

Town Mayors Charity – Since May 2024 RNLI has been the Town Mayor's Charity along with SWF Army cadets. A cheque was presented to RNLI for £ 101.21 and the SWF Army Cadets will receive a cheque at a later date for £101.22.

7. Questions from Residents

A young resident raised questions to PC Bell, Essex Police.

8. Town Mayor’s Closing Remarks

The Town Mayor thanked all the residents, the guest speakers and recipient of awards for attending our Annual Town Meeting.

The meeting closed on a presentation of Town Council photos, achievements and projects over the year.

The meeting closed at 9.08pm.

Signed
(Chairman of the Meeting)

Date: 20 April 2027