

SOUTH WOODHAM FERRERS TOWN COUNCIL

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

Present:
Councillor Massey (Chair)
Councillor Kelly (Deputy Chair)

Councillor Bentley	Councillor Birch
Councillor Sherlock	Councillor Benn
Councillor Eley	Councillor Thompson
Councillor Wilson	Councillor Knox
Councillor Crosbie	Councillor Shearring
Councillor Price	Councillor Ferry

In attendance: Town Clerk and three members of public

C26-353 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were **RECEIVED** and **ACCEPTED** from
Councillors Cash, Roberts, Perham Lake, O'Brien & Barnett.
ABSENT Councillor Sismey

C26-354 Dispensation Considerations

No dispensations received.

C26-355 Declarations of Interest

No declaration of interest received.

C26-356 Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the Extra Ordinary Council meeting held on 18 August 2026 were agreed and signed as a true record of the meeting.

Proposed: Councillor Crosbie

Seconded: Councillor Eley

Vote: All in favour

C26-357 Public Questions

Two members of the public spoke regarding Agenda item 7 Bowls Clubhouse at Champions Manor Hall.

7.41pm two members of the public left the meeting.

C26-358 National Association of Local Council Award Scheme – Gold Award

South Woodham Ferrers Town Council achieved the Gold Award under the Local Council Award Scheme in August 2026. This is an excellent achievement and recognises the Council's commitment to outstanding governance, effective performance, and continued improvement. Out of 10,000 Parish & Town Councils in England & Wales, forty-seven hold the Gold Award.

The Chair Mike Eldred of National Association of Local Councils (NALC) presented the South Woodham Ferrers Town Council with the Gold Award at the meeting.

7.56pm one member of public left the meeting

C26-359 Bowls Clubhouse at Champions Manor Hall

Council **NOTED** a verbal update regarding the ongoing project from two members of the bowls club in Agenda Item 5 Public Questions.

C26-360 Reports to Committees

Planning & Environment Committee

It was noted that a meeting was held on 30/6/26, 28/7/26, 25/8/26 & 29/9/26.

- 336 Bus Service due to be introduced on the 26 July 2026.
- New Garden of Remembrance Pet Scattering Copse and Memorial Area opening on the 31 July 2026 at 10.30am
- Proposals regarding the sponsorship of the roundabout
- John Cox works are now completed for phase 2
- Comments submitted for planned redevelopment of Chetwood School to be submitted by the Town Clerk.
- Comments submitted for the Public Space Protection Order Extension - Dog Fouling.
- Essex Wildlife Trust lease.

Events, Community & Leisure Committee

It was noted that a meeting was held on 7/7/2026, 1/9/26 & 6/10/26.

- Country & Western Summer Event 11/7/2026.
- Summer youth events
- Summer fun at Champions Manor Hall Town Carol Service
- Quarterly Heart of the Community event.
- Christmas fayre 2026
- Seniors Christmas Lunch 2026
- Agreed Summer Event 2027 date.
- Fun at Champions/Youth Events 2026
- Poppies on the Bandstand
- Community CPR sessions at Champions Manor Hall
- WAA Allotment fencing
- Summer event – World Record Attempt
- Town Council stall at the Christmas Fayre 21st November 2026.
- Baby Loss awareness hearts at the bandstand 9-15th October 2026.
- Remembrance Sunday – new tommy silhouette
- Closure of the Play area at the Village Hall

Finance & Projects Committee

It was noted that a meeting was held on 13/10/26.

- Grants Awarded October 2026
 - Men's Shed - £3,000.00
 - SWF Village Hall Warm Hub - £300.00
 - Emotionally Healthy Minds – EMR £2,500.00

Staffing Committee

It was noted that a meeting was held on 21/7/2026, 18/8/26 & 1/9/26.

- Recruitment of the Events & Marketing Officer
- Completion of the Town Clerks Appraisal 2026/27.
- Work Experience Student Debrief Report.
- NALC pay Increase 3.2% for all staff 2025/26.
- Provision of temporary illness cover for a staff member, following consultation and advice from Worknest HR.
- Events & Marketing Officer
- SSO probation completed
- NALC Salary pay increase 2026/27.

C26-361 Clerks Report

Council **NOTED** the Clerk's report.

C26-362 Chelmsford Local Plan

Council **NOTED** Chelmsford Local Plan Review 2022–2041 Draft Examination Hearings Programme. Town Clerk will notify all members of the hearing dates relevant to South Woodham Ferrers.

C26-363 Swimming Pool Contribution

Proposal: To agree South Woodham Ferrers's the swimming pool contribution paid to Chelmsford City Council for 2025/26 of £10,000.00.

Proposed: Councillor Kelly

Seconded: Councillor Crosbie

Vote: All in Favour

C26-364 YMCA Agreement 2026/27

Proposal: Council agreed the Youth Club Service Level Agreement 2026/27 with the YMCA as recommended at the Events Community & Leisure meeting on 06/10/2026 for £8,425 plus an optional visit cost for taking 20 young people from the youth club on an educational visit/s at £500.00.

Proposed: Councillor Crosbie

Seconded: Councillor Kelly

Vote: All in Favour

C26-365 Audit

Conclusion of Audit 2025-26

- Council **NOTED** the Section 3 report and the Conclusion of Audit Notice from PFK Littlejohn with no matters arising and no recommendations. Report attached to agenda.
- Council noted payment for the external audit 2025-26 at a cost of £1,638.00 including VAT.
- Council noted the internal audit date for 2026/27 will be completed on the 4th of November 2026.

C26-366 Play Area – Land Registration and Project Update

Council **NOTED** that the Land Registry has registered the Play Area to South Woodham Ferrers Town Council.

Council **AGREED** to continue with the playground project as presented, in liaison with Chelmsford City Council. The project's progression will be considered

by the Finance & Projects Committee before being submitted to Council for approval.

C26 -367 Lease Blue Cage

Council reviewed the lease, including the requested amendment from the SWF Playing Fields and noted that the amendment had been confirmed as appropriate by the Town council's solicitor, Knights.

Proposal: To approve the lease for signing at the next Council meeting on 17th November 2026 with SWF Playing Fields members invited to attend.

Proposed: Councillor Eley

Seconded: Councillor Wilson

Vote: All in Favour

C26 -368 Review of Policies

In accordance with Standing Order 5.j.xvii to xviii Council reviewed the policies

Proposal: To accept the Document Retention Policy as presented

Proposed: Councillor Eley

Seconded: Councillor Sherlock

Vote: All in Favour

Proposal: To incorporate into the Volunteer policy that reasonable expenses incurred by volunteers in the undertaking of their authorised volunteering duties may be reimbursed by the Council, subject to prior authorisation by the Town Clerk and in accordance with any applicable Financial Regulations and to include the Press and Social media Policy to the list of related policies.

Proposed: Councillor Wilson

Seconded: Councillor Crosbie

Vote: All in Favour

It was **AGREED** to defer the Tree Management Policy until the Council meeting on 17th November 2026.

C26 -369 Representative on Outside Bodies

Councillor Wilson provided an update on the SWF Village Hall Management Committee, confirming that a director had resigned and that the accounts had not yet been filed.

C26 -370 Chelmsford City Council / Essex County Council

Chelmsford City Council

Councillor Sherlock and Eley reported -

South Woodham Ferrers residents can get their hands on one of 1,200 free trees through Chelmsford City Council's [Space to Thrive campaign](#). The young saplings are available from 5th October to 5th November 2026, on a first come, first served basis - one per household while stocks last. A simple way to make your garden greener, provide a home for wildlife and help nature thrive on your doorstep. To find out which trees are available and where you can collect them, [click here](#).

When a volunteer at the St John Ambulance charity shop reported a spate of unkind and offensive graffiti in the walkway opposite the shop, through Trinity Square, Cllr Donna Eley reported it to [Chelmsford City Council](#). Within 24 hours, the Council's Street Care Team had removed it. Unfortunately, equally offensive graffiti appeared again within a day, but the team returned and cleared it by the

next working day. Cllr Eley has also contacted the Community Safety Team, who have alerted the Neighbourhood Policing Team. Hopefully, this will lead to increased patrols in the area.

[Night Marshal patrols](#) are now in place every Friday and Saturday evening in Chelmsford City Centre. -

(Good to know for SWF residents if you are planning a night out in the city) Funding has been secured from the Home Office to help reduce the risk of violence and disorder in Chelmsford city centre. The funding is supporting a range of evidence-based, early-prevention measures, including an additional evening of Night Marshal patrols each week. The CSAS (Community Safety Accreditation Scheme) and SIA (Security Industry Authority) accredited marshals provide an additional visible presence in the city centre on Friday and Saturday nights, helping to support a safer and more welcoming environment for everyone.

Cllr Terry Sherlock, in his role as Cabinet Deputy for Economic Development & Sustainable Transport, has had meetings recently with local bus and rail companies. Discussions are on-going on how assistance and support are provided and can be improved for local disabled and vulnerable users.

Chelmsford City Council is [reviewing its bin collection routes](#) as the city grows and more homes are added. Around 10% of residents may see a change to their collection day, with changes expected in early 2027. There will be no change to how often collections take place or what is collected.

While routes are being finalised, the Council will not issue printed recycling calendars as these could quickly become out of date. Residents can check their latest collection dates using the [online collection day checker](#) or download the free [Locl app](#), which provides up-to-date information and collection reminders.

Get ready for a magical festive treat as [Cinderella](#) comes to [Chelmsford Theatre](#) this Christmas. With plenty of laughs, dazzling costumes, toe-tapping music and a little bit of fairy-tale magic, this year's pantomime promises fun for all the family. Join Cinderella on her journey from rags to riches as she meets her Prince Charming and tries to escape the clutches of her wicked stepmother and ugly sisters.

And it's not just panto! Younger theatre-goers can enjoy [The Owl Who Came for Christmas](#), a charming festive show perfect for getting little ones into the Christmas spirit. Whether you're a lifelong panto fan or looking for a fun family day out, there's plenty to enjoy at Chelmsford Theatre this Christmas.

Essex County Council

Councillor Benn Reported –

- Cabinet appointed and the administration established quickly, with Council and Cabinet business continuing at pace.
- New policy on flags on council buildings implemented.
- Judicial review launched against the Government's Local Government Reorganisation proposals, after which the Government withdrew its Essex LGR plans.
- Greater Essex devolution progressed with Southend and Thurrock, including work towards the proposed Greater Essex Combined County Authority.
- Organisation-wide efficiency review launched.

- Councillor allowances frozen.
- Discretionary net zero and climate activity ended following review, with £3 million of identified savings.
- Council property estate review commenced, including work on Bishops Hill and release of Hargrave House for housing development.
- Review of DEI activity commenced, covering statutory and discretionary activity and external grants.
- Pothole Emergency declared, backed by an additional £7.5 million for highways repairs in 2026/27.
- Dedicated additional highways repair capacity introduced across all 12 district, borough and city areas.
- Pothole repairs accelerated, with July repairs reported as 60% higher than the previous year.
- 'Pothole? We're on it!' reporting website and public dashboard introduced, with councillors involved in identifying priority roads.
- £1.15 library reservation charge reversed.
- 'Read On' app launched to encourage reading.
- Brentwood Library offer expanded to include face-to-face community banking services.
- 'Operation Backlog' launched for EHCPs, with the backlog reported as falling from more than 1,000 cases to around 400 by early September.
- Work progressed on new specialist SEND provision and inclusion hubs, including Burnham-on-Crouch.
- School capacity expanded, including six new classrooms at Cressing Primary School and 40 additional places at Glenwood Special School.
- Government challenged over cancellation of the proposed Lodge Farm Free School in Witham.
- Sustainable Drainage in Schools programme completed.
- Foster carers recognised through the Foster Carer Awards and a £250,000 'A great fit for fostering' recruitment campaign launched.
- Intensive fostering expansion agreed, increasing capacity to 12 foster carers.
- Outline business case approved for Orchard Close, completing the planned programme of six short-term residential homes for children with complex needs.
- £2.5 million Families First Neighbourhood Grants Programme opened.
- Preparations made to invest £11 million of Best Start in Life grant funding.
- Essex ActivAte summer holiday activity and food programme delivered.
- Free August Park and Ride bus travel extended to children and young people aged 5–15.
- Expanded assistive-care technology provision progressed towards a new service.
- Learning Disabilities Festivals held in Harlow and Canvey.
- Community Transport consultation launched.
- New All-Ages Carers Strategy progressed, shaped around carers stated priorities.
- Work undertaken with the NHS and universities on GP and dentist recruitment and retention.
- 'Making Food Fair in Essex' campaign launched.
- £5 million investment supported expansion of Stansted Airport College and aviation, engineering and STEM training.
- Connect to Work delivery reported as exceeding targets and helping hundreds of residents towards employment.
- Essex Growth Agency activity in 2025/26 reported as adding £120 million GVA, supporting more than 2,500 businesses and enabling 4,500 residents to get a job, start training, improve skills or confidence.
- More than £500 million of developer contributions towards transport infrastructure and services negotiated through Transport for Future Communities in 2025/26.
- Libraries delivered 18,216 events in 2025/26, generated £7.1 million of social value, increased footfall by 5%, and supported more than 22,000 children through the Summer Reading Challenge.

- More than 300 Know Your Neighbourhood events delivered through libraries, reaching over 3,500 residents and recruiting 34 new volunteers.
- Library partnerships exceeded income targets by just over £500,000, while £835,000 of planning and infrastructure funding was secured.
- Revised highways maintenance and inspection strategies progressed, alongside Local Transport Plan 4.

C26 -371 Town Mayor's Announcements

A list of recent events attended by the Town Mayor was **NOTED**. Details of these engagements are also available on the Town Council website on the Town Mayor's page.

C26- 372 Media Release

- Gold award presentation
- Swimming Pool Contribution to Chelmsford City Council
- YMCA Youth Club Service agreement 2026/27.
- Chelmsford Local Plan Review 2022–2041 hearing dates relevant to South Woodham Ferrers.

8.27 pm to resolve to exclude the press and public for the remainder of the meeting under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act, 1960, as the following item contains confidential information.

C26-373 Play Area Matter

Council received an update on a Play Area matter.

C26-374 Next Meeting

The next Council meeting will be held on 17th November 2026 at 7.30pm.

There being no further business to discuss the Town Mayor closed the meeting at 8.42pm.

Signed
(Chair of the Meeting)

Date: 17 November 2026