

Farnham's pandemic response

Lockdown

restrictions may be easing for some, but Farnham Town Council and the Farnham Maltings believe their role in leading the coordination of offers of help and requests for support during the coronavirus pandemic is far from over.

The

COVID-19 coordinating group was set up at the beginning of the coronavirus outbreak

to ensure the most vulnerable people who live in Farnham and the surrounding villages are cared for.

Councillor

Pat Evans, Mayor of Farnham attends the weekly coordinating group via video link and has heard for herself how Farnham has responded to the pandemic. This has included the setting up of a coronavirus helpline which has been operating since the end of March and has taken 1,300 calls and arranged for numerous offers of help.

The

Mayor of Farnham says: "The helpline has been a great success. Call handlers have

matched volunteers with people who are local to them that need help. This approach has really helped to strengthen communities and we've seen many examples of how an initial call for help has led to some lovely blossoming friendships. We also know of a number of volunteers who have gone from fulfilling a one-off request for help from a nearby neighbour to running regular errands such as picking up food orders, topping up mobile phones and mowing the lawn."

Everybody

who receives help gets a follow up phone call from a helpline supervisor to ask how the service went and if they need any further support.

As

well as helping with day to day requests, the helpline team has arranged an emergency

dental appointment for a vulnerable man and even sourced some plain white tiles so that a man who was convalescing after a major heart attack could pass the time by taking up his old hobby of engraving tiles.

The

helpline has also taken calls and emails from people living abroad who are concerned about their elderly relatives. Volunteers have established contact with the individuals and have arranged social calls and kept in touch with

relatives abroad.

Gavin

Stride from the Farnham Maltings says: "Given our purpose is to 'contribute to the quality of people's lives', it felt completely natural to throw ourselves into this work and it has been humbling and surprising to feel properly useful. To have so many people volunteer, encourage and want to help fills me with hope for our town going forward."

Complementing

the helpline is a support fund which was set up by a number of local voluntary organisations. The fund aims to provide financial help to residents who are facing hardship as a direct result of the pandemic. People can apply for a grant of up to £300 to help with replacing an essential kitchen appliance or paying for gas/electricity. The original fund of £22,000 has increased to over £30,000 thanks to generous donations from members of the public.

Councillor

Pat Evans says: "Since going live over four weeks ago, the fund has helped 18 Farnham households that are facing hardship as a direct consequence of coronavirus. So far, the fund has helped to buy essential items such as a fridge, single beds, a cooker, and nappies as well as providing help with fuel debt. Anybody wishing to apply for a grant or to donate money can find out how to do so at www.farnham.gov.uk."

The

mental wellbeing of people has been a focus during lockdown. To occupy people's time, Farnham Town Council has adapted the competitions it runs as part of Farnham in Bloom so as to encourage children and amateur gardeners to get involved. The setting up of the community store Share Farnham has been a big success too. The store accepts donations of games, puzzles, DVDs and activities that can be enjoyed at home. People are encouraged to visit the store and take home a new pastime – there's plenty to choose from and the items are free. The community stores are located at Hale Community Centre and the Farnham Maltings.

Gavin

Stride says: "From the start we have wanted to ensure that our collective efforts outlive this crisis. That we should, wherever we can, contribute to prepare the town for what is now referred to as 'the new normal'. One way we can do this is by encouraging generosity and that we share all of the resources we collectively hold."

Details about ongoing support for people affected by the coronavirus pandemic can be found on Farnham Town Council's [coronavirus website pages](#).

Prizes for Lego garden winners

Children across Farnham have risen to Farnham Town Council's lockdown challenge to create a garden from Lego.

The competition is one of several new initiatives aimed at getting the community involved in this year's Farnham in Bloom and attracted over 45 entries.

Councillor Sally Dickson, Lead Member for Farnham in Bloom says: "I'd like to say a big thank you to everybody who took part – we were delighted to receive so many entries. We had the lovely task of creating a short list of entries and then asked our sponsor Chris Chittock from Pivot SAP Consultancy to choose the winners."

Judge Chris says: "The standard of entry was extremely high, and there were some fantastic and very imaginative designs. I think it is safe to say that we have some budding garden designers in Farnham!"

After much deliberation, first prize was awarded to seven-year-old Annabelle from Weybourne. She was praised for the overall layout of her garden, her creativity and use of scale and colour.

Second prize went to four-year-old Noah and two-year-old Joshua. The brothers used Duplo bricks to create a large-scale garden and a very impressive rainbow.

The final prize was awarded to Simon aged ten who showed his experience as a Lego builder by including some wonderful details such as a hosepipe and telescope.

Thanks to sponsorship from Farnham-based Pivot, the children received a Farnham Town Council goody bag and Lego book and Annabelle received a Lego trophy.

See the [winning designs](#).

Farmers' Market returns

The Farmers' Market will return to Farnham on Sunday 24 May with additional safety measures in place to protect both shoppers and stallholders.

In line with the latest government advice and guidance, the market will be held in an enclosed area in Central car park. There will be one customer entrance and a separate exit so that the number of people in the market at any one time can be tightly monitored. The number of traders is limited to 20 so as to allow plenty of space between each stall.

Councillor Alan Earwaker, Lead Member for Tourism and Events says: "This month's Farmers' Market will feel very different to previous markets but the changes we have introduced are essential for enabling everybody to observe social distancing and to be safe.

"Unlike in the past, sadly this market will not be a social occasion; the emphasis is on supporting producers and enabling customers to buy fresh local produce safely. I highly recommend shoppers visit the [farmer's market page](#) in advance to see which stallholders will be at the market. This will enable shoppers to prepare for their shopping trip by having an idea of what they would like to buy. Finally, it goes without saying – if you are unwell, please do stay at home."

The market will be held from 10am to 1.30pm. There will be no entry before 10am. There will be a hand sanitising station at the entrance to the market which everybody will be asked to use.

Extra staff will be at the market to manage the changes and to ensure the measures are observed.

Dementia friends training

Three years ago, Farnham Town Council joined the local Dementia Action Appliance, which aims to make Farnham a more dementia-friendly town.

As part of its ongoing commitment to learning more about the condition that is predicted to affect one in 14 people in the UK aged over 65, councillors and staff from Farnham Town Council have recently undergone training to become a

'Dementia Friend'.

The training was led remotely via video link by Dementia Friends Champion Alastair Shanks from Right at Home GF. He shared information about the personal impact of dementia and what Dementia Friends can do to help.

Councillor

Pat Evans, Mayor of Farnham attended the training and speaking afterwards she said: "In both my roles as Mayor and as a councillor, I come into contact with many people who are living with dementia. I found the training to be very informative and helpful.

"Being a Dementia Friend has given me a greater understanding of dementia and an insight into some of the challenges. I highly recommend this training to anybody who wants to help people with dementia in their community."

Local employers that want to learn more about becoming a dementia friendly business can contact Farnham Town Council for contacts and more information.

Secret Gardens Competition

Farnham Town Council is expecting a bumper crop of entries in this year's Secret Gardens competition which will be judged remotely.

There are eight categories to choose from including Best Hanging Basket/Container and Best Family Lockdown activity such as creating a bug hotel or building a small pond.

Councillor Sally Dickson, Lead Member for Farnham in Bloom says: "One of the positives of lockdown is that many people have put their time to good use by spending it in their gardens. Together with our sponsor The Farnham Institute Charity, we would love to see even more people entering this year's competition and showing us what they have achieved this spring/summer.

"Gardening is a wonderful pastime which is accessible to all as it can be done on any scale and by any age group. It also has the added benefit of being very good for our mental health and wellbeing. I do hope that anybody who has

discovered the rewards of gardening will continue to enjoy the benefits long after restrictions are lifted.”

The Secret Gardens competition is open to anybody who lives within the boundaries of Farnham Town Council.

Gardeners wishing to enter the competition should [register their interest](#). Entrants will then have until 17 July 2020 to send three photos and up to 100 words describing each of their entries to bloom@farnham.gov.uk.

Desktop judging will happen in July and August and the results will be announced in September. Prizes will be awarded to the winners of each category.

Join the nation for VE Day 75

Farnham Town Council is calling upon Farnham people to join in a host of home-based celebrations to commemorate 75 years since the end of World War 2 in Europe.

From home-made bunting and displays of poppies to garlands of Union flags and celebratory posters, residents are encouraged to make use of materials they have at home to design a piece of artwork to mark VE Day 75. Please share your creation by emailing a photo of it to bloom@farnham.gov.uk by 12 May.

Councillor Pat Evans, Mayor of Farnham says: “We may not be able to take part in large gatherings or hold the street parties we envisaged for VE Day 75, but there are still plenty of ways to celebrate this momentous occasion and to honour the World War 2 generation.

“At 11am on Friday 8 May, I will pause for a UK-wide two-minute moment of reflection and remembrance. Later, at 2.45pm I plan to watch the broadcast of Sir Winston Churchill’s victory speech and then at 3pm, I will join the nation in paying tribute to heroes past and present by raising a glass and undertaking this national toast: ‘To those who gave so much, we thank you’ – please do join me from the safety of your home.”

Over the weekend, people can mark the anniversary by having a VE Day inspired picnic in the garden or by holding a virtual party for family and friends.

The Mayor of Farnham added: “However you decide to observe VE Day 75, please continue to follow the restrictions and stay safe and, when the lockdown

measures are eased, do come and see the commemorative VE Day carpet bed we have planted in Gostrey Meadow. In a few weeks' time, it will look at its best and will be a wonderful homage to the men and women who served in World War 2 and their families."

For posters to colour in, bunting templates, 1940s playlists, recipes, and more stay at home inspiration visit www.ve-vjday75.gov.uk.

Farnham Rants backs fund

A fundraising appeal which was launched a week ago with support from the Farnham Herald has received an additional boost from Lee Moran, the founder of the popular Facebook group Farnham Rants.

The Farnham Coronavirus Support Fund, which was set up by Farnham Town Council, the Farnham Maltings and a number of voluntary organisations aims to donate funds and emergency assistance to Farnham people who are facing hardship caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

Community minded Lee Moran agreed to help publicise the fundraising appeal to the 25,000+ members of Farnham Rants in an attempt to help the fund reach its £50,000 target. His support will also help to extend awareness of the fund to more people in need.

Councillor Pat Evans, Mayor of Farnham says: "In the first few days after the fund was launched, we received a number of applications from people who need help. Alongside these requests for help, we have also attracted donations of nearly £2,500 from the generous people of Farnham. This is on top of the original £22,000 that was contributed by Farnham Town Council and Farnham organisations to start the fund.

"Every additional pound raised will go to a Farnham person in need of urgent assistance such as help with paying for gas/electricity or the replacement of an essential kitchen appliance such as a cooker."

The Farnham Lions, one of the Farnham and Villages Coronavirus Support Group partners, is helping to coordinate donations through its Just Giving page. Details about how to donate and further information about how to apply for the fund can be found on the [coronavirus support fund page](#).

Hardship fund launched

Farnham's voluntary sector has once again come up trumps by joining forces with Farnham Town Council and the Farnham Maltings to create the Farnham Coronavirus Support Fund.

Eleven community organisations have contributed a total of £22,000 to start the fund and the Farnham Herald has launched a fundraising campaign to increase the fund to £50,000.

A Just Giving page has been set up with the support of Farnham Lions. This is for online donations and for those who wish to donate with Gift Aid. A link to the page can be found at www.farnham.gov.uk/supportfund.

Farnham residents who are facing hardship caused directly by the coronavirus pandemic can apply for a grant of up to £300. Applications for urgent assistance are invited and could include help with paying for gas/electric or food, replacing essential household items such as a broken cooker or providing equipment like a wheelchair or care alarm.

Councillor Pat Evans, Mayor of Farnham says: "This is another example of Farnham working with the community for the community.

"I would like to thank anybody who decides to make a donation as every contribution will make a real difference to an individual Farnham resident or a family currently in desperate need."

The application process has been designed to be straightforward and quick and to ensure the money goes to those most at need, applications need to be supported by a referee such as a GP or head teacher.

Applications are being administered by Farnham Town Council with support from a panel of Farnham organisations.

See full details about [how to donate and how to apply](#).

Farnham in Bloom at 30

Farnham in Bloom is 30 this year and although restrictions are in place to prevent the spread of coronavirus, there are still plenty of ways people can get involved and celebrate this horticultural milestone.

This year, the judges from South and South East in Bloom will judge Farnham in Bloom remotely. Farnham Town Council will submit a portfolio of evidence demonstrating how it has met the judging criteria. The judges will look for evidence that previous standards are being maintained and how the campaign has adapted to the restrictions.

Councillor Sally Dickson, Lead Member for Farnham in Bloom says: "We are having to approach Farnham in Bloom in a slightly different way this year, but the good news is that there are still many ways for people to take part.

"Competitions such as Secret Gardens include categories which will appeal to novice gardeners through to old hands. To show how communities have pulled together over the past few weeks, I think it would be wonderful to see whole streets of people growing sunflowers in their front gardens or planting up rainbow coloured hanging baskets as symbols of hope."

To show the In Bloom judges how Farnham has embraced this year's campaign, please email bloom@farnham.gov.uk with photos of your garden, veg patch and any other garden project you have started since lockdown.

See full details about how to enter this year's [Farnham in Bloom competitions](#) including competitions for schools and allotment holders.

Annual meeting postponed

Farnham Town Council's annual meeting and the election of the new Town Mayor has been postponed in line with government guidelines.

The Mayor and all existing officer holders will continue in post until the annual meeting can be held.

Councillor John Neale, Leader of Farnham Town Council says: "In light of the current situation, we have reviewed our calendar of meetings and have deferred the next ordinary meeting which was due to be held on 30 April to 14 May. This meeting will take place remotely using Zoom video software and will include business such as the signing off of the accounts for 2019/20."

Although Farnham Town councillors cannot meet in the Council Chamber, in line with government guidance, meetings are taking place remotely. This includes working groups and a weekly management meeting between the Leader, Mayor of Farnham and Town Clerk. Delegated decision making means normal council business can continue until such times as the Council can meet formally.

Epic moment for town's Plan

Farnham's Neighbourhood Plan has cleared the final hurdle in its Herculean quest to be re-adopted by Waverley Borough Council.

An early review of the first Neighbourhood Plan, which was adopted in 2017 was triggered by a requirement to accommodate more homes. The amended Neighbourhood Plan went to local referendum on 12 March. Of those who voted, 95.5% said they wanted Waverley Borough Council to use the Plan to help decide planning applications in the Farnham area.

Councillor Carole Cockburn led on the review of the Neighbourhood Plan and said: "The Farnham electorate gave a very clear mandate when they voted at the referendum. This positive approval triggered the long-awaited requirement for Waverley Borough Council to adopt the Plan. I am delighted that this has now happened, and that going forward the Plan will play an influential role in deciding planning applications in the Farnham neighbourhood.

"It has taken longer than we wanted to reach this stage but thanks to a fantastic community effort, we've made it. Everybody who contributed to the Neighbourhood Plan has every right to feel proud of their effort to shape Farnham's destiny."

Councillor

John Neale, Leader of Farnham Town Council said: "I would like to pay tribute to Councillor Cockburn and the wide range of community groups who supported this successful referendum. I'd particularly like to thank the Farnham Society for a very well-co-ordinated awareness raising campaign."

Farnham

Town Council is believed to be only the third council in the country to have taken a second neighbourhood plan through a referendum.

View the adopted [Farnham Neighbourhood Plan](#)

A helping hand

Farnham

Town Council recently rallied its outside workforce team to provide Farnham Hospital with the expertise and equipment they needed to build a new, temporary assessment centre.

Iain Lynch, Clerk at Farnham Town Council says: "We received a call from Peter Glover at Farnham's Integrated Care Services. He told us what they were thinking of doing and asked if we could help.

"We met him on site and discussed what we could do to fulfil their requirements. Once we had agreed a plan, we mustered our team and set about assembling our marquees and putting up barriers to help guide people through the station. We also enlisted additional support and extra marquees from the Farnham Hedgehogs and called upon Light Angels, our Christmas lighting contractor, to install lighting and power for the assessment centre."

Councillor John Neale, Leader of Farnham Town

Council says: "Responding to this call for help from our health care partners is another great example of how Farnham has come together during this time of need. It took just four hours for our team to build a fully functioning assessment

centre which will help remove pressure from local GP services by separating those referred with potential symptoms of COVID-19 from other patients."

Farnham Town Council has also provided a supply of water and washing facilities and thanks to a range of community organisations,

a rota of volunteers has been put in place to help with marshalling vehicles at the assessment centre.

A video showing the building of the centre and how the community is responding to calls for help and support can be viewed on [Farnham Town Council's website](#).

Cemetery memorial testing

Specialist contractors working on behalf of Farnham Town Council will begin a programme of memorial safety testing in its cemeteries this month. The inspections will start in Green Lane Cemetery before progressing to Badshot Lea, West Street and Hale Cemeteries.

As a burial authority, Farnham Town Council is responsible for ensuring general safety in its cemeteries. The memorials are tested every five years as part of an ongoing maintenance programme.

Councillor Carole Cockburn, Lead Member for Cemeteries says: "Our qualified contractors will carefully check the stability of every memorial by hand and in a very sensitive manner – no mechanical devices will be used. If a memorial is found to pose an imminent risk, immediate action will be taken to make it safe. Any other memorials that require attention will be staked and a warning sign will be displayed. If you have any concerns about this work, please contact Farnham Town Council."

The work will take around 2-5 days per cemetery to complete and will be carried out on weekdays only.

Memorial owners have a specific responsibility for the safety of their memorial. If the structure is found to be unsafe, they will be contacted by Farnham Town Council and asked to make arrangements with an approved stonemason to secure the memorial.

Farnham's coronavirus response

In the week following the government's

decision to fight the spread of coronavirus by putting the country into lockdown, an immense amount of work has been undertaken to ensure Farnham's most vulnerable are cared for.

The Farnham COVID-19 Coordinating Group has been formed by the Farnham Maltings and Farnham Town Council with the support of the Farnham Herald, the Farnham and Villages Coronavirus Support Group, Farnham Nextdoor and the Farnham Response Group, together with Churches Together, Farnham Foodbank, Farnham Money Advice, Meals on Wheels, Residents' Associations and the Farnham Society as well as many other individual community groups.

Councillor John Neale, Leader of Farnham Town Council says: "Once the first cases of coronavirus were reported in the UK and guidance was issued to advise more vulnerable members of the community to stay at home, a number of very local community initiatives quickly formed to help people in need.

"The idea behind setting up the coordinating group is twofold. Firstly, we want to bring together all the requests for help so that nobody slips through the net and secondly, we want to ensure the many offers of help are directed to where they are most needed. To do this, we have set up a helpline and dedicated email. We are grateful to Keith Roberts for helping us to create a secure database for recording calls, to Gavin Stride and his team at the Farnham Maltings for their hard work and to everybody who has offered to help out in their community."

Residents who need help but who do not have friends, family or neighbours to help them should call 01252 745446 or email help@farnhammaltings.com. The lines are open Monday to Friday, from 9am to 6pm and there is a recorded message for assistance outside of these hours.

Anybody who would like to volunteer is asked to email volunteers@farnhammaltings.com and local neighbourhood organisers or community networks are invited to add their details to a database by emailing organisers@farnhammaltings.com. Both email addresses generate an auto-response with a link to an online form for completion.

Councillor Pat Evans, Mayor of Farnham says: "We are blessed to live in a town that has such a special community that can be relied upon to pull together during times of need. We have seen an amazing show of solidarity over the past few days and I feel extremely proud that as a Town Council, we have been able to play such a constructive role in working with the community for the community."

She adds: "Having set up the coronavirus helpline, it is important that people know it exists, so we have arranged for the Royal Mail to deliver an information leaflet to every household in Farnham and surrounding villages. We've also gathered and published a wealth of information on our website at www.farnham.gov.uk to signpost people to other useful sources of advice."

The coronavirus response initiatives set up by Farnham Town Council and community groups, aim to complement what is happening at County and street level so that everybody in Farnham and the surrounding villages has the support they need.

A Surrey-wide community helpline has also been set up by Surrey County Council to direct people to services that can help during the coronavirus pandemic. The helpline is for people who need help and to give advice to those who would like to help their community. The number is 0300 200 1008 and is open Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm.

Farnham Farmers' Market

The farmers' market is this Sunday (22 March) from 10am to 1.30pm at Central car park, off Victoria Road, Farnham. However, if government advice changes because of the coronavirus, the market may be postponed – the latest information will be posted on our [coronavirus update page](#).

The market will have locally sourced fresh fruit and vegetables, ready to give your vitamin levels a spring boost. Other stalls also include fresh fish, meat and poultry plus dairy produce, baked goods, home-made preserves and artisan goods you would expect at one of Surrey's most successful markets.

T & V Veg promise an excellent choice of produce from which to get your five a day. There will also be freshly caught fish and shellfish from Selsey Willows and gorgeous smoked fish dishes from Sussex Smokers.

The charity tea tent will be run by The Lions.

Farnham

Town Council is keen to support local producers at this difficult time and asks shoppers to take note of precautionary guidance designed to protect stallholders and other shoppers.

Show is a hit with audience

The Mayor's Charity Variety Show raised hundreds of pounds for local charities last weekend (Saturday 14 March) with a packed bill of entertainers at Crondall Village Hall.

Part way through the evening, the audience enjoyed a fish and chip supper with a chocolate ice cream to follow.

The Mayor of Farnham, Councillor Pat Evans, who hosted the evening says: "This is the first time we have held a variety show and what a fantastic success it was. It was a wonderful evening for the local community to be together and all profits will go to my two chosen charities, Space2grow and Hale Community Centre."

Taking into account ticket sales, bar and raffle, the evening raised £1,000 for the two charities.

The line-up included songs from Shuffletunes community choir, live music and comedy from Geoff Hiscott and a performance from the highly talented Carrington Family Ensemble. Also included were the former Farnham Town Crier, Jonathan Jones, stand-up comedy from Tommy Connors and Musical Theatre performances from young people's group Theatre Rocket. The evening concluded with a 'sing-along' led by Sue Lampard and Geoff Hiscott.

As well as paying tribute to all the performers, the Mayor thanked the team from Crondall Village Hall, Simon Alexander the Stage Manager and Sue Lampard for organising the entertainment programme for a great event.

Voters choose 'yes'

The Farnham electorate has given a clear message about how it wants the town to evolve over the next 12 years with an overwhelming majority voting in favour of adopting the Farnham Neighbourhood Plan.

The

result of the referendum, which took place on Thursday 12 March showed that of the 7,848 people who voted, 95.5% want Waverley Borough Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area.

This is

the second time voters have voted on Farnham's Neighbourhood Plan and comes after the original plan was revised to accommodate a new government housing target.

Councillor

Carole Cockburn led on the review of the Neighbourhood Plan and says: "I am thrilled

with the outcome of the referendum and would like to thank everybody who voted. Considering this was a standalone election, the turnout was excellent and is a very convincing result. People have shown us that they feel so strongly about the future of their town that they were prepared to turn out for this one-off election and have their say. I would like to pay tribute to volunteers from the Farnham Society and local residents' associations for working so tirelessly to inform people about the referendum and for encouraging people to vote."

The

Neighbourhood Plan is an important planning document for Farnham which has been produced by the community for the community. It includes policies which aim to develop a shared vision for Farnham and to sustain local character. Importantly for many, it also states the community's preference for new housing to be built on previously developed land.

Commenting

on the result of the referendum, Councillor John Neale, Leader of Farnham Town Council says: "This is a momentous occasion for Farnham. Having an adopted Neighbourhood Plan ensures that future development will be focused on sites for which the public has expressed a preference. The Plan should also help to safeguard our green spaces from inappropriate, speculative development.

"Everybody

who accepted the invitation to take part in a Neighbourhood Plan consultation has influenced the content of the Plan. It is reassuring that we now have some certainty for the future of Farnham and that our town and communities can evolve in a way that has been chosen by the people."

The

Farnham Neighbourhood Plan will now be officially adopted by Waverley Borough Council and will very soon be used to help decide planning applications in the Farnham area.

Farnham Walking Festival

The programme for the 2020 Farnham Walking Festival is out now.

The

Walking Festival is organised by Farnham Town Council in partnership with local walking enthusiast Guy Singer, and with additional support from an army of volunteer walk leaders.

The

festival takes place from 16 May to 7 June. All information, including practical advice about what to wear, is on the festival website www.farnhamwalkingfestival.org.

The website shows how long each walk is, how challenging it is, whether it is wheelchair accessible or suitable for pushchairs plus details about how to book, which is essential for many of the walks.

Guy

Singer who oversees the planning of the festival's walks, says: "Last year many of our walks were so popular that they were oversubscribed, and I know some were disappointed that they could not join us. To help avoid that this year, we have more than doubled the number of events and added in some great new routes.

"Walking

has so many benefits – it's great for physical fitness but also our mental health, the opportunity to socialise in a relaxed environment, and helping us feel connected to where we live. I'm looking forward to welcoming even more people to the festival to inspire people's interest in Farnham and sharing the love for our fantastic countryside."

Councillor

Alan Earwaker, Lead Member for Tourism and Events says: "Building on 2019's very successful festival, the number and variety of walks has increased substantially."

He adds:

"The programme, put together by Guy Singer, includes walks for every ability, from gentle half-mile informational events to 15-mile, day-long hikes – with plenty of choice in between. We have included walks suitable for young families with pushchairs to some challenging or adventurous routes off the beaten track for more experienced walkers.

“Whatever

your age, fitness level, walking ability or interest, you should find something that appeals to you. Among this year’s walks are a Shakespeare themed interactive walking tour, a family treasure hunt, a walk taking in the Hogs Back Brewery and a ghost walk – I’m sure residents will agree that even just these walks cover lots of different interests!”

The

routes, which include stunning countryside and local places of interest, are planned by a team of knowledgeable walking enthusiasts who will also lead the walks. Many of the walks are themed around wildlife, history, culture or other interests. There are also routes with specific groups in mind, such as a lunchtime networking walk for the business community and an early morning walk for those with time available at the beginning of the day.

Perhaps

this year’s most ambitious walk is the full 34-mile route of the Pilgrims’ Way which will be walked in three parts across three days. A less strenuous but equally enjoyable series of events will be community walks from each of the area’s villages followed by a picnic.

Commonwealth Day flag flying

Farnham Town Council has observed

Commonwealth Day with a flag-raising ceremony outside its offices in South Street on Monday 9 March.

Similar ceremonies took place simultaneously

in towns and cities across the UK and the day was also celebrated across the world in the other 53 countries that make up today’s Commonwealth.

Farnham’s ceremony was led by the Mayor of

Farnham Councillor Pat Evans and included children from St Andrew’s, Badshot Lea Infants, Potters Gate and Farnham Heath End School. They were joined by RAF AC, the Army Benevolent Fund, The Queen’s Royal Regiment, the Royal British Legion, Farnham Hedgehogs, Farnham Visitors Forum, Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice and Farnham Weyside Rotary.

Speaking after the event, Councillor Pat

Evans said: “The Commonwealth is about celebrating an international community, friendship as well as diversity. It’s about shared history but also working together for common goals. This year’s Commonwealth Day was centred around the

theme Delivering a Common Future and aimed to highlight how the 54 member countries of the Commonwealth are innovating, connecting and transforming in their quest to achieve some ambitious goals such as protecting natural resources and boosting trade.

“Our young people are our future leaders and ceremonies such as the one we held today, help to bring greater understanding and appreciation of the values and principles of the Commonwealth Charter.”

Nationally, HM The Queen issued a message as Head of the Commonwealth and there was a multi-faith service at Westminster Abbey.

Comments and questions invited

Farnham’s

Annual Town Meeting takes place on Thursday 26 March, providing a face to face opportunity for residents to hear about the town council’s plans and priorities for Farnham and for residents to share their views and ask questions.

The

meeting takes place at 7pm at the Farnham Maltings. It is open to all Farnham electors but, for the purposes of catering and practical arrangements, anyone planning to attend is asked to email customer.services@farnham.gov.uk by 23 March.

“Asking

questions and keeping up with how the town council is planning its services over the next year is an important part of being in a democracy. It’s a good way to find out the facts about the council’s priorities and aspirations, direct from your elected representatives, and to get an answer to any questions you have about local council services,” says Councillor Pat Evans, the Mayor of Farnham who will chair the event. “If you take an interest in local issues and how the council looks after our town and surrounding villages, do put the date in your diary, and come and meet me and my councillor colleagues on the 26th,” she says.

The

meeting includes presentations by the councillors responsible for key areas such as tourism and events and for community enhancement. Most of Farnham Town Council’s 18 elected members representing the area’s nine wards are expected to be at the meeting to take comments and answer questions.

Questions

at the meeting are likely to cover the council's main areas of responsibility such as contributing to decisions on planning matters, supporting the local economy, community events, and looking after allotments, cemeteries, parks and outside spaces.

Councillors

will do their best to answer questions from the public as fully as possible. For those issues that fall outside the town council's responsibilities, they will follow up with the relevant body and provide a response after the meeting.

Mayor honours winners of awards

Thirteen local people have been recognised by the Farnham community for their outstanding services to the area, in the annual Services to Farnham Awards. The awards highlight the work carried out by individuals for the benefit of Farnham. The Mayor of Farnham hosted the ceremony which took place on Monday 24 February in the Council Chamber at Farnham Town Council.

"Among this year's winners we have some amazing people who have dedicated themselves tirelessly and for many years for the benefit of others in and around Farnham. They include those contributing to areas as diverse as music and culture, village and town life, the environment, karate, family support, guiding and horticulture. It is an absolute pleasure to honour this wonderful group of local people who do so much for others," says Councillor Pat Evans, the Mayor of Farnham. "I would also like to thank those who nominated them so that we can share our winners' stories with others,"

Each of the winners was nominated and seconded by members of the public, a friend or colleague who were required to set out their reasons for nomination. All nominations were considered by a panel of judges and its decision was presented to the meeting of Farnham's Full Council in January for endorsement.

The Mayor presented each winner with a medal and certificate, which were inspired by Sir Ray Tindle, founder of the Tindle Newspaper Group.

The recipients of the 2020 Services to Farnham awards are as follows:

Mrs Rachel Britton

For Services to Farnham through Guiding

Rachel Britton has made an enormous impact on Guiding locally, having provided exceptional service for almost 20 years. Rachel has run the Rowledge Guides for over 20 years and started a new Rainbow unit some five years ago.

She has held a range of other roles including District Commissioner and Division Commissioner each of which she served for three years. She is now continuing her commitment to the London and South East Region as an international advisor.

Generations of parents are grateful to Rachel for what she has done to develop young people into fine citizens. This award recognises the selfless time she gives to the young people of the town.

Mr Vic Cracknell

For Services to Farnham through music

Vic Cracknell is a singer, songwriter and multi-instrumentalist who has dedicated years of his life to providing performance opportunities to others.

For well over a decade, he has hosted live music events, open mic nights, sing-a-longs, jam nights, and stages at local music festivals, with the aim of promoting the talents of local musicians within their local communities for others to enjoy.

As well as supporting performers, Vic gives his time to perform in care homes and elsewhere.

Aside from performing, Vic now has 'Vic's Music Matters' column in the Farnham Herald promoting local artists and music in the form of a 'Surrey Songwriters' Spotify playlist.

Without Vic and his commitment and passion, Farnham would definitely not have the strong music presence that it does, and would be much less vibrant.

Col. Jack Crawford

For Services to the community of Wrecclesham

Jack Crawford has been Chairman of the Isabella Schroder Trust in Wrecclesham for over 20 years and a key volunteer in the local community.

Under Jack's leadership, the Trust financial affairs have been re-organised to ensure it continues to operate in a secure and sustainable way ensuring that the

legacy of Isabella Schroder can continue to support the Wrecclesham community in the future. During this time hundreds of local individuals have been supported in times of need.

Amongst other activities, Jack has been Chairman of the local branch of Christian Aid since 2003 ensuring it carries out its tasks effectively and efficiently.

Jack has made an important contribution to Farnham and is a worthy recipient of the award.

Mr Anthony Goodall

For Services to the environment and Farnham

Anthony Goodall has been a tireless campaigner to improve the quality of life and environment in Wrecclesham.

As one of the founders of the TRASH Campaign 20 years ago to ensure the local community had a voice on issues relating to the Alton Road Sandpit and landfill activity, Tony's knowledge, drive and commitment has made a real difference in minimising harmful impacts.

Tony demonstrates his passion for the well-being of his local community in other key local campaigns and he is also Secretary of the Wrecclesham Village Society.

Tony's personal unerring dedication in making Wrecclesham a better place to live and taking on thankless tasks should be celebrated and he much deserves this award.

Mrs Louise Granville-Jones

For Services to the well-being of the Farnham community

Louise Granville-Jones started volunteering for Home-Start in Waverley over 20 years ago and has supported over 800 local families who faced a wide variety of difficulties including coping with disability or mental health issues, loneliness/isolation or needing help with a child's development and learning.

Louise is passionate about making a difference, adapting the way she works to meet individual needs in a caring and understanding way. Louise was key to helping expand the Home-Start service across Waverley, giving advice to the other co-ordinators and providing consistency and continuity.

It is much to Louise's credit that families and referrers have stressed the importance of her contribution and how she has made the impossible possible.

Dr Alan Hunt

For Services to Farnham through the Farnham Carnival

Dr Alan Hunt has made a central and critical contribution to one of Farnham's key annual community events, the Farnham Carnival, for over 20 years.

Alan's drive, enthusiasm, dedication, hard work, organisational skills and leadership have seen the carnival grow from strength to strength and his experience will be irreplaceable.

Whilst his humility may not allow it, Alan has earned the title of Mr. Carnival as without him and his efforts the carnival may no longer exist.

Alan is without doubt worthy of this recognition for everything he has contributed to the Town and its cultural life.

Mr Michael McAleenan

For Services to the Andrew Windsor Almshouses

Michael McAleenan has given long service and dedication to the Andrew Windsor Almshouses.

As Chairman for over seven years, his dedication to the role has steered the Charity through a £500k restoration project, fundraising and managing the essential works.

Michael's attention to detail and countless hours on site, ensured that the project was a success, and completed on time and within budget.

Michael has given invaluable service to the Charity both as a Trustee and as Chairman, providing great leadership.

Michael has made a significant contribution both to the vulnerable almshouse residents and to Farnham as a whole and much deserves this award.

Mr John Negus

For Services to Farnham through horticulture

John Negus is one of Farnham's horticultural gems. He has been involved with the Victoria Garden, a multi-award winning entry in Britain in Bloom, since its formation 20 years ago.

John is not only their horticultural advisor but so much more, a volunteer who practices what he preaches.

John was an inaugural member of Farnham in Bloom's Community Group promoting community-led projects and is a key facilitator of initiatives such as Bloomin' Kids, Bloomin' Friends and Bloomin' Litter.

In addition, John has helped with the Bourne Conservation Garden since its inception and with the setting up of Bishop's Meadow Trust. John is also well sought after as an expert gardener and horticultural specialist, being a long-standing gardening journalist and broadcaster.

John's selflessness, kindness, passion and enthusiasm and his effortless ability to lead by example make him a worthy recipient of this award.

Mr Graham Noakes

For Services to the cultural life of Farnham

Graham Noakes has made an immense contribution to the life of Farnham since he moved to the town in 1984.

Graham has served as chairman of Round Table, and President of the 41 Club twice, and for ten years, was Chairman of the Farnham Youth Choir, helping shape it into one of the top 50 choirs in the world, winning Gold at the European and World Choir Games.

Graham's charitable service has included the Round Table fireworks for some 35 years, being a governor of Hale School and Heath End School and being publicity officer for the Farnham Ramblers.

He was a member of the Farnham Chamber of Commerce committee until he retired in 2017 and is a trustee of the charity *Mind Body EDS* and is chairman of the Farnham Carnival.

Graham is very conscientious in everything he does and is highly respected for his advice and guidance. He is truly a man of Farnham and most worthy of this award.

Mr Graham Precious

For Services to the community of Rowledge

Graham Precious has worked tirelessly for the community of Rowledge for over a decade.

As a long term member of the Rowledge Village Fayre committee, the Rowledge Village Hall Trust and as Chairman of the Rowledge Residents' Association, Graham has done much to foster a positive community spirit for the benefit of all.

He has maintained close links with Farnham Town Council and other organisations in the area and also contributed much to the history of the village from his own research.

Graham has selflessly worked to enhance the quality of life in Rowledge over many years and played a key role in establishing a flourishing village community which will be a lasting legacy of his contribution.

Mr Chris Shephard

For Services to the heritage and history of Farnham

Chris Shephard has made an immense contribution to the life of Farnham over the past 50 years. As a local historian, author and photographer he has made an important contribution in chronicling Farnham life.

Chris was instrumental in founding the Rustics group of volunteers at the Rural Life Centre, before becoming a trustee and the director taking the museum from strength to strength.

Chris has made a significant contribution to the Farnham Visitors' Forum and as a Trustee of Farnham Castle and the Farnham Building Preservation Trust. Chris was the inspiration for the Farnham Walking Festival and has created and leads walks on the town's history.

He brings great pleasure for readers through the regular Peeps into the Past column in The Herald.

Chris deserves this award as an outstanding Farnham resident working tirelessly for the benefit of its community.

Mr Norman Smith

For Services to the Farnham Brass Band

Norman Smith joined Farnham Brass Band soon after moving to Farnham in 1987 fulfilling the role of Principal Cornet for most of that time, leading the section, providing guidance and encouragement to his team, playing solos and, with his famously sweet tone, adding a bit of class to performances.

Norman's loyal leadership has been a mainstay of the band and he has become an integral part of the Hale Remembrance Service playing the Last Post and Reveille every year for 30 years.

Norman also supports other local bands including Haslemere and Basingstoke when short on players.

Norman's contribution to the Farnham Brass Band enabling it to perform up to 20 times every year at local community events including the Farnham Carnival, local fetes, Music in the Meadow and Farnham in Bloom Winter Celebration make him deserving of the Services to Farnham award.

Mr Barry Wilkinson

For Services to Farnham through Karate

Barry Wilkinson has taught karate in the town to hundreds of children and adults for more than 50 years. Barry studied karate in the UK and Japan and set up the Farnham Karate Club in 1971.

He formed the England Wadokai Karate-do Renmei (EWICR), has taught throughout Europe, Ireland and the Far East and is Vice President of the Federation of Wadokai Europe.

At 8th Dan, Barry has one of the highest grades in Europe and is respected throughout the UK, Europe and beyond.

He has helped put Farnham on the sporting map as a pioneer in his chosen field and has brought pleasure, fitness and a sense of pride and confidence to several generations of karateka.

Barry has made an enormous contribution, and much deserves this award.

Nominations for the 2021 awards can be made at any time before the panel meets

in the autumn of this year. See the [Services to Farnham](#) page.

Litter pickers needed

Farnham

is in need of volunteer litter-pickers to take part in this year's Big Pick Week in March and to join in Bloomin' Litter activities throughout the year.

"Litter

picking is a quick and easy way to have a big impact on the attractiveness of your neighbourhood, high street or favourite park. The Big Pick takes place over the week of 21 to 28 March. We need just an hour or two of your time and you can join in as an individual, family, group of friends, or colleagues from a local business," says Councillor Sally Dickson, Lead Member for Community Enhancement at Farnham Town Council.

Councillor

Dickson adds: "For our Bloomin' Litter initiatives, we also need regular volunteers over the spring and summer months to keep our town and villages litter-free. If you enjoy the Big Pick and want to do more or feel you can take part in litter picking on a regular basis, please get in touch. It's a very worthwhile contribution to your local community, particularly for young people or others looking for a volunteering opportunity."

Signing

up is easy: simply email Farnham Town Council at bloom@farnham.gov.uk giving your contact details, the number of people likely to join you and the area you would like to cover. Remember to also mention whether you are interested in Big Pick Week, a regular litter pick for Bloomin' Litter or both.

Farnham

Town Council provides all the litter picking and safety equipment needed and can even help dispose of what is collected.

Big Pick Week culminates in a town centre clear up on Saturday 28 March for the Great British Spring Clean. Farnham Town Council invites volunteers to get involved and play their part in filling sacks with litter. When the spring clean finishes on 28 March, volunteers can enjoy a hard-earned cup of tea and a piece of cake.

Free Sunday activities

The farmers' market comes to town on Sunday 23 February, bringing hints that spring is on its way in the form of lusciously fresh, local seasonal produce. If that is not enough to tempt Farnham's residents out of their homes, an afternoon of free live music, open to all, takes place the same day at the Vineyard Church.

"February can be on the chilly or damp side but both of these events are free to come along to and both have refreshments on sale making them a very inexpensive opportunity to get out of the house and mingle among others while enjoying a hot drink or a snack," says Councillor Alan Earwaker, Lead Member for Tourism and Events.

Local really does mean local at the Farnham farmers' market with produce being grown, raised, caught, baked, pickled, processed or made within 50 miles of the market. The farmers' market is open from 10am to 1.30pm at Central car park off Victoria Road. Then, from 3pm to 5pm the Vic Cracknell Swing Band will perform a two-hour set of live and lively tunes at Music in the Vineyard at The Vineyard Church, Church House, Union Road, also in Farnham. Both events are free to enter.

Councillor Earwaker says: "Thanks to sponsorship from Bourne Wood Manor, we are able to keep Music in the Vineyard free to attend. We had a great start at our January show which the audience absolutely loved. Farnham Assist will be joining us this time to host the refreshments stall, selling tea, coffee and cakes or you are welcome to bring your own indoor picnics to enjoy during the show if you prefer,"

Music in the Vineyard takes place each month over late winter and into early spring to give local people the opportunity to get out and socialise while enjoying a selection of live bands. A different artist performs at each show to appeal to varied tastes. Also at each show, a different local good cause hosts the refreshment stall.

At the farmers' market, shoppers can expect to find fabulous brassicas such as cauliflower, kale, cabbages and Brussels sprouts as well as celeriac, rhubarb and Bramley apples. Organic and locally sourced meat and fish will be on sale too. Available all year round at the market is a huge choice of locally made goods such as breads, cakes, cheeses, sauces, pickles, pies, juices, ales and wines.

Tickets on sale for Variety Show

Tickets are on sale now for Farnham's very own variety show, which takes place on Saturday 14 March at 7.30pm at Crondall Village Hall. The Mayor's Charity Variety Show promises a line-up packed with high quality, local acts such as Shuffletunes choir, comedy by Tommy Connors and a spoken piece by Jonathan Jones. A fish and chip supper is also included in the ticket price. All profits will go to the Mayor's chosen charities.

"We will have everything you would expect to see in a highly entertaining evening bursting with talented performers. Tickets are on sale for £12.50 each and we will seat our audience in tables of eight making this a really sociable and fun way to enjoy the show," says the Mayor of Farnham, Councillor Pat Evans.

The Mayor continues: "The entertainment is being arranged by Performers Together so I am looking forward to a night of music, dance, magic and comedy and perhaps one or two novel acts that Farnham might not have seen before. Most of all, I am looking forward to raising money for my chosen charities – space2grow and Hale Community Project – both of them are doing excellent work in the Farnham community. I do hope as many local people as possible will join me at the show."

Tickets are available online from [Farnham Town Council's website](#) or they can be bought from the Town Council's office on South Street. A welcome drink is included in the ticket price and there will be a paying bar throughout the event. Cod and chips (or vegetarian alternative) provided by Seafare Fish and Chips will be served part way through the evening with a choc-ice for dessert. There will also be a raffle with winners of the prizes announced before the end of the night.

Commemorative tree planting

The lives of five servicemen from Farnham who died over 100 years ago in World War 1 have been commemorated with the planting of cherry trees at the Memorial Hall on Crosby Way, Farnham.

The servicemen were all employees at Farnham United Breweries and died serving their country during the war which lasted

from 1914 to 1918.

The ceremony was the idea of Councillor George Hesse who felt inspired to revive the memory of the five employees of Farnham United Breweries in whose memory the Memorial Hall was built and which is now coming up to its 100th year.

The Mayor of Farnham, Councillor Pat Evans, assisted with planting the trees at a ceremony outside the Memorial Hall on Tuesday 11 February. She was joined by the Mayor of Waverley, Reverend Uffindell, representatives of the armed forces, the Royal British legion, the Scouting movement, local residents and family members of the five who died.

The Mayor said: "We continue to remember those who lost their lives protecting our freedom because it reminds us of the sacrifices that others have made – and continue to make – for us to live the way that we do today. These five men were ordinary people doing ordinary jobs in Farnham but, when asked, made an extraordinary sacrifice that most of us can hardly imagine in order to protect their town and country."

The trees join a commemorative plaque, also at the Memorial Hall, which was laid in memory of the five servicemen who died: G Ayres, CT Hawkins, M Glazier, F Mansey and JBP Wallace.

The five trees are all Japanese flowering cherry trees, recognisable during late spring for their stunning shell pink blossom.

Farnham United Breweries was founded in 1860 and operated until it was acquired by Courage and Co Limited in 1927. Brewing continued for another year but malting only ceased decades later in 1956.

Ugandan children visit Farnham

A choir of 11 children from the King's Kid Home School in Uganda recently visited Farnham and much to their delight, received a warm, traditional welcome from the Mayor of Farnham.

'Karibuni' (welcome) and 'oli otya?' (how are you?) is how the Mayor of Farnham

greeted the 11 to 18-year olds who are on an exchange visit to the UK hosted by Brighton Hill Community School in Basingstoke.

Deputy headteacher David Watkins of Brighton Hill is a Farnham resident and thought it would be good for the children to visit a town similar in size to their hometown of Mityana.

To begin their visit to Farnham, the young people gathered in the Council Chamber at Farnham Town Council where the Mayor gave a short talk about Farnham and gave each young person a bag of Farnham souvenirs.

Councillor Pat Evans, Mayor of Farnham said: "The young people were delightful and were so open, happy and engaging.

"The choir is made up of orphans who have been neglected or abandoned. I was fascinated to hear more about the King's Kid ministry from its co-founder and lead pastor Robert Mponye. I hope the children enjoy their visit to the UK."

While in Farnham, the party visited the Keep at Farnham Castle, walked the Farnham Heritage trail, explored St Andrew's Church and visited the Museum of Farnham before finally stopping off for an hour of singing at St Andrew's Church.

Other highlights of the children's trip have included singing at The Methodist Hall Westminster in front of 2,000+ teachers, working with celebrity chef Mark Lloyd to prepare and cook a 3-course meal at Brighton Hill Community School for members of the community, a trip to Winchester and a variety of community and church music events.

After their stay in Basingstoke, the children travelled to the west Midlands. More information can be found about the children's ministry at www.kingskidhome.com.

Name our new van

Farnham Town Council welcomes a new environmentally friendly vehicle to its fleet and is asking for your help to name it. The council is running a competition to find the perfect name for the vehicle, which is used by its outdoor workforce and will soon be a familiar sight in the local area.

"When vehicles need replacing we're making choices that will help us reduce

Farnham's carbon footprint. Our new van runs on compressed natural gas (CNG), making it a far cleaner choice. It will join two similar vans – called Flora and Fauna – so we're asking residents to come up with ideas for the perfect name for our new addition," says Councillor Sally Dickson, Lead Member for Community Enhancement.

To enter the competition, send an email to customer.services@farnham.gov.uk by 29 February or find the council on Twitter or Facebook to suggest your idea. A small panel will decide the winning name and invite the winner to an official naming ceremony.

Just like Flora and Fauna, the newest member of Farnham's family of vans features a striking design of wildflowers. Residents can expect to spot it at local parks, cemeteries, the town centre and areas where council staff carry out maintenance and improvement tasks as they look after Farnham.

The council is working towards being carbon neutral by 2030. Its choice of a more environmentally friendly vehicle represents its latest action to try to reach that target. Among the environmental advantages of CNG are that it produces less carbon monoxide and fewer hydrocarbons.

Neighbourhood Plan referendum

Farnham electors are being asked to have their say on the updated [Farnham Neighbourhood Plan](#) by voting in a special local referendum on Thursday 12 March.

The adopted Neighbourhood Plan had to be revised to meet a new housing target and includes some other factual updates and the results of a more comprehensive landscape study.

Farnham's revised Neighbourhood Plan reaffirms the community's vision for the Town Council area including Badshot Lea, Boundstone, Hale, Heath End, Rowledge, Shortheath, The Bourne, Upper Hale, Weybourne and Wrecclesham.

As well as identifying sites for additional housing, the Plan includes policies which aim to protect and enhance biodiversity, neighbourhood centres, public open spaces and sports provision.

Councillor Carole Cockburn who led Farnham Town Council's Neighbourhood Plan review says: "It was during our many consultation exercises that local people told us their aspirations for the town and how they want their neighbourhoods to be in 2032. We took those wishes on board and incorporated them into the current Neighbourhood Plan. Eighty-eight per cent of the 11,391 people who voted in the May 2017 voted in favour of the first Neighbourhood Plan."

Councillor Cockburn says: "Having completed the review of the plan in 2019, it was then scrutinised by an independent examiner. In his [final report](#), having considered detailed representations, he concluded that Farnham has a: 'Review Plan which should help guide the area's development' and that will make 'a positive contribution to informing decision-making on planning applications by Waverley Borough Council'.

The independent examiner, decided the Plan should be subject to the forthcoming referendum. If the majority who vote are in favour of the Plan, it will be used by Waverley Borough Council to help decide planning applications for the area.

"Farnham's Neighbourhood Plan is understood to be the country's first Neighbourhood Plan Review Referendum. To ensure this most recent version can be used, it needs to be readopted following the referendum. I implore you to please use your vote during the forthcoming referendum," says Councillor Cockburn.

For more information about the Neighbourhood Plan, visit www.farnham.gov.uk/shapefarnham.

Council tax kept below average

Careful money management has enabled Farnham town councillors to agree a level of council tax that is set to remain below the national average.

Farnham Town Council made the decision at its Full Council meeting on Thursday 23 January, resulting in the portion of council tax that it receives for a band D property being set at £66.09 per year.

"The council has shown continued restraint in budgeting for services to keep the Farnham portion of our residents' council tax bills at an affordable level.

We've taken into account inflation, the cost of living and our residents' incomes as well as global pressures such as the impact that meeting the financial cost of the climate challenge might have on our reserves," says Councillor John Neale, the Leader of Farnham Town Council. "We have also increased income from sources other than council tax such as sponsorship from a range of local businesses. At the same time, we have taken on responsibility for selected services from our financially squeezed partners in borough and county councils."

Although

residents pay one council tax bill, the money is divided between borough, county, town and parish councils, as well as Surrey Police. Farnham funds many of its services from its share of the tax. The sum Farnham Town Council charges its residents through their council tax bills is known as its precept.

In

2015/6, Farnham's precept was just over £3 above the national average for town and parish councils. The council has worked hard since to keep its portion of the council tax as low as possible, and in 2019/20 its precept was £3 below the national average.

"We continue to budget sensibly and apply restraint in our spending in order to keep our precept as low as possible. This is at the same time as taking on services to support the borough and county, such as cleaning street signs and managing extra areas of land – all of which costs money – and maintaining high standards across all our services. Just like household budgeting, it is hard and requires perseverance and discipline but for residents, it means that council tax bills will increase by just 3.1p per week. At £1.60 a year, that's less than a takeaway cup of coffee per household," said Councillor Neale. The town council set its budget for 2020/21 at £1,400,327. It set the precept at £1,146,027 resulting in the annual cost to a band D household being £66.09 compared to £64.49 in 2019/20.

Cash boost for community groups

Almost 40

of Farnham's community organisations will benefit from the latest round of grants allocated by Farnham Town Council. Together, they will share £75,000 to support their work with people in need, sports and arts activities as well as projects for young people and the environment. The grants were agreed by Farnham Town Council at its meeting on Thursday (23 January).

"There

are too many fantastic projects to list but to give a flavour, this year's Community Grants scheme is supporting groups ranging from the Helen Arkell Dyslexia Charity to Hale Carnival Committee as well as helping the Woodlarks Centre buy a minibus and the Rowledge and Bourne Ringers purchase a new A flat bell," says Councillor John Neale, Leader of Farnham Town Council. "Some grants will provide vital support for people when they need it most – parents, people with disabilities, older residents – while others positively enhance the lives of local people through sports, educational and cultural activities," he says.

The

scheme, which is supporting many organisations, shows how investing a relatively small amount of money in the community can benefit many people, with some of the grants being just a few hundred pounds.

Among

the beneficiaries is arts group FADEG which will use its grant of £250 to help finance a community arts show to encourage creativity among amateurs, particularly those who benefit from art as a therapy. Farnham disability charity, Challengers will receive £750 to support activities for its summer play scheme, such as a drumming workshop and messy play. A grant of £350 will enable Farnham Brass Band to purchase a new bass drum and new carol and hymn books while the Parenting Space will receive £1,200 to support local families on Talking Teens parenting courses.

Farnham

Town Council invites applications from not-for-profit organisations for financial support of up to £2,000 through its community grants scheme. Applications can be for one-off projects or funding for up to three years. The council considers requests for work relating to, for example, young people's projects, heritage and cultural schemes, facilities in community buildings, sport, leisure and play activities, community transport and environmental projects.

Small

grants of up to £250 are available for specific community projects throughout the year. To apply, email town.clerk@farnham.gov.uk.

Music in the Vineyard returns

January marks the return of Music in the Vineyard which is a free live music concert organised by Farnham Town Council throughout the winter months.

The first of the monthly concerts is on Sunday 26 January from 3-5pm at The Vineyard Centre in Union Road. Shuffle Tunes Choir will be first to perform and promise to share their enthusiasm and joy for singing.

Councillor Alan Earwaker, Lead Member for Tourism and Events says: "After the busyness of Christmas, January can feel quite flat but our programme of free music concerts aims to lift the spirits and provide an opportunity for some socialising. The concerts are always very popular so, if you intend to come, I urge you to get there for the start as numbers are limited."

At each concert, a local charity will host the refreshment stand serving tea, coffee and cake. space2grow will support January's Music in the Vineyard.

The concerts are scheduled for the last Sunday of the month from January until April. Details of who's playing can be found on our [Music in the Vineyard](#) page.