



FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Report to the Annual Town Meeting of Electors

Thursday 22 March 2018

Council

Farnham Town Council has 18 elected councillors who represent nine wards and a population of around 40,000 people.

The political make-up of the Council is:

- 10 Conservative
- 6 Farnham Residents, and
- 1 Liberal Democrat
- 1 Vacancy (as at 22nd March 2018)

Farnham Town Council meets as a Full Council nine times a year and it is at these meetings that decisions are taken. Meetings are open to the public, and there is an opportunity for public questions on any matter.

The day-to-day work of the Council is undertaken through a number of working groups. These groups discuss the detail of projects and future plans. Recommendations of the working group meetings go to Full Council for final decision.

Farnham Town Council's working groups are:

- Strategy and Finance (which has the following sub-groups):
 - Infrastructure Planning Task Group
 - Human Resources Panel
 - Assets Task Group
 - Health and Wellbeing Task group
- Cemeteries and Appeals
- Community Enhancement
- Planning and Licensing Consultative Group (which has the following sub-group):
 - Trees and Hedges Strategy Task Group (jointly with Community Enhancement)
- Tourism and Events

This report sets out some of the areas of activity in 2017-18 and looks towards 2018-19.

*Councillors meet
as full Council
and on a range
of Working
Groups*

The Mayor of Farnham 2017/18

Full Council meetings are chaired by the Mayor of Farnham. The Mayor for 2017/18 is Councillor Mike Hodge. The Mayor represents the town at civic and ceremonial functions. During the mayoral year, the Mayor will attend over 300 community events. The Mayor chose to support two charities during his Mayoral year; these are the Woodlarks Centre, a care home and activity centre in Farnham and Brightwells Gostrey Community Centre.

Services

Farnham Town Council provides many services for its residents including managing allotments and cemeteries, enhancing the town and funding CCTV as well as running a year-long programme of events. During 2018/19, based on an average Band D property, each household will pay £62.62 to Farnham Town Council. This helps to fund services with the balance of the budget funded by income from services, events and sponsorship.

Farnham Town Council's services include:

- Allotments
- Annual Town Meeting of electors
- CCTV and community safety
- Christmas lights
- Civic events
- Cemeteries
- Community enhancement including:
- Farnham in Bloom
- Noticeboards
- Street furniture
- Farmers' Markets
- Graffiti removal
- Grants for community organisations
- Planning – statutory consultee
- Managing the South Street Trust
- Managing bookings for street banners above the highway
- Toilets
- Tourism and events
- Town twinning with Andernach in Germany and other friendships
- War memorials

*In 2018/19
residents living in
a Band D
property will pay
£1.20 a week to
Farnham Town
Council.*

A look back over 2017/18

Many essential public services are provided by Farnham Town Council but the council also organises, runs, enables and supports activities throughout the year to make Farnham a great place to live, work and do business. Farnham Town Council works with partners in other councils and public services as well as the town's excellent voluntary groups and active business community.

An award-winning Council

2017/18 was a successful year for Farnham Town Council with national recognition for its achievements.



For the third year running, Farnham was a finalist in the National Association of Local Councils' (NALC) Awards. Representing 10,000 councils nationally, NALC awarded 'runner up' status to Farnham Town Council in the 'Council of the Year' category.

Separately, for the first time in its history, Farnham received gold in Britain in Bloom and was Large Town joint category winner with Truro having won a Silver Gilt in 2014 and 2016.

Community enhancement

Farnham in Bloom

2017 was a great year for Farnham in Bloom which continues to go from strength to strength.

The campaign involves local people and community organisations working together throughout the whole year. The competition is about more than flowers with entries being judged on:

- horticultural achievement
- environmental responsibility, and
- community participation



Activities involving children and young people, retired people and local businesses as well as gardeners - both keen and novice - took place throughout 2017. Children's gardening workshops, the Secret Gardens competition, community clean-ups and a Greenhouse Open Day were among the highlights.



In 2017, Farnham in Bloom was crowned winner of the Large Town category in Britain in Bloom. In the South and South East in Bloom competition, for the seventh consecutive year, Farnham won Gold in the town centre category and gold in the Large Town category for the fifth year running. Farnham also beat off stiff competition from other Surrey towns to win again the County Award for Surrey plus a further seven awards recognising the huge community contribution.

Getting involved

Farnham in Bloom inspires people to come up with great ideas to get involved. **Bloomin' Kids** offers free gardening workshops for children during school holidays. **Bloomin' Litter** includes community litter picks and the year-round litter picking campaign where volunteers adopt an area to help keep Farnham litter free. We now have 55 people regularly carrying out small scale litter picks in their local community. **Bloomin' Arts** provides dance and collage competitions that explore a whole different angle of Farnham in Bloom.

A winter celebration

Rain failed to dampen the spirits of Farnham in Bloom supporters at the Winter Celebration. An amazing year was celebrated with Christmas music by Farnham Brass Band, singing of carols and mulled wine and mince pies.

Cemeteries

Farnham Town Council has a programme of works in place to ensure the ongoing maintenance and improvement of the town's cemeteries. This includes pathway repairs, memorial repairs and boundary improvements.

2017/18 was a successful year for Farnham Town Council with national recognition for its achievements.

The Garden of Reflection in West Street has undergone some changes. This is part of a significant extension, which is planned for 2018.

For the second year running, Badshot Lea cemetery won Silver Gilt in South and South East in Bloom, providing useful feedback on future improvements in 2018. West Street Cemetery will be assessed in 2018.

Work to determine the future of Hale Chapels has continued throughout the year in association with the Hale Chapels Trust. A recent application for Heritage Lottery funding was unsuccessful. Farnham Town Council is in discussion with the Lottery fund to see if another bid can be submitted. In the meantime, alternative options are being explored in case restoration is not possible.

Communication

We continue to use a variety of communication tools to reach a wide range of residents including councillors hosting an **information tent** at every event, and **coffee mornings** hosted by the Mayor for each ward.



Our **electronic newsletter** is distributed every 4-6 weeks and continues to be popular with around 1,250 people subscribing to receive it. If you would like to receive a copy, you can subscribe at www.farnham.gov.uk.

Social media is an important channel of communication. More people are communicating with us and commenting about our services on Facebook and Twitter. We welcome all suggestions to help us improve.

The majority of our **press releases** receive coverage in the local media. The reach of the news is extended by additional coverage on the radio and newspapers' associated social media pages and websites. All press releases are circulated to the area's borough and county councillors and residents' association representatives.

The **2018 Official Residents' Guide** was delivered to every home and business in Farnham. Packed full of useful information, it includes details about events, councillors' contact details and how to enjoy the best of living in Farnham.

The guide also includes information about the services provided by Farnham Town Council and how it spends its share of the council tax, as well as contact details for other local authorities and who does what.

Community events and presentations



The Town Council brings together community groups in civic and commemorative events such as Remembrance Sunday, Commonwealth Day and Armed Forces Day. The council also organised the Christmas Carol Service and Mayor-making which remain key civic traditions, alongside the historic Venison Dinner held in November each year at Farnham Castle.

The Services to Farnham Awards recognise the exceptional work done by individuals to support Farnham's community and foster community spirit. Sharing their skills and knowledge so that others can enjoy and benefit from what Farnham has to offer, helping people in difficulty and fundraising thousands of pounds are just some of the ways that the 11 recipients of this year's awards have made Farnham a better place. Each person was presented with a medal by the Mayor of Farnham to recognise their contribution.

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Tourism and events

Farnham is possibly the most 'festive' town in England as Farnham Town Council organised, run or supported no fewer than ten festivals in 2017.



Nearly 450 people took part in the first **Walking Festival** which was so successful that it has been expanded for 2018.

The community came together to share music, dance, games and food at the **Spring Festival** while choirs joined forces in the **Festival of Song**. **Dance in the Meadow** was a celebration of all the wonderful dance

that happens in Farnham and later in the year, people ate, drank and were merry in the **Food Festival** and the **Gin Festival**.

In June, Performers Together hosted the inaugural **Flash Festival**, bringing a month of performance supported by Farnham Town Council. August saw Farnham's family friendly Music Festival, Weyfest, at the Rural Life Centre in Tilford, whilst October was **craft month** and saw the town celebrate its craft heritage.



In December, Farnham Town Council again supported the delightful community-led **Christmas Tree Festival** in St Andrew's Church.

As part of the Christmas lights switch-on, Farnham Town Council continued its programme of extending festivities to surrounding villages by providing lights in Badshot Lea, Rowledge, Hale and Heath End.

By the end of March, the programme of events will also have included 14 Sundays of Music in the Meadow, 12 Farmers' Markets, three Music in the Vineyard winter concerts and a Picnic in the Park.

Farnham Town Council holds these events to bring people into the town, to give local voluntary groups a chance to raise awareness of their activities and to provide opportunities for local businesses to benefit too.

Supporting local causes

Farnham Town Council gave around £75,000 of funding to local good causes through its Community Fund with a further £10,000 from the South Street Fund. Projects ranged from painting workshops for carers to helping out-of-work lone parents back into employment.

A fund donation of £10,000 from Farnham Town Council helped community bus service hoppa reach its fundraising total of £30,000 to buy a new bus for its Farnham services. Now on the road, the new bus is vital to help hoppa keep up with demand from elderly, disabled and other passengers who rely on the service to make essential journeys and social visits.

Farnham Town Council awarded grants totalling more than £75,000 to local groups serving the community.

Community grants

During 2017/18, Farnham supported a wide range of local community groups. The recipients were:

40 Degreez	Opportunities
4th Farnham Scouts	Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice
Alder Valley Brass Band	Rowledge Cricket Club
Badshot Lea Infants school	Rowledge Handbell Ringers
Bishop's Meadow Trust	Rowledge Tennis Club
Blackwater Valley Partnership	Royal British Legion
Brightwells Gostrey Centre	Sandy Hill Bungalow
CAB	Stopgap Dance Company
Christmas Tree Festival	Support 19
Computing for All	Surrey Youth Focus
Creative Response	The Abbey School
Farnham Art and Design Education Group	The Dance Movement
Farnham Carnival	The Museum of Farnham
Farnham Competitive Music Festival	The Rural Life Centre
Farnham District Scouts	Vivaldi Singers
Farnham Maltings	Waverley hoppa Community
Farnham Music Festival	Transport
Farnham Pottery Trust	Waverley Singers
Farnham Town youth Football Club	William Cobbett Society
Hale Carnival	Woodlarks
New Ashgate Gallery	

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South Street Trust

Farnham Town Council acts as the Trustee for the Farnham South Street Trust also known as the Farnham School of Science and Art. The Trust awards grants from the income of an endowment set up by James Knight and John Knight in 1880 for 'art and allied subjects'. Initially, the income was from the rent of 17 South Street but the building was sold and the funds invested. The Trustees now distribute the interest on the invested funds. Recipients for 2017/18 include:

40 Degreez	Opportunities Community Project
Badshot Lea Infants School	Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice
Bloomin' Arts CIC	Potters Gate Primary School
Creative Response	Rural Life Centre
Farnham Art and Design education Group	St Andrew's Infants School
Farnham Heath End School	St Mary's Infant School
Farnham Maltings	St Polycarp's Primary School
Folly Hill Infants School	The Abbey School
Frensham Heights	The Dance Movement
Hale School	William Cobbett Primary
Highfield South Farnham	
New Ashgate Gallery	

Planning

The Planning and Licensing Consultative Group meets every fortnight and reviews every planning application in Farnham. In 2017/18 it considered 957 applications, endorsing 73% and raising objections or concerns on 257 where there was overdevelopment, they did not fit with the Neighbourhood Plan, were not consistent with relevant policies or affected residents' amenities. Concern has been expressed over the loss of trees and hedges which affect the character of an area, and over the increasing use of Certificates of Lawfulness to avoid formal planning applications.

Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan represents a vital achievement for the town.



The Neighbourhood Plan, which was based on local preference, knowledge and substantial public consultation about how land should be used and the type of development that should happen in Farnham was adopted by Waverley Borough Council.

Led by Cllr Carole Cockburn and the Infrastructure Planning Group over four years of sustained community involvement, this represents a vital achievement for the town in determining planning policies and identifying where housing growth should be located over the next fifteen years.

During the Neighbourhood Plan process Farnham Town Council:

- worked closely with residents, business and the borough council
- won a Judicial Review and costs after a legal battle with developers, and
- gained 88% support through a referendum to get the plan adopted.

Although the plan is now part of the borough plan and is used to determine planning applications for Farnham, an early partial review is taking place to identify potential sites for a further 450 homes allocated by Waverley Borough Council to distribute an increased housing quota in the Town Council area.

Buildings of local merit

An audit of buildings of local merit, which involved members of the public and local interest groups, was carried out to record local buildings of historic or architectural interest. The buildings included will be part of a formal listing held by Waverley Borough Council to ensure they are protected and conserved.

Health and wellbeing

Two health and wellbeing open days have been held to help residents find out about all the local services dedicated to health and the opportunities available to help people improve their fitness, health and wellbeing. Farnham Town Council teamed up with Farnham Hospital, health partners and community groups to make sure the days appealed to all.

Finances

Setting the council tax

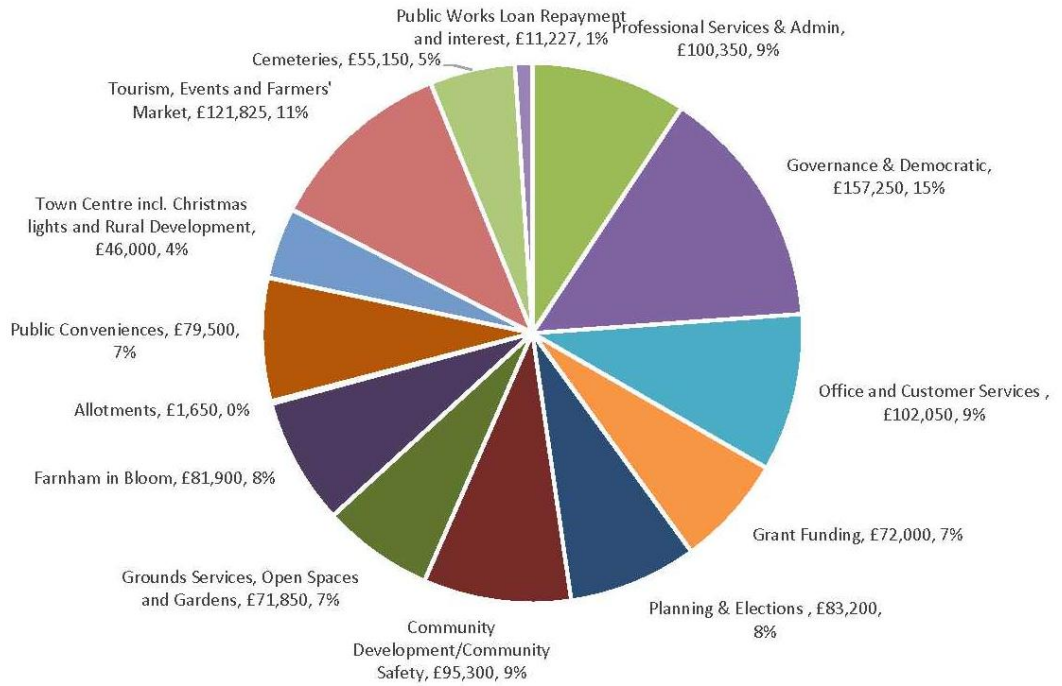
The Town Council's share of the council tax bill for 2018/19 (also known as the precept) was set in January. Farnham Town Council kept the increase to a minimum (3p per week), taking into account the statutory and discretionary services it provides and the need to complement those provided by the borough council and county council.

*The Town
Council
precept for
2018/19 is
£1,064,987*

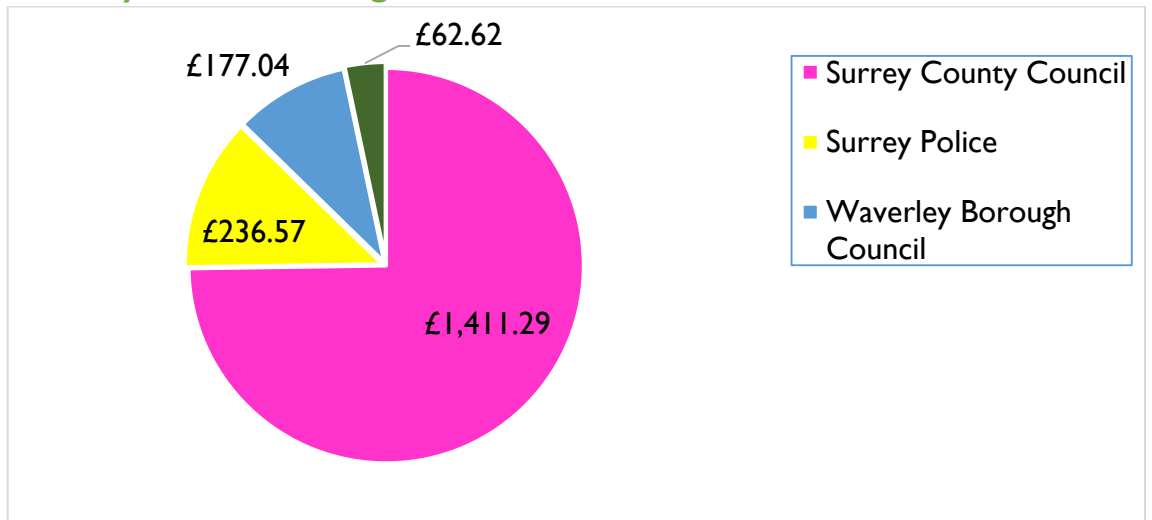
FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL PRECEPT 2018/19

Service Area	Estimated 2018/19 Expenditure			Estimated 2017/18 Expenditure		
	Gross Expenditure	Income	Net Budget	Gross Expenditure	Income	Net Budget
Professional Services & Admin	£100,350	£0	£100,350	£99,750	£0	£99,750
Governance & Democratic	£157,250	£0	£157,250	£167,500	£2,000	£165,500
Office and Customer Services	£102,050	£0	£102,050	£91,050	£500	£90,550
Grant Funding	£72,000	£0	£72,000	£70,000	£0	£70,000
Planning & Elections	£83,200	£0	£83,200	£73,700	£0	£73,700
Community Development/ Community Safety	£100,800	£5,500	£95,300	£103,800	£5,500	£98,300
Grounds Services, Open Spaces and Gardens	£71,850	£0	£71,850	£58,850	£10,000	£48,850
Farnham in Bloom	£105,900	£24,000	£81,900	£100,150	£23,000	£77,150
Allotments	£18,150	£16,500	£1,650	£15,850	£16,500	-£650
Public Conveniences	£79,500	£0	£79,500	£87,000	£0	£87,000
Town Centre incl. Christmas lights and Rural Development	£53,000	£7,000	£46,000	£53,000	£6,000	£47,000
Tourism, Events and Farmers' Market	£189,325	£67,500	£121,825	£186,576	£56,001	£130,575
Cemeteries	£126,850	£71,700	£55,150	£123,350	£71,700	£51,650
Public Works Loan Repayment and interest	£18,227	£7,000	£11,227	£18,227	£5,000	£13,227
TOTAL	£1,278,452	£199,200	£1,079,252	£1,248,803	£196,201	£1,052,602
Less Government Local Parish Council Tax Support Funding			-£14,265			-£16,783
PRECEPT			£1,064,987			£1,035,819

Estimated 2018/19 Net Expenditure



Where your council tax goes 2018/19



Farnham Town Council Council will sign off its accounts for 2017/18 at its June meeting for submission to its external auditor PKF Littlejohn LLP. Email sba@pkf-littlejohn.com.

The public has a right to inspect the Council's annual governance and accountability return and supporting records. Electors also have a right to inspect the accounts and contact the external auditor if there are any concerns.

The dates for the period of this exercise of public rights 2017/18 are 15 June 2018 to 27 July 2018.

Feedback

If you have any comments or questions, please do get in touch.

Farnham Town Council

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Mayor of Farnham 2017/18 - Councillor Mike Hodge

Deputy Mayor of Farnham 2017/18 - Councillor David Attfield

Leader of the Council - Councillor Carole Cockburn

Town Clerk - Iain Lynch

Town Crier - Jonathan Jones

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