

Farnham in Bloom

*Large
Town*

South and South East
in Bloom submission

2020



Farnham
Town Council



Farnham
In Bloom

Welcome to Farnham

In February when we welcomed our Farnham in Bloom community to our Bloomin' Big Meet, little did we know what 2020, our 30th year, had in store for us!



Mayor of Farnham and her consort

I am delighted that South and South East in Bloom continues and that Farnham can once again enter albeit in a virtual way, this prestigious competition.

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic we had to cancel many of our events including our launch, Bloomin' Kids workshops, and Greenhouse Open day and many more. To keep residents busy during the lockdown period we have run virtual competitions such as creating a Lego Garden, making a scarecrow, VE day arts and crafts competition and encouraging people to enter our Secret Gardens competition.

We are thankful to our sponsors during this difficult time for businesses. Their support has made it possible for us to provide flowers and plants around the town which have brought joy to everyone. As Farnham emerges from lockdown, shoppers and residents can enjoy the splashes of colour from the 200 hanging baskets and planters displayed around Farnham and the surrounding villages.

Farnham Town Council has also provided much needed support and help to residents during this time, setting up a helpline, introducing a support fund for families who are in financial difficulties, opening a Share community shop where residents can take home donated items such as puzzles and games and enhancing the pavement widening scheme in Farnham to support local shops and businesses with social distancing by planting up 40 new planters.

We are sorry we cannot welcome you in person this year but we hope you enjoy our submission and get a sense of what we have been to doing to make Farnham bloom.

Councillor Pat Evans
Mayor of Farnham

About Farnham In Bloom



Badshot Lea village infant school

Farnham in Bloom is about making Farnham an attractive place to live and work in or to visit: filling it with flowers and keeping the town and surrounding villages looking their best and encouraging people to work together. Farnham in Bloom is part of the wider Community Enhancement work for the Town with a particular focus in the summer months on:

- A range of floral displays throughout the town and local villages including hanging baskets, troughs and planters with village flowers being watered and maintained by residents, community organisations and local businesses.
- A school hanging basket competition as well as fun, engaging competitions to find the tallest sunflower, anti-litter poster, largest pumpkin, best flower grown in a boot and the most impressive scarecrow.
- A **Secret Garden** competition for businesses, residents and schools which includes categories for the best:

- Courtyard
- Hanging basket or container
- Front, back or small garden
- Large garden
- Public house, hotel or business premises
- Shop front
- Wildlife garden
- School garden
- Vegetable plot
- and The Madge Green Community Gardening Project Award

Farnham in Bloom at a glance

Since its early beginnings 30 years ago, Farnham in Bloom has relied on voluntary commitment, local sponsorship (financial and in-kind) and support of local authorities and local businesses.

Being part of this competition has given a focus to the contribution made by all of Farnham's distinct communities in both the Town Centre and Large Town categories.

The charts below set out how this contribution has grown over the years, to deliver high standards and ultimately bring pleasure to Farnham's residents, businesses and visitors.

Farnham in Bloom activity for 2020 includes:

- An amended calendar of activities so the community could still participate in Farnham in Bloom despite Coronavirus restrictions.
- All hanging baskets have been planted by Farnham Town Council and local schools in peat free compost.
- A new sponsorship brochure offering specific sponsorship packages and more options has seen sponsorship increasing in the last few years.
- An increased social media presence in 2020 documenting all aspects of Farnham in Bloom.



RHS Britain in Bloom National Winners 2019

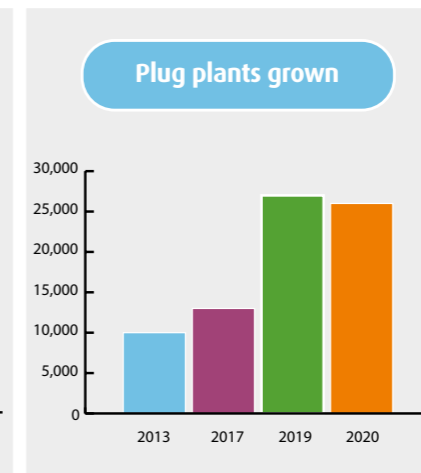
- Providing hanging baskets and troughs for a neighbouring Parish Council.
- Extension of the Council's wildflower area improving West Street, Badshot Lea and Green Lane Cemeteries and Gostey Meadow.
- Continuing our 'Bee Friendly' project as part of 'Help Our Pollinators' and 'Wild About Gardens' campaigns.



Plug plants ready to be grown on



Summer flowers at Hickleys Corner





30 Years of Farnham in Bloom



From its inception, Farnham in Bloom was managed by a local volunteer group for 15 years. In 2005, the group retired and the Farnham in Bloom baton was passed to Farnham Town Council.

2020 marks the 15th year that Farnham in Bloom has been led by Farnham Town Council, the Farnham in Bloom Community Group and a team of volunteers. Farnham Town Council entered Farnham town centre into South and South East in Bloom for the first time in 2008 and since then has won the following awards for the Town centre and Large Town centre categories:

- Gold in the S&SEiB Town Centre category nine times
- Gold in the S&SEiB Large Town category eight times
- The S&SEiB Large Town regional category five years in a row

- The S&SEiB Chairman's Award for Post 19 and Bishop's Meadow
- Gold in the RHS Britain in Bloom Awards and Joint Category Winner in 2017, Gold in the RHS Britain in Bloom Awards and Category winner in 2019.

Farnham in Bloom grows year on year and involves so many dedicated local people and community organisations that help make the initiative what it is today.

We continue the great work of the original volunteers, bringing people together to make Farnham and its surrounding villages even better places to live, work and visit.

"After we stood down, I was delighted that the enthusiasm for Farnham in Bloom not only lives on, but grows, year on year, with so many local individuals and businesses showing their support."

Madge Green – Co-founder of Farnham in Bloom who sadly passed away in 2017.



Madge Green and her volunteers



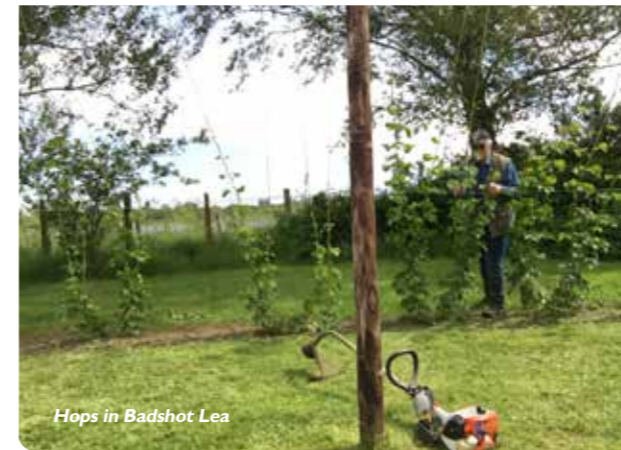
Horticulture

In late 2019, Farnham Town Council took over the management and ownership of more open spaces including Halifax Garden and Batting's Garden. A programme of works started in the winter.

Despite the lockdown, all members of the outside work force, were retained and focused their time on maintaining the green spaces in the town centre and the surrounding villages. Twenty-six thousand plug plants for the hanging baskets, troughs and planters were nurtured in the greenhouse. Varieties such as Coleus chocolate cherry, Impatiens violet, Petchoa Sunray Pink, Calla Lilies and Salvia Mystic Spires have helped lift people's spirits during a difficult time.



Halifax Garden, Rowledge



Hops in Badshot Lea



Laying wildflower seed in Gostrey Meadow

At Batting's Garden, our outside workforce team cleared old shrubs and we set up a working party to support the planting phase. This project had to be put on hold due to the coronavirus outbreak.

Badshot Lea Bloomers community group were very active in the autumn and winter planting spring bulbs which were donated by Farnham in Bloom. A few members who were not isolating have continued to weed, plant summer planters, maintain the hop garden and support the village school garden.

Three large sections of wildflower areas have been re-sown this year. These areas provide an excellent corridor for wildlife from the surrounding green spaces. Many species such as bees and butterflies have thrived in these spaces.

Environment

All the normal horticulture practices have been maintained including using peat free compost and slow-release fertilizer and in all the plant containers and baskets.



Commemorative tree planting at the Memorial Hall

A large new Iveco van has been purchased to complement our existing vehicles and is fuelled by CNG (Compressed Natural Gas) instead of diesel. We have also introduced a composting Eco toilet at the greenhouses.

In the winter, five Japanese flowering cherry trees were planted at the Memorial Hall to commemorate the lives of five servicemen from Farnham who died over 100 years ago in World War I.



Control of graffiti and litter has been monitored closely. Before lockdown, we held the annual allotment lecture, and this was very well-attended. Dr Martin Angel of the Farnham Biodiversity Group shared insights into how plot holders can encourage wildlife.

During the lockdown period, the allotments provided a welcome distraction for many plot holders. The sense of community was strengthened with activities such as a scarecrow competition and a socially distanced plant and seed swap.



New planters for pavement widening scheme

To support businesses and to enable shoppers to social distance, as lockdown restrictions eased Farnham was part of a pavement widening scheme. Farnham Town Council alongside Surrey County Council provided sixty extra planters in the town. These were planted up with summer flowers and have softened the look of the temporary barriers which have been installed around the town centre.

Community Participation

Lockdown restrictions provided an opportunity to introduce new competitions and for more people to get involved in Farnham in Bloom.

A new Bloomin' Kids Lego competition was very successful and attracted nearly 50 entries. The annual Secret Garden competition also went virtual with 45 people entering. Participants sent in photos of their gardens for judging.

A video was created and a Zoom session was held to show off the vast array of plants in the greenhouse. Volunteers who would normally have helped in the greenhouse were invited to wander around at a safe social distance. 2020 marked Farnham in Bloom's 30th anniversary.

Our aim was to engage with teenagers and young people so we began the year by inviting secondary school representatives to our Big Meet so they could hear from other community groups and learn what Farnham in Bloom could offer young people. Many schools were interested in taking part in workshops at the greenhouses, but these were put on hold when schools closed.

Eleven local schools took part in the hanging baskets competition. Instructions and materials were delivered to schools so they could make up and grow on their plants. The competition involved staff and keyworker children.



Dropping off materials to make up hanging baskets

Instagram and Twitter accounts were set up at the start of lockdown. We participate in a weekly 'In Bloom hour' on Twitter to engage and share best practice.

Sponsor benefits were modified so that businesses could promote their business through opportunities such as judging competitions and by being tagged in social media posts.



@farnhaminbloom Instagram account

Thank you for supporting Farnham in Bloom 2020

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Thank you to our individual sponsors of Farnham in Bloom

Barry and Sandra Hartop
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In loving memory of

Gill Ely
 Madge Green

Marcia James
 Kath Taylor

RHS Britain in Bloom Gold winner and category winner in 2019 • www.farnham.gov.uk