

Farnham in Bloom

*Town
Centre*

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

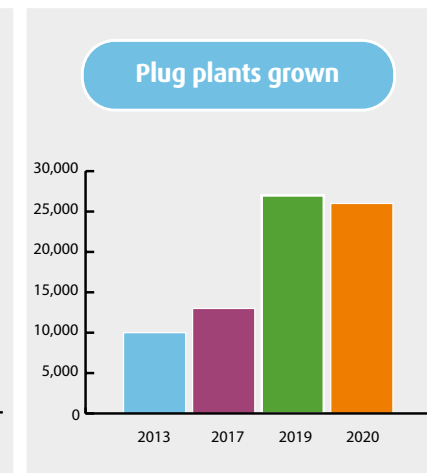
- Providing hanging baskets and troughs for a neighbouring Parish Council.
- Extension of the Council's wildflower area improving West Street, Badshot Lea and Green Lane Cemeteries and Gostey Meadow.
- Continuing our 'Bee Friendly' project as part of 'Help Our Pollinators' and 'Wild About Gardens' campaigns.



Plug plants ready to be grown on



Summer flowers at Hickleys Corner





30 year carpet bed



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 several new open spaces. Four are in the town centre - Gostrey Meadow, Evelyn Borelli Garden, Riverside Home Park and the Haren Garden.

Fifty donated native trees were planted by volunteers in West Street Cemetery in the early spring to add to the biodiversity of the cemetery. The large wildflower area in the central part of this cemetery has been extended to provide an excellent corridor for wildlife from the surrounding green spaces including Bishop's Meadow.

Many species, including bees and butterflies have thrived in this space. The grass around the graves has been well maintained to ensure visitor safety.



Haren Garden



Spring flowers in Gostrey Meadow

The areas had previously been looked after by the borough council's contractors. We took the opportunity to take a fresh look at the gardens and to put in place improved standards of environmental and horticultural practice.

A programme of works started in the winter to ensure that visible improvements were achieved by the spring. At Gostrey Meadow, our outside workforce team put in a new planting scheme including some great shrubs and plenty of colour.

Fourteen-thousand spring bulbs were planted around the town for residents and visitors to enjoy.



Tree planting at West Street Cemetery

Despite the lockdown, all members of the outside workforce were retained.

They focused their time on maintaining the green spaces, cemeteries and nurturing the 26,000 plug plants for the town centre hanging baskets, troughs and planters. Social distancing measures were adhered to and PPE was worn when necessary.

Environment

We have continued to maintain our normal horticulture practices which include using peat free compost and slow-release fertiliser in all the plant containers and baskets.



Low emissions vans

A large new Iveco van has been purchased to complement our existing fleet of vehicles. It is fuelled by CNG (Compressed Natural Gas) instead of diesel and is more environmentally friendly, quieter and more efficient.



Stone planter in Castle Street



Planters to support social distancing

To support businesses and to enable shoppers to maintain social distance as lockdown restrictions eased, Farnham was part of a pavement widening scheme. To soften the look of the scheme, Farnham Town Council alongside Surrey County Council provided 40 extra planters in the town. These were planted up with summer flowers.

Normally Waitrose use planters to enhance their outdoor seating area but this year they have been used to support social distancing queuing outside the store.

Plants have been cleared from the riverbank to allow residents and visitors to enjoy walking and cycling alongside the town centre stretch of the River Wey. So that visitors can enjoy the river in Gostrey Meadow, plants have been cleared to open up the water's edge and a band of wildflowers have been planted to encourage birds, bees and insects. Plans had been drawn up to redevelop the old bowling green and club house site. The project includes redevelopment of the play area and the bowling green to provide a community café. These plans have had to be put on hold until next year.

Community Participation

The Coronavirus pandemic meant we had to rethink how we ran our community events so that people could still get involved

We introduced a new Bloomin' Kids Lego competition which was very successful and attracted nearly 50 entries. The annual Secret Garden Competition went virtual and saw 45 participants sending 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 one by one at a safe social distance.



Lego competition

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.



St Andrew's Infant School



New pond dipping platform at space2grow

The community group space2grow had to halt activities and events during lockdown but with a few core volunteers and social distancing measures in place, their garden has thrived and is a haven for wildlife including 22 species of moths found in a recent survey. Larger projects such as decking around a pond and the building of a pizza oven were put on hold.

Instagram and Twitter accounts were set up at the start of lockdown to keep residents up to date with the progress of the plants and flowers. 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.

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