

Farnham Bee Trail



Discover where our
town is buzzing!



In partnership with



Farnham
Town Council





Introduction

Discover Farnham's Bees

Farnham's Bee Trail is a free self-guided walk, suitable for groups, individuals and families, to help local people discover, enjoy and champion local bees.

By taking part you'll get to know some of these fascinating pollinators and their habitats, and meet them face-to-face! All the while enjoying the benefits of outdoor exercise and connecting with nature.

We've twinned Farnham's Bee Hotspots with community spaces, so you can enjoy the hubs, history, and hospitality the town centre has to offer while walking the bee trail during the spring and summer.



Honey bee by Sarah Womersley

How to take part

Farnham's Bee Trail is best walked between April and late September. You're most likely to see bees on sunny days, as they find it hard to fly in bad weather.

Now you have your Farnham Bee Trail booklet, check out the map on page 4 and decide which Bee Hotspots you'd like to visit and when.

Each time you visit a Bee Hotspot keep your eyes peeled for our buzzy friends, and our Bee Trail posts complete with rubbing plates. You can mark off each hotspot you go to in the centrefold of the booklet.

If you hand in your completed centrefold to the Farnham Town Council offices by the end of September, you'll be entered into the yearly **Bee Trail prize draw.**

Many of the locations are accessible for pushchairs and wheelchairs users, however please note some have uneven surfaces or steps. Please check in advance.

*Front cover: Common carder bee by Sarah Womersley.
Back cover: Ivy mining bee by Alex Potts.*



Tips for spotting bees



Flowers are the best place to hunt for bees, as this is where they drink nectar and collect pollen to feed their larvae.

Feeding bees are not defensive so you are **EXTREMELY** unlikely to be stung while bee spotting (unless you happen to sit or kneel on one!). You can get close to these amazing insects without worry.

Move slowly and smoothly so as not to startle a feeding bee. They have good eyesight so they will know you are there – you just have to appear unthreatening! Take your time. If a bee flies off, it will often return.

Bee, wasp or fly? With around 9,000 wasp species and 7,000 fly species in the UK, you are likely to encounter these similar insects as you hunt for bees. Here are hints to tell them apart: Flies have a sucker-like mouth part and eyes which cover most of their head. Bees, in contrast, have a pointed proboscis (tongue) and slimmer eyes on the sides of their heads. Wasps look almost completely bald compared to bees, which are generally much hairier. Social wasps are bright yellow, and wasps never collect pollen like bees do.



Ashy mining bee by Sarah Womersley

To properly identify a bee, make sure you get a good look at it from different angles. It can help to take a video (slow motion is best). Good websites to help with bee ID are the Bumblebee Conservation Trust and the Bees, Wasps and Ants Recording Society. Some smartphone apps can also help.

If you find a grounded bumblebee that might get trodden on, you can help by offering it a stick to climb onto, and placing it on a nearby flower. It will likely fly off when it has recovered sufficiently, as bumblebees need a lot of rest—they just don't always do it in a particularly safe place!



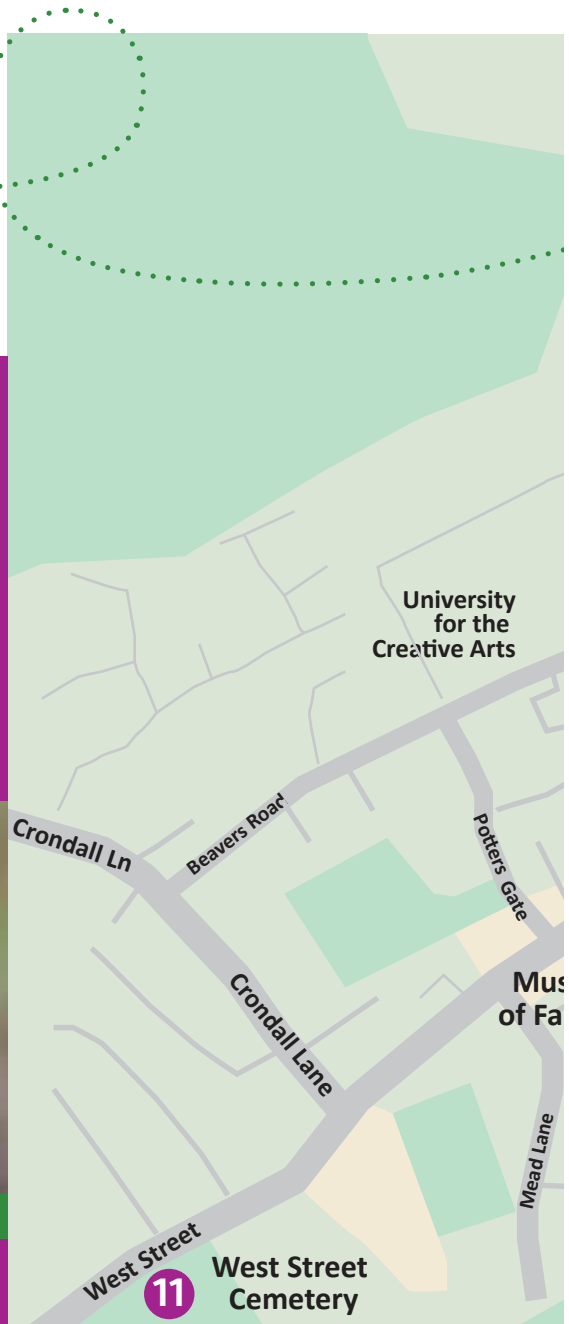
Map of Bee Hotspots

Remember To Stay Safe

Please take care on roads and uneven ground, and always supervise children around water bodies, unknown dogs, bees, wasps, brambles and nettles!



Female hairy footed flower bee by Alex Potts







Bees you might see



Buff-tailed bumblebee by Sarah Womersley

Bumblebees

Large and furry with a distinctive low buzz, these social bees nest in small colonies with workers and a queen. Workers collect pollen to feed their larvae by wetting it down with nectar and packing it onto rounded 'pollen baskets' on their hind legs. There are 24 species of bumblebee in the UK.

Buff-tailed bumblebee (*Bombus terrestris*)

Large, with a yellow band near the head and another below the wings. Tail-tip hairs range from white to brown. Our biggest and most common bumblebee, they can be seen flying almost all year round if the day is sunny.



Common carder bee by Sarah Womersley

Common carder bee (*Bombus pascorum*)

Brown all over, but varying from fawn to creamy-grey brown, with hints of ginger and russet.

They have long tongues compared to many other bees for reaching into tubular flowers. Often seen flying from April into October.



Honey bee by Sarah Womersley

Honey bees

Streamlined with a fawn-coloured thorax, striped abdomen, and rounded, packed pollen baskets like bumblebees. Some wild colonies exist, but most honey bees live in a hive, cared for by a beekeeper. There is only one species of honeybee in the UK, the European honey bee (*Apis mellifera*)



Male Hairy- footed flower bee by Alex Potts



Wool carder bee by Alex Potts



Ivy mining bee by Alex Potts

Solitary bees

With nearly 250 species in the UK, these bees vary hugely in looks and behaviour. After mating, females create a nest with a few eggs, which emerge as adult bees the following spring. Unlike social bees, solitary bees don't wet down and tightly pack the pollen they collect, but carry it dry on their hairy legs or abdomen, which allows it to dust over the flowers they visit, and makes them very efficient pollinators.

Hairy-footed flower bee

(*Anthophora plumipes*)

A bee that flies March-May. Rounded and hairy, males are fawn-coloured with hairy feet, females are jet black with ginger hind legs. They have a zippy flight pattern with a whining buzz, and often forage with their tongues hanging out!

Wool carder bee (*Anthidium manicatum*)

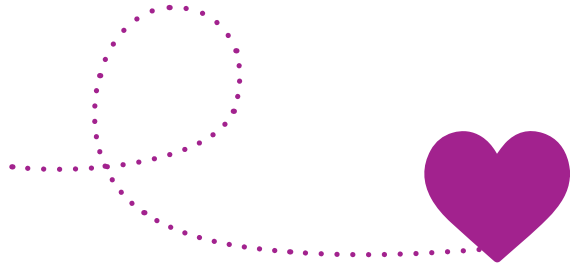
A dark and less hairy bee with yellow faces and yellow markings up the sides of the abdomen. Females collect the tiny hairs on plant leaves and stems, roll them into woolly balls, and line their nests with them. Peak flying is in June/July.

Ivy mining bee (*Colletes hederae*)

Similar to honey bees, but finer and fancier in appearance. Foxy thorax and smartly striped tail-end tapering to a point. Mostly feeds on ivy and are on the wing from August.



Plants Bees Love



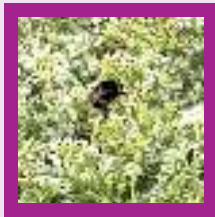
Lavender



Clover



Marjoram



Horse chestnut



Dandelion



Lamb's ears



Echinops



Bramble



Ivy



Green alkanet



Hawthorn



Wisteria





Mark off the Bee Hotspots
you visit using the rubbing
plates at each location.

1

Gostrey Meadow



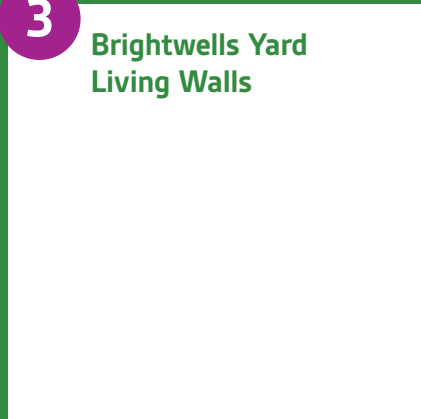
2

Victoria Garden



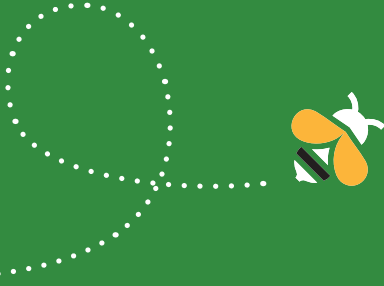
3

Brightwells Yard
Living Walls





Bee Hotspots



4

Farnham Park

5

Farnham Castle

6

Long Garden Walk



7

Farnham Maltings
Garden



8

St Andrew's
Churchyard

9

Farnham Library



10

Museum of Farnham

Hand this centrefold into the Farnham Town Council offices, South Street, Farnham, GU9 7RN, by September 30th and be entered into our Bee Trail prize draw. You could win books, gardening equipment, or a beekeeping experience!

11

West Street Cemetery

12

Bishop's Meadow



Hotspot 1

Gostrey Meadow



This park boasts bedding schemes, a wild area, the FARNHAM bee hotel, mature trees, and riverside habitat.

Make sure to check for mason bees in the bee hotel and examine the magnificent cerise horse chestnut for buff-tailed bumblebees in May.

Tip: You will find the rubbing post near the 'Farnham' bee hotel sign.



Hotspot 2

Victoria Garden

A quiet sanctuary for people and pollinators alike, in the middle of the bustling town and created from the old Farnham Swimming Baths in 1997.

There are different sections with alliums, lavender, and irises to name a few.

Close by is the Spire Café for a drink and a cake. Opening times vary.





Hotspot 3

Brightwells Yard Living Walls



If you're going to see a film at Reel Cinema, take a walk around the building first...and look up!

Bees are often visible feeding on flowering plants on the living walls covering the cinema, proof that in urban environments, positive action can be taken to help pollinators.

Tip: You find the rubbing post near the cinema.



Hotspot 4

Farnham Park

This historic deer park has a long avenue of lime trees, which buzz with bees on warm July evenings and smell divine! In the plentiful hay meadow habitat, you'll discover yellow rattle – 'the meadow maker' – which parasites and weakens grasses, allowing wildflowers to flourish. There's miles of walking, the playground is top notch, plus there's Birdie's café for refreshments.

Tip: You will find the rubbing post at the Lower Entrance, opposite Bear Lane.





Hotspot 5

Farnham Castle



Farnham's most iconic landmark is surrounded by a steep, historic ditch - an undisturbed haven for wildlife. The keep has a low-grow meadow, the Bishop's steps run next to a wild area, and in May the wisteria in the Bishop's Palace courtyard will be buzzing .

Up near the top of the town, there are great views of Farnham from the castle. Opening times vary.

Tip: You will find the rubbing post at the Castle end of the lime tree avenue.



Hotspot 6

Long Garden Walk

This residents' border is a utopia for solitary bees. Five star perennial planting ensures reliable habitat for four-banded flower bees and the delightful wool carder bee.

A pint in the Hop Blossom afterwards will be needed after watching these bees buzzing about so industriously!





Hotspot 7

Farnham Maltings Garden



A tiny garden in a delightful spot down by the river which is planted with perennials for all seasons. Look out for echinops – bumblebees love these blue globe-shaped flowers.

There's plenty to do at Farnham Maltings, which has markets, cafes, crafts, theatre and films, plus many activities for children and families.



Hotspot 8

St Andrew's Churchyard

The undisturbed nature of old churchyards means more fragile specimens can be found nestling in their grounds. If you visit this historic Grade 1 listed church (where William Cobbett is buried) in June, you'll see pyramidal orchids in the long grasses around the building.

In September, the churchyard is buzzing with ivy mining bees visiting... you guessed it: ivy flowers!





Hotspot 9

Farnham Library



The Library Gardens are being managed for nature by Farnham Town Council. This involves a nature-friendly mowing regime, leaving areas unmown for wildlife to flourish. The lack of disturbance has meant that there is a wealth of solitary bees and bumblebees feeding on the many wild flowers and large shrubs. Look out for hairy-footed flower bees on the blue flowers of green alkanet, and bumblebees on the bramble which has been left to flower at the back of the garden. The Library organises many events for adults and children, including reading groups, story time and the Summer Reading Challenge. Opening times vary.



Hotspot 10

Museum of Farnham

A hidden gem of a garden at the town museum, with varied planting schemes exploring plant dyes, Roman and Tudor gardening, Digging for Victory, hop gardens, monastic gardens, orchards and nuttries.

Inside there are excellent exhibits about local history. Opening times vary.





Hotspot 11

West Street Cemetery



A little walk out of town you'll find this large cemetery. There are wild areas, nature sculptures, and a beautifully planted Garden of Reflection.

Sometimes, comfort can be found observing a little bee going about its business, proof that the world will keep turning, even in the darkest of times.

Tip: You will find the rubbing post near the Garden of Reflection.



Hotspot 12

Bishop's Meadow

A Site of Nature Conservation Importance, this flood meadow habitat was saved from development by residents of Farnham, including the late Sir Ray Tindle. It contains riverside plants, an orchard, hedgerows and wildflowers. Look out for red-tailed bumblebees which visit the site in June/July. These bees sadly suffered a deep nationwide decline in 2024.

Tip: You will find the rubbing post at the Crosby Gate entrance





Want to know more?

Join Hive Helpers for **FREE** guided Bee Safaris May-September, meeting at the Gostrey Meadow Bandstand.

Ask your bee questions, catch some specimens (and release them, of course!), and find out more about how to ID different species. Participants will receive a pollinator fact sheet and you can mark off the Bee Trail Hotspots that we visit.

Please wear comfortable walking shoes and bring drinking water and sunscreen on hot days.

Email: office@hivehelpers.co.uk for further details.



Red-tailed bumblebee by Sarah Womersley



Useful websites:



Find out about pollinator planting with **Hive Helpers'** Pollinator Patch.



Identify bumblebees with **Bumblebee Conservation Trust's Species Guide**.



Learn about solitary bees with *Bees, Ants and Wasps Recording Society's Beginners Bees, Wasps and Ants*.



Get involved with honeybees with **Farnham Beekeepers Association's** *Becoming a Beekeeper*.

Book recommendations:

The Wild Bee Handbook by Sarah Wyndham-Lewis. A light read for beginners wishing to learn more about bees and Bee - friendly gardening.

Field Guide to the Bees of Great Britain and Ireland by Steven Falk. A comprehensive guide for identifying bee species.

The Hive Helpers project is based at Farnham Community Farm and runs to benefit the local community, with all profits going back into the community too! We raise awareness of pollinators through beekeeping and nature conservation activities.



www.hivehelpers.co.uk

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Hive Helpers mission is to:



INSPIRE
care for
pollinators



IMPACT
positively on
local habitats



IMPROVE
mental & physical
wellbeing

In partnership with



Farnham
Town Council

