



Farnham Town Council Annual Report

Throughout 2024/25, Farnham Town Council delivered on its promise to improve its support for younger people. £20,000 was awarded in grants to help organisations put on free school holiday activities. An extra £90,000 was invested in research, providing grants to help organisations put on free school holiday activities and strengthening the outreach work that already exists for younger people.

The Council remains committed to working towards carbon neutrality and helping others to reduce their carbon footprint. As well as focusing on its strategic objectives, Farnham Town Council has continued to deliver its core services with the day-to-day management carried out by 17 full time equivalent members of staff. The team is led by the Town Clerk and decisions about the operation of the council are made by elected councillors.

During 2024/25, Farnham Town Council managed four cemeteries, eight allotment sites organised a programme of community events and improved the town's street scene and open spaces. The Council considered and gave its views on around 800

planning applications and hosted several civic events.

Farnham Town Council continues to strive to be an effective and influential voice for Farnham. This is a role that will take on increasing significance throughout the project to transform the movement of traffic in the town centre and when Surrey and Waverley councils are abolished in favour of a new unitary authority.

Through careful management and the loyal support of an army of volunteers, Farnham Town Council manages to keep its share of the council tax low and ensure Farnham continues to be a desirable place to live, work and visit.

April



- Children ranging in age from 2 to 14 rolled up their sleeves and got their hands dirty

as they learnt how to plant, water, weed and care for plants at an **Easter Bloomin' Kids' workshop**.

- A piece of art created by **Farnham's first World Craft Town** artist in residence went on show at The Crafts Study Centre. 'Things We Can Know' was made by glass artist Fiona Byrne as a permanent record of her residency in Farnham.

May



- **Farnham Walking Festival** returned with a programme of 40 free walks celebrating the best of Farnham's great outdoors.



- The invaluable contributions of 11 exemplary individuals were honoured at the annual **Services to Farnham Awards**. The recipients of the awards spent countless hours supporting many important facilities and services including care of the elderly, people with disabilities, activities of all kinds and for all ages, protecting the environment and caring for people's well-being.



- The names of a couple who founded a popular local visitor attraction were added to Farnham's wall of notable names. The late Madge Jackson MBE and Henry Jackson MBE founded the Old Kiln Agricultural Museum which has since been renamed the Rural Life Living Museum.

- Two prominent trees which had to be felled after becoming diseased were given a new lease of life by chainsaw artist **Michael Jones** who transformed the two stumps into beautiful pieces of public art.

- **Farnham's Sustainability Festival** was all about trying something new to benefit nature and the environment. Around 40 local businesses were hand-picked to show visitors ideas for leading a healthier, greener and more sustainable life.

Some of the activities that took place during the year include:

2024 - 2025

June



● Garden enthusiasts and nature lovers were called upon to enter **Farnham's Secret Gardens** competition. The competition included several new categories such as the Best Bee Friendly Border, Best Wildlife photo and Best Shop Window display.

● Farnham came together to commemorate the **80th anniversary of D-Day**. A series of tributes signalled the community's respect and gratitude for the sacrifices made by so many during World War II and the role played by local people.



● Farnham proudly honoured members of the armed forces with a special **flag-raising ceremony** hosted by the Mayor of Farnham and attended by local school children and dignitaries.

● **Paddy Blagden CBE**, a former Farnham resident who was described as 'the most important figure in humanitarian mine clearance since its inception' was honoured on the town's wall of Notable Names.



July



● People enjoyed the perfect end to the town's carnival weekend at **Proms & Pop** in the Park with Dua Live providing a tribute to pop sensation Dua Lipa.

● A new Green Flag was awarded for **Hale Cemetery** with the Council also retaining Green Flags for Badshot Lea and West Street Cemeteries for the second year running and Gostrey Meadow for the fourth consecutive year.



August



● A consultation was launched inviting the public to say what equipment they would like to see in the new **playground at Gostrey Meadow**.

September



● Members of the Farnham community and beyond came together to witness the Mayor of Farnham, Councillor Brodie Mauluka and councillors reaffirm their intent to serve the town and its people at the annual **Civic Service**.

September



● **Farnham Food & Drink Festival** served up a feast of culinary delights for food lovers and families alike. Attractions included a food theatre, drinks demonstration stage, infamous chilli eating competition, and over 100 stalls showcasing a delicious array of food and drink.

● Community groups, charities, and non-profit organisations wanting to make a positive impact in Farnham were invited to apply for **community grants of up to £2,500**. Applications were also invited for grants earmarked for educational projects and initiatives related to the arts.



● Farnham was awash with colour when 120 ladies, dressed to the nines in purple dresses and iconic red hats descended upon the town for a day of shopping, dining, and celebration. **The Red Hat Bees** of Bardwell from Suffolk promote, support and encourage women in pursuit of fun, friendship, freedom, fulfilment and fitness.





October



● October was **Craft Month** with 31 days of workshops, craft activities, exhibitions, craft fairs and trails, many of which were free.

● Twenty-five years of creating positive change for the Hale and Sandy Hill communities was marked by a visit from **Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Edinburgh** GCVO.



● A new **£20,000 grant pot** was launched to help fund free school holiday activities for younger people of all ages, especially those that may be financially disadvantaged.



October



● Farnham flourished in the annual **South & South East in Bloom competition**, securing multiple top awards across various categories. The achievements are a testament to the hard work and dedication of all those who make up the Farnham in Bloom team and who volunteer to ensure the town is a vibrant and beautiful place to live and visit.



● Two special awards ceremonies were held to recognise and thank the army of **volunteers** behind the town's award-winning performance at South & South East in Bloom.



● The winners of the **2024 Britain in Bloom UK Finals** competition were announced with Farnham in Bloom winning Gold and best in category for its entry into the Town Centres and City Centres award.

October



● Farnham was aglow with light and creativity when the town celebrated its first-ever **Lantern Festival**, marking the grand finale of October Craft Month.

November



● Farnham's annual **Remembrance Parade** and Service offered the community a moment to unite in honouring those who lost their lives while serving in the armed forces.

● A delegation from Italy joined the Mayor of Farnham and the family and friends of renowned illustrator, artist and author **Pauline Baynes** for the unveiling of a commemorative plaque on the Notable Names of Farnham wall.

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2024 - 2025

November >>

- Thousands of residents and visitors gathered for a dazzling celebration marking the switching on of the town's **Christmas lights**. Over 500 performers from 15 local schools and theatre groups pleased the crowd with performances of music, dance, and drama.



December >>

- The sound of voices singing traditional Christmas carols filled St Andrew's Church at the twelfth Farnham Civic Christmas Carol Service hosted by the Mayor of Farnham.



December >>

- A cheque for £10,000 was presented to help support the very popular hoppa Shoppa service which is used by residents who do not have access to any other transport.



January >>

- Councillors agreed the contractor who will be creating the **new Town Council website**.
- Work began on a project to improve traffic flow and provide pedestrians with wider pavements. The latest information can be seen at www.surreycc.gov.uk/farnhamworks.

February >>

- A planning application was submitted to provide additional shade, **storage for event equipment and toilets at Gostrey Meadow**. The new storage area will reduce the carbon footprint of the events as there will be fewer vehicles transporting equipment to and from Gostrey Meadow.
- A **no-interest loan scheme** was relaunched for Farnham people and aims to help people survive the ongoing financial crisis.
- Ceramicist Christina Lorenzet** took up her residency as Farnham World Craft Town's second artist in residence.

March >>



- The **Farnham Literary Festival** was another bestseller with over 50 events taking place across more than a dozen venues.

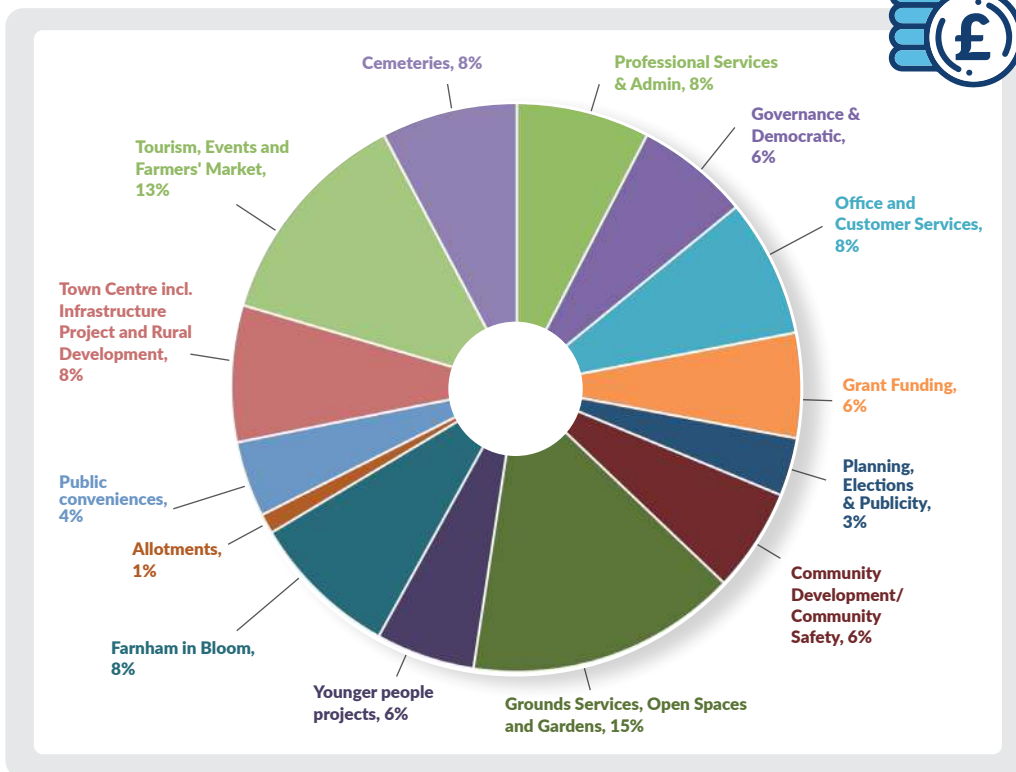
- Following a tendering exercise to appoint a **playground designer**, the public were invited to vote for the playground they would like to see built at Gostrey Meadow.



- Volunteers were invited to help with preparing a new wildflower meadow, litter picking and tidying up at Badshot Lea cemetery.
- A **commitment to support younger people** was renewed with the launch of a grant to support the provision of free school holiday activities.
- Voters** in Farnham were invited to speak up and give their opinion on the services provided by Farnham Town Council at the Annual Town Meeting of Electors.



Estimated 2025/26 Gross Expenditure



£20,000

grant pot for school holiday activities.



30,000

hours given by volunteers in Farnham.



45,000

plug plants and 30,000 bulbs planted.



212

different events and festivals organised by the Farnham events team.



1,000

people responded to two consultations about the new playground at Gostrey Meadow.