

Farnham Town Council Annual Review

2025 - 2026

Many changes happened in 2025/26 which will impact on Farnham for many years to come.

Although the Farnham Infrastructure Programme and reorganisation of local government are outside the direct control of Farnham Town Council, Town Councillors, as the elected representatives who know Farnham best, have used their voice and influence to achieve the best possible outcome for the people of Farnham.

In terms of the services which are within the direct control of Farnham Town Council, 2025/26 has been another successful year with positive results which you can read about in this annual review.

Farnham services at a glance



April



- Young people were introduced to the pleasures of gardening at a series of free workshops in **Badshot Lea**

and **Upper Hale**. Volunteers led the workshops and helped the youngsters plant onion sets, peas, sunflowers, sweet peas and more.

- A three-year scholarship programme aimed at supporting young entrepreneurs from disadvantaged backgrounds was launched. The initiative is run by Young Business Showcase and was named in honour of **Stewart Dakers**, a former employee at Farnham Town Council and youth advocate.

- Farnham held a celebration to mark **75 years of friendship** with Haren in the Netherlands.

May



- Marking 80 years of peace since the end of World War II. Commemorations included the reading of the **VE Day proclamation**, a civic ceremony, an act of remembrance followed by an evening of live music, a broadcast of Winston Churchill's Victory speech and beacon lighting.



- A shared passion for the planet saw hundreds of visitors learning more about sustainable living at the **Farnham Sustainability Festival**. The event included food, music and 40 stalls showcasing eco-friendly crafts, wellness activities and educational demonstrations.



- The tenth **Farnham Walking Festival** featured over 30 guided walks including leisurely strolls and nature trails as well as challenging hikes for seasoned walkers.

- Music in the Meadow** got underway with Farnham Folk Day – a special, extended concert celebrating folk music and traditions.



- Seven remarkable individuals were recognised at the

Services to Farnham awards for their outstanding voluntary service across a range of areas including services to inclusion and literacy, Sailability, Farnham Sea Cadets, art and culture, Farnham Citizens Advice, the natural environment and Farnham Lions.

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June

- The Mayor of Farnham, dignitaries and local school children attended a flag-raising ceremony for the start of **Armed Forces Week**.



- School children rose to the **challenge of designing a minibeasts** themed carpet bed for a display in Gostrey Meadow. The competition inspired many creative entries with the winning design submitted by Willow, a pupil at Badshot Lea Infants School.

July

- Carnival weekend came to a lively close with **Farnham World Music Day** – an afternoon of free live music and family fun at Gostrey Meadow.



- The Mayor of Farnham got his fundraising for **Hale Community & Youth Centre** off to a great start by taking part in a 6k sponsored walk.

July

- A **display board** showing the names of sponsors and supporters of Farnham in Bloom was unveiled in South Street. Gold sponsors included Cala Homes, BBS Ltd, The Patio Black Spot Removal Company and Squire's Garden Centre.



August

- Four green spaces managed by Farnham Town Council were recognised for excellence in 2025. Gostrey Meadow, Hale, Badshot Lea and West Street Cemetery were each awarded with a national **Green Flag Award**.



- Families who took part in a consultation to say what they would like to see in **Farnham's newest playground** were amongst the first to try out the play area in **Gostrey Meadow**. The lucky families joined the Mayor of Farnham in an official ribbon cutting ceremony followed by exclusive access to the new playground.

- An advertising policy in the **Farnham Neighbourhood Plan** contributed to a government planning inspector's decision to overturn an appeal for the installation of a digital advertisement display feature at Hickley's Corner.

August

- Judging of Farnham's entry into South & South East in Bloom took part with contributors and supporters of **Farnham in Bloom** helping to show what makes Farnham one of the south east's top blooming towns.

September

- Younger people in Farnham enjoyed a summer of free activities thanks to £18,055 of funding from **Farnham Town Council's School Holiday Grant scheme**. The grants were awarded to eight local organisations enabling them to deliver free creative, sporting, and social activities during the school summer holidays.



- A great day out was served up for food lovers at the **Farnham Food Festival**. Thousands came along to celebrate local producers, enjoy tasty food and spend a fun day out in Farnham.

October

- Farnham in Bloom gathered a bumper crop of **gold awards** at South & South East in Bloom. Awards included:
 - Town centre - *Gold and Best in Category*
 - Hale Cemetery - *Gold and Best in Category*
 - Badshot Lea Cemetery - *Gold and Champion of Champions*
 - Gostrey Meadow - *Gold*
 - West Street Cemetery - *Gold*

October



● Plaques were unveiled on **Farnham's 'Notable Names'** wall to honour the contributions of Lieutenant Colonel John Luard - distinguished soldier, author, artist, and the founding chairman of the Farnham School of Art, and renowned dendrologist Alan Fyson Mitchell VMA (1922–1995).



● England's first **World Craft Town** celebrated its craft roots with Farnham Craft Month. More than 80 events provided people of all ages with opportunities to take part in hands-on workshops, exhibitions, open studios, talks, markets and craft trails.



● Farnham's second, family-friendly **Lantern Festival** offered a magical and creative alternative to traditional trick-or-treating. The lanterns were made by schools, businesses, faith groups, clubs and families.

● The friendship between Farnham and its twin town Andernach was celebrated during a visit to Germany by the Deputy Mayor and Deputy Mayoress of Farnham.

● Budding authors were invited to put their novel ideas to the test in Farnham Literary Festival's First Five Pages writing competition which is aimed at discovering new talent.

November



● More than 30 local volunteers joined forces for a large-scale **community litter pick** ahead of the 2025 Remembrance Sunday parade. Volunteers collected approximately 26 bags of litter, clearing everything from food packaging, cigarette butts, bottles, cans and broken glasses to discarded dog-waste bags and a drill bit.



● Farnham gathered in large numbers for the annual **Remembrance Parade and Service**. Close to 300 participants representing the Farnham branch of the Royal British Legion and local uniformed organisations took part in a procession watched by thousands of onlookers.

● Hundreds of adults and schoolchildren who contributed to Farnham's winning performance at South and South East in Bloom 2025 received thanks and recognition at the **Farnham in Bloom Community Awards**.

November



● The countdown to Christmas began with the switching on of **Farnham's brand-new Christmas lights**. Following an enthusiastic countdown from ten, special guests flipped the switch, illuminating Farnham with a stunning new display featuring warm white lights with a cool blue twinkle, and a striking illuminated Farnham sign on the Coxbridge roundabout.



December



● Guests were treated to a stellar performance by **Farnham Youth Choir** at the Mayor of Farnham's 13th Civic Christmas Carol Service at St Andrew's Church.



● Gifts, festive treats and plenty of family-friendly fun were the order of the day at the **Farnham Christmas Market**. Over 140 stalls stretched from Castle Street to The Borough, The Bush Hotel Courtyard and Ivy Lane Club off Downing Street.



● A special thank-you reception was held for **volunteers** who contributed over 23,000 hours to Farnham in Bloom. Their efforts included planting out thousands of plug plants, weeding, deadheading and taking care of the planters around Farnham. Residents also took part in litter-picking, watering, tending hanging baskets and caring for green spaces.

January



- A contractor was appointed to build a new amenity building including toilets and storage at Gostrey Meadow.
- Older residents were encouraged to brighten up a dreary January afternoon with free music, a warm venue, good company and a hot cup of tea at the first **Music in the Vineyard** for 2026.

March



- Preparations for **Farnham in Bloom 2026** received a head start thanks to the collective effort of volunteers. Over two mornings, around 40 people turned out to help fill over 9,250 pots with compost in readiness for the thousands of plug plants which will eventually bloom in hanging baskets and containers around Farnham.
- Local schoolchildren joined the Mayor of Farnham and dignitaries for a flag-raising ceremony commemorating **Commonwealth Day**.

March



- Bestselling authors, broadcasters and expert voices came together for a programme which was designed to entertain as well as provoke thought at **Farnham Literary Festival**. The ten-day festival delivered a lively mix of ideas, storytelling and big personalities.

February



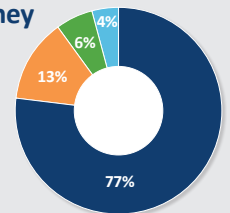
- **HRH The Duke of Edinburgh** KT KG GCVO visited Farnham and spent the day learning more about the special role of craft in Farnham. During the visit, Farnham received a certificate from the World Crafts Council AISBL to mark five years since becoming the first town in England to receive recognition as part of the World Craft City network.

Your Feedback

If you have any comments about this annual review, or you would like a large print version, please do contact your local town councillor or staff at the Town Hall.

Where the money comes from

- Council tax 77%
- Events and services 13%
- Investments 6%
- Grants 4%



The year ahead - planned expenditure for 2026/27

In 2026/27, Farnham Town Council will receive £91.67 (3.5%) of the council tax paid by households living in a Band D property which is equivalent to £1.76 per week. In total, Farnham Town Council will invest £1,825,930 on services that keep Farnham community focussed, safe, vibrant, welcoming and thriving. This is where the money will be spent.

