

2026

Farnham in Bloom

Town Centre

South and South East in Bloom
Judges' Briefing Notes



A welcome to Farnham in Bloom 2026

Welcome to Farnham, and thank you for taking the time to visit us as part of this year's Farnham in Bloom judging. So far, 2026 has been an exciting and busy year, and we are honoured to once again take part in the South & South East in Bloom competition in the Town Centre category.



Councillor Graham White

Farnham in Bloom is a true community effort, bringing together residents, businesses, schools, volunteers and partner organisations in a shared ambition to enhance our town through horticulture, environmental stewardship and creativity. Our guiding ethos, "growing flowers and communities," reflects not only the beautiful planting you will see, but also the pride, collaboration and connection that make Farnham so special.

As you explore the town, I hope you enjoy discovering the many projects and community groups. Behind each one is a story of dedication, care for the environment, and a strong commitment to sustainability and biodiversity - woven through vibrant floral displays and thoughtful planting.

We are incredibly grateful to the many businesses that support Farnham in Bloom, from sponsoring hanging baskets, troughs and planters to contributing at Gold and Silver level. Their support is especially valued during a particularly challenging period for the high street, helping both to enhance the town and to demonstrate a shared commitment to the local community.

We are immensely proud of what has been achieved and deeply grateful to everyone who contributes their time, energy and enthusiasm to Farnham in Bloom.

I hope you enjoy your visit and wish you a very enjoyable and inspiring day.

Councillor Graham White
Mayor of Farnham



Troughs bloom on South Street

About Farnham in Bloom



A post on the Bee Trail

Farnham in Bloom is about making Farnham an attractive place to live, work and visit - bringing the town and surrounding villages to life with colour, while encouraging the community to work together and take pride in their local environment.

As part of the wider programme of community enhancement, Farnham in Bloom places a particular focus on the summer months, including:

- A wide range of floral displays across the town and local villages, including hanging baskets, troughs and planters. These are watered and maintained with the valued support of residents, community organisations and local businesses.
- Twelve schools taking part in ten fun and engaging school competitions, designed to inspire creativity and environmental awareness. These include Best Hanging Basket, Best Biodiversity Area, Best School Garden, Tallest Sunflower, Largest Pumpkin, Wildlife Photography and Anti-litter poster campaign.
- The Gardens of Farnham competition, open to businesses, residents and schools, featuring categories such as Best Hanging Basket or Container, Best Pub Frontage and Care or Residential Home.

Farnham in Bloom at a glance

Since its beginnings in the 1990s, Farnham in Bloom has relied on the dedication of volunteers, the generosity of local sponsors—both financial and in kind—and the continued support of local authorities and businesses.

Farnham in Bloom remains committed to growing its volunteer base and is actively working to recruit new volunteers whilst also strengthening partnerships with local organisations such as Hive Helpers and Surrey Wildlife Trust to create mutually beneficial relationships that enhance Farnham and make it an even more attractive place to live, work, relax and visit.

Being part of South and South East in Bloom and RHS Britain in Bloom continues to provide a valuable framework, showcasing the contribution made by all of Farnham's distinct communities.

The charts below highlight how this collective effort has grown over the years, helping to deliver high standards and bringing lasting enjoyment to residents, businesses and visitors alike.

Farnham in Bloom activity for 2026 has included:

- A full calendar of events and activities for the community.
- Planting all hanging baskets using reduced-peat compost, with support from volunteers and local schools.
- Reviewing and strengthening our volunteering offer, alongside recruiting additional volunteers.
- Establishing a new partnership with Surrey Wildlife Trust to highlight the importance of water conservation and harvesting, and beginning the process of becoming a Butterfly Friendly Council.
- Providing services beyond Farnham, including supplying hanging baskets and troughs for Weyhill, horticultural maintenance at the Lion & Lamb Yard in Farnham, and undertaking grass cutting at Badshot Lea Village Infant School.
- Creating new interpretation boards for Library Gardens in partnership with Hive Helpers, focusing on how the space is managed to allow nature to thrive.
- Continuing strong engagement with community groups and schools, including reintroducing visits to the Council's greenhouses for pupils to plant their hanging baskets and learn from the team.
- The creation of a Friends of Farnham train station group to maintain the planting at the station.
- Reintroduction of water voles to the River Wey in Farnham after an absence of over 20 years.

A year-round calendar of events



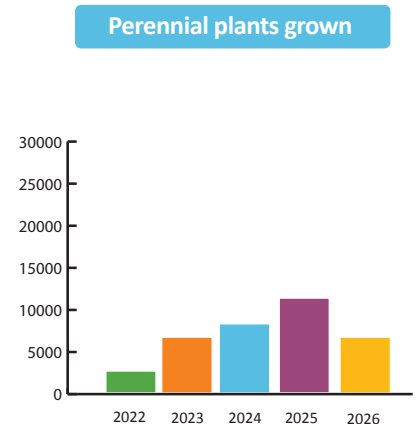
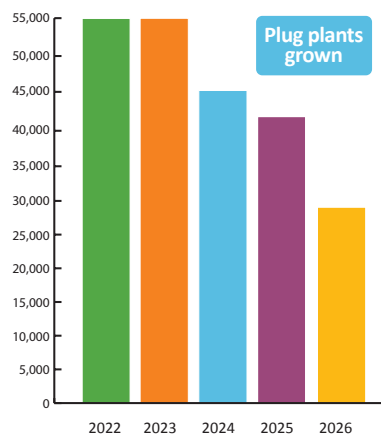
January	Design a Carpet Bed Competition for schools
February	Bloomin' Big Meet
March	Great British Spring Clean litter pick
April	Easter Bloomin' Kids' Workshops
May	Wellbeing & Sustainability Festival and school hanging basket sessions
June	Summer planting
July	Schools' Gardens competition judging
August	Gardens of Farnham competition judging
October	Farnham in Bloom Awards and Bloomin' Kids Workshops
November	Autumn Litter pick
December	Thank you reception for volunteers



A stall at the Sustainability and Wellness Festival



Bloomin' Friends planting in the town



Horticultural Achievement



Spring flowers provide a vibrant display on historic Castle Street

Farnham Town Council's commitment to sustainable planting continues to evolve, with increasing emphasis on biodiversity, climate resilience and resource-efficient horticulture.

Existing beds continue to be redesigned to incorporate greater numbers of perennial plants, reducing annual resource requirements while providing long-lasting colour and habitat value. Good examples of these include the 'Eye' beds at Gostrey Meadow and perennial plants instead of annuals in many of the planters across Farnham.

An impact that this change is having is that in summer 2025, 15,958 plants were ordered for the displays,

compared to 11,696 in summer 2026. This has not only reduced costs, but has significant environmental benefits, for example less water needed.

This is all supported by an extensive volunteer network. Bloomin' Friends volunteers help propagate plants, prepare hanging baskets and maintain displays throughout the year, contributing significant volunteer hours to enhance Farnham's public spaces.

Farnham in Bloom 2026 by numbers:

- 28 896 plug plants (compared to over 35 000 in 2025) a quarter of these being perennial plants
- 28 000 Spring bulbs – the bulk of these going into amenity grass areas
- 100% of bulbs used in floral displays are reused by community groups the following year
- 220 hanging baskets (made up by volunteers)
- 70 planters and troughs planted
- 12 schools involved in competitions



Badshot Lea Infant School take part in the Largest Pumpkin competition



Plants are nurtured in the Council greenhouses before they are ready to go out around town



Members of the Outside Workforce plant up a bed in Gostrey Meadow

Environmental Responsibility



Residents turn out en masse for the Great British Spring Clean event

Environmental responsibility remains central to Farnham in Bloom and Farnham Town Council's wider commitment to creating a greener, more sustainable community. Activities focus on enhancing biodiversity, building climate resilience, and supporting the Council's ambition to become carbon neutral by 2030.

Farnham Library Gardens continue to demonstrate how attractive public spaces can successfully support biodiversity through pollinator-friendly planting and sustainable management practices. This year marks the first steps in delivering the Butterfly Friendly Council initiative, which will be implemented over a three-year period. Farnham's existing five-year Biodiversity Action Plan, created in 2021, is currently under review and will be updated this year.

The development of a Butterfly Action Plan will sit within this wider framework as a dedicated species action plan, strengthening Farnham's commitment to protecting and enhancing biodiversity. It will also form part of a broader programme of habitat enhancement and species-focused conservation across Farnham's parks, open spaces and cemeteries.

In 2026, significantly more areas of parks and cemeteries have been managed with longer grass. In cemeteries such as West Street, areas around memorial headstones are carefully mown and pathway edges are maintained, ensuring the space remains respectful and accessible while greatly increasing opportunities for biodiversity. Surrey Wildlife Trust and the Farnham Biodiversity Partnership are undertaking wildlife surveys at West Street Cemetery and Farnham Library Gardens, where similar grass management practices are in place, and the findings will help inform future management.

The Farnham Bee Trail, officially launched in May 2025, educates the public about the importance of bees while encouraging exploration of Farnham's green spaces.



Electric vehicle used for watering

- Monthly graffiti cleaning days
- Over 250 litter pickers lent out
- 976 amphibians saved by volunteers during the annual Toad Patrol in South Farnham.

In June, in collaboration with the Wey Water Vole Recovery Project, the Environment Agency and the Derek Gow Consultancy, water voles were reintroduced to the River Wey in Farnham town centre via Town Council land, where suitable habitat has been restored. This marks a significant milestone, with water voles returning to the River Wey after an absence of at least 20 years. The town centre releases form part of a wider programme involving nearly 300 voles being introduced across the North Wey.

The Farnham Repair Café continues to provide opportunities for residents to repair and reuse household items, supporting waste reduction, skills sharing and community resilience. The Repair Café was recognised with the King's Award for Voluntary Service in 2024. To date, volunteers have repaired over 3,300 items, diverted more than 9 tonnes of waste from landfill, and prevented an estimated 84.7 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions.

Working with Surrey Wildlife Trust, Farnham in Bloom has promoted rainwater harvesting through workshops at Bloomin' Kids events and via the allotment newsletter, with an evening lecture planned for later this year.

There has been a growing interest from residents and schoolchildren in helping to clean up their local areas. Numerous

litter pickers have been loaned to residents, schools, the local Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, and groups such as Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Guides to support litter collection efforts. The Council's Great British Spring Clean event was well attended, with over 45 participants in the town centre event and many more registering to carry out litter picks in their own neighbourhoods. Plans are in place to introduce two additional litter picking hubs in the autumn, in Badshot Lea and Hale and Heath End, to support and expand group litter picking initiatives. These efforts are further supported by a dedicated team of Bloomin' litter volunteers, who are fully insured and equipped with high-visibility vests and litter pickers.

Farnham Town Council has also awarded Community Grants to a number of local organisations and schools for environmental projects, including a garden renovation at Badshot Lea Village Infant School, woodland improvements at Snailsynch, and the creation of a cold room at Farnham Community Farm.

Farnham Town Council also takes a proactive approach to graffiti management, responding promptly to reports and helping to maintain clean, welcoming public spaces across the town.



Tree carving in West Street Cemetery



A Water vole being released in the River Wey (credit Edwin Brooks - National Trust)

- Ivy left to grow on cemetery walls
- Limited chemical use
- Recycle pots and trays
- Use of water butts
- Reduced-peat compost

Community Participation

Community remains at the heart of Farnham in Bloom, and 2026 is no exception. Once again, residents and volunteers have come together to support one another, helping businesses, families and schools to make Farnham bloom.

There are many groups across the town making a significant and lasting impact:

The Farnham in Bloom Community Group continues to play a vital role in underpinning the initiative, working in partnership with Farnham Town Council to support and deliver the town's entry in South & South East in Bloom. The group also coordinates a range of community-focused activities, including the Bloomin' Kids Gardening Workshops and the Gardens of Farnham competition.

Space2Grow, an acre site near Bishop's Meadow, provides a valuable outdoor space for a wide range of groups. It hosts an active Men in Sheds group, parenting classes and gardening sessions, and regularly welcomes local schools. The nearby infant school

benefits from weekly Forest School sessions, giving pupils access to a natural environment they would otherwise lack due to having no green space on site.

Badshot Lea Community Garden has continued to flourish. In May, it welcomed its first visit from a residential home—an experience the team hopes will be the first of many. For the first time, the garden has also joined the local hospice's established open garden scheme, helping to raise funds for this important cause. With an allotment, growing areas, a pond, polytunnels, a garden shop, and newly funded wheelchair-accessible raised beds, the site offers something for everyone. Residents, local schoolchildren and Duke of Edinburgh students all contribute to this thriving, inclusive and much-valued community space.



New wheelchair-accessible planters at the Badshot Lea Community Garden



Bloomin' Friends volunteers filling pots with compost



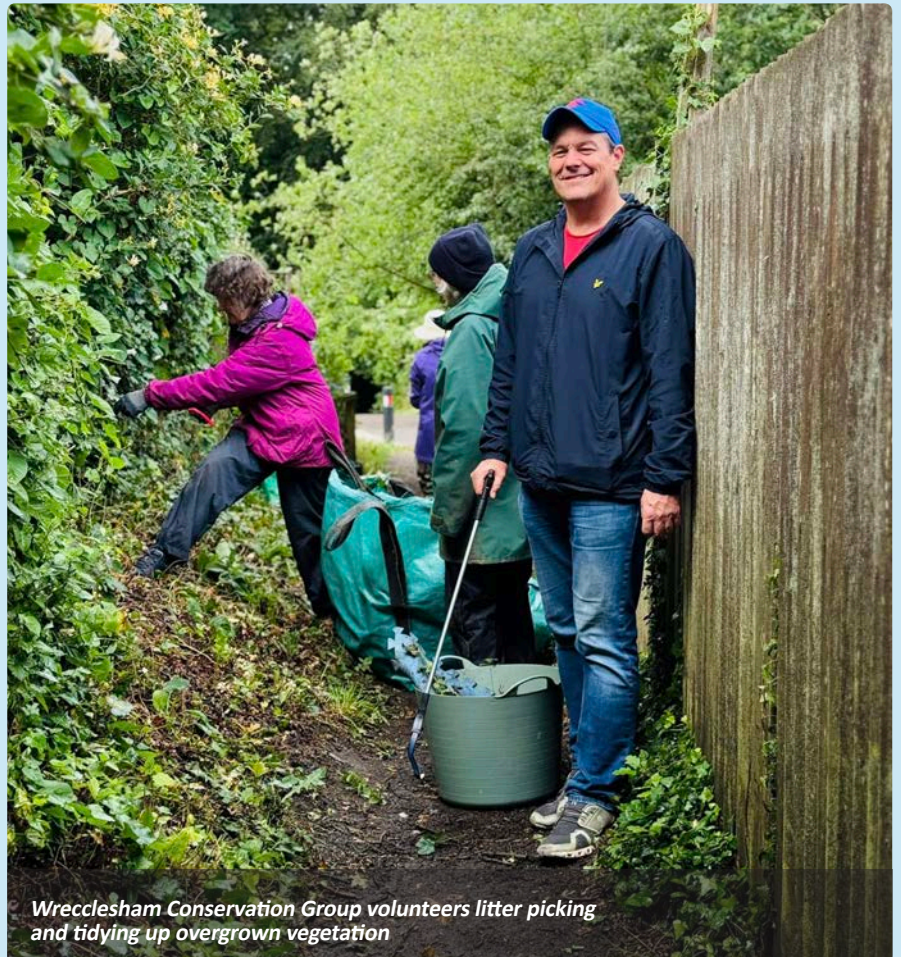
Edgeborough School visit the Council greenhouses to plant their baskets

The Bourne Conservation Group, based at the Middle Bourne Lane Community Garden, undertakes a wide range of activities to conserve the natural environment and support local wildlife. Their work includes thinning holly and laurel, maintaining over 10 miles of local footpaths by clearing excessive vegetation, caring for planting at The Bourne crossroads, and leading wildlife and heritage walks for the community.

Established in 2024, the Wreclesham Conservation Group continues to go from strength to strength, working to enhance the local area for both people and wildlife by maintaining, recording and improving its landscape, environment and biodiversity. The group has been actively clearing rubbish, boosting biodiversity and carrying out wildlife surveys in St Peter's Churchyard. Additional activities include bat and bee walks, as well as rescuing nearly 1,000 amphibians during the annual spring migration as part of their ongoing toad patrol.

Dedicated volunteers from Friends of Gostrey Meadow and the Friends of West Street Cemetery continue to care for these areas, undertaking planting, weeding, watering and other seasonal tasks, providing invaluable support to the Council.

This year, the relaunched Wellbeing & Sustainability Festival in Gostrey Meadow, organised in partnership with Farnham Community Farm, welcomed over 1,000 visitors. More than 60 stalls representing environmental and community groups, open spaces and 'Friends of' groups offered practical



Wreclesham Conservation Group volunteers litter picking and tidying up overgrown vegetation



Easter Bloomin' Kids gardening workshops in full swing

advice and inspiration on reducing our impact on the planet and its resources. Farnham in Bloom contributed by selling plants, promoting the Butterfly Friendly Council initiative through talks, and hosting a butterfly colouring competition for children - designs from which will feature on signage later this year.

Schools have once again shown great enthusiasm for Farnham in Bloom activities and events. Twelve schools have signed up to take part in ten competitions, ranging from

hanging baskets to wildlife photography and anti-litter posters. Participating schools were also provided with pumpkin and sunflower seeds to grow, with friendly competition to see who could produce the tallest or largest plants.

The annual carpet bed competition proved popular once again, with this year's theme being Literary Characters Inspired by the Natural World, celebrating 100 years of Winnie-the-Pooh. The winning design, created by a pupil at St Mary's Infant School, featuring

Pooh Bear and Piglet, was beautifully brought to life by a plant supplier, creating a vibrant display for all to enjoy. This bed was kindly sponsored by the Farnham Lions.

To commemorate VE Day, a striking floral design featuring a range of coloured poppies was planted by the war memorial in Gostrey Meadow, providing a reflective and meaningful tribute.

Community facts and figures



Farnham Town Council achieves gold awards across its 2025 entries with huge support from the community

- **Over £18,000 of sponsorship income raised**
- **Farnham in Bloom is supported by over 50 community groups**
- **Over 23,000 volunteer hours estimated**
- **12 schools taking part in competitions**
- **7 Gardens of Farnham competition categories**

Sponsorship is vital to the success of Farnham in Bloom with three gold sponsors and two silver sponsors confirmed for 2026.

Farnham Town Council produces an annual Invest in Farnham brochure that details the many sponsorship opportunities available.

Links with local businesses are very valuable and they are keen to support local activities and share the benefit Farnham in Bloom has to the wider community.



Planter sponsored by a local business

Aims and aspirations for 2027



- As part of local government reorganisation, Waverley Borough Council has offered 11 new sites that could come under Farnham Town Council's management. These include Borelli Walk, Wrecclesham Recreation Ground and Weybourne Allotments. The Town Council is carrying out due diligence and assessing each site to develop appropriate maintenance plans.
- Continue to expand the tree planting programme in partnership with Surrey County Council and other local authorities.
- Establish active 'Friends of groups for both Farnham Station and Farnham Library.
- Consolidate roadside gardens through additional planting in Union Road, Downing Street, West Street and Castle Street.
- Deliver the second phase of the Butterfly Friendly Council initiative in partnership with key stakeholders, alongside launching a new school competition. This will support the winning school in creating a butterfly-and moth-friendly habitat within their grounds.
- Review how the Council composts green waste and trial alternatives to the reduced-peat compost currently in use, including the development of composting and propagation subgroups within the Farnham in Bloom Community Group.

Previous results include

- Gold in the South and South East in Bloom Town Centre category 14 times.
- Gold in the South and South East in Bloom Large Town category 11 times.
- The South and South East in Bloom large town regional category winner 7 years in a row.
- The South and South East in Bloom Chairman's award for Post 19 and Bishop's Meadow.
- Gold in the South and South East in Bloom Cemetery category for West Street Cemetery.
- Gold, Category winner and Champion of Champions in South and South East in Bloom for Badshot Lea Cemetery.
- Gold in South and South East in Bloom for Hale Cemetery.
- Gold in the Royal Horticultural Society Britain in Bloom awards and joint category winner in 2017.
- Gold in the Royal Horticultural Society Britain in Bloom awards and category winner in 2019 and 2024.
- Gold in the Royal Horticultural Society Britain in Bloom awards in 2022.
- A Green Flag award to Gostrey Meadow in 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025 and 2026.
- A Green Flag award to West Street, Hale and Badshot Lea Cemeteries in 2024, 2025 and 2026 and Green Lane Cemetery in 2026 for its inaugural year.

Parks and open spaces

Farnham Town Council owns and manages a number of green spaces across Farnham and the surrounding villages, as well as around 300 allotment plots across eight sites. These spaces are maintained by the Council's outside workforce, with support from specialist contractors where required.

Open spaces managed by Farnham Town Council:

- Gostrey Meadow
- Riverside
- Rowledge Green
- Badshot Lea, Green Lane, Hale and West Street Cemeteries
- Battings Garden
- Evelyn Borelli Garden of Rest
- Halifax Garden
- Haren Garden
- Riverside Maltings
- Library Gardens

Initiatives and best practice include:-

Horticultural Practices

- Wildflower sections / long grass areas
- Tree management with regular surveys
- Sustainable planting including a 26% reduction in the use of bedding plants
- Increased use of perennial plants

Environmental Responsibility

- Limited chemical use
- Reduced-peat compost
- Supporting habitats for wildlife
- Electric tools
- Hybrid vehicle fleet



Hale Chapels' Garden at Hale Cemetery

Community Participation

- Engagement with 'Friends of' groups
- Local schools getting involved with litter picking and design a carpet bed competition
- Hiring out of spaces for community events alongside Council led events such as the Wellbeing & Sustainability Festival
- Working in partnership with key stakeholders such as Hive Helpers, Farnham Biodiversity Partnership and Surrey Wildlife Trust to enhance areas for wildlife, conduct surveys and created habitats



A bee orchid growing in the Library Gardens

Cemeteries

Farnham Town Council owns and manages four cemeteries across Farnham, with West Street being the largest. Each site contains a number of notable graves and offers both full burials and the interment of cremated remains. All four cemeteries are now entered into the Green Flag Award scheme, reflecting the high standards of management, maintenance and community value. The cemeteries are all distinct and characterful spaces, featuring a mix of evergreen and deciduous trees, colourful planting, and areas that support biodiversity. Across the sites, a conscious decision has been made to increase areas of longer grass to further enhance biodiversity and provide valuable habitats for wildlife.

West Street Cemetery

Horticultural Practices

- A large area of wildflowers and standing dead wood attracts a range of insects and provides a green corridor through Farnham.
- The Garden of Reflection is planted with sustainable plants, seasonal bedding and re-used spring bulbs.
- Hazel whips, hawthorn and dog roses planted

Environmental Responsibility

- Recent wildlife surveys conducted in conjunction with Surrey Wildlife Trust and Farnham Biodiversity Partnership.
- Large 'no mow' sections left to increase biodiversity.
- Dead hedges and log piles created.
- Dormouse boxes fitted.

Community Participation

- A 'Friends of West Street Cemetery Group' continues to grow.

Badshot Lea Cemetery

Horticultural Practices

- A large area of established wildflowers continues to attract a range of pollinating insects.
- Bedding plants nurtured from plugs are used to provide a floral display at the entrance of the cemetery.
- Over 1,000 spring and summer bulbs have been planted.

Environmental Responsibility

- Improved pathways around the cemetery for visitors.
- Dormouse boxes fitted and hazel whips planted in autumn 2025.
- Recent survey conducted in partnership with Farnham Biodiversity Partnership and Surrey Wildlife Trust.

Community Participation

- Thousands of spring bulbs which were previously planted in the town's floral displays were planted in the autumn by community groups.
- A memorial tree provides a space for friends and relatives of loved ones to hang memorials.

Green Lane Cemetery

Horticultural Practices

- A wildflower area to encourage pollinating insects.
- Entered into Green Flag for the first time in 2026.

Environmental Responsibility

- The introduction of bat and bug boxes to increase wildlife.

Community Participation

- Repairing of benches by 'Men in Sheds' group.

Hale Cemetery

Horticultural Practices

- Additional planting in the Hale Chapels' Garden.
- Wildflower area over seeded.

Environmental Responsibility

- Bird and bat boxes.

Community Participation

- Continued engagement with local schools for litter picking.
- Annual community carol service event.

The Library Gardens

Horticultural Practices

- A wildflower area to encourage pollinating insects.

Environmental Responsibility

- The introduction of bat and bug boxes to increase wildlife.
- Grass management has been adapted to include longer grass areas to support biodiversity.
- The gardens have been recognised as a significant bee-friendly location with additional pollinator friendly planting added to the site.
- New interpretation boards explaining how the gardens are managed to support nature and biodiversity.

Community Participation

- In the process of establishing a Friends of Farnham Library Gardens volunteer group.
- Working in partnership with stakeholders such as Hive Helpers, the Farnham Biodiversity Partnership and Surrey Wildlife Trust.



Farnham in Bloom Sponsors 2026

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- Farnham Institute Charity
- Make it Farnham
- Squire's Garden Centre



SILVER Sponsors

- The Bush Hotel
- The Patio Black Spot Removal Co.

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Brian Daniels • Pat Elsmore • Sylvia Muchmore

In loving memory of

Gill Ely • Madge Green • Donald & Kathleen Knott • Patricia Pitman

RHS Britain in Bloom: Gold & Best in Category (2017, 2019, 2024) | Gold Winner (2022)

Thank you for your support