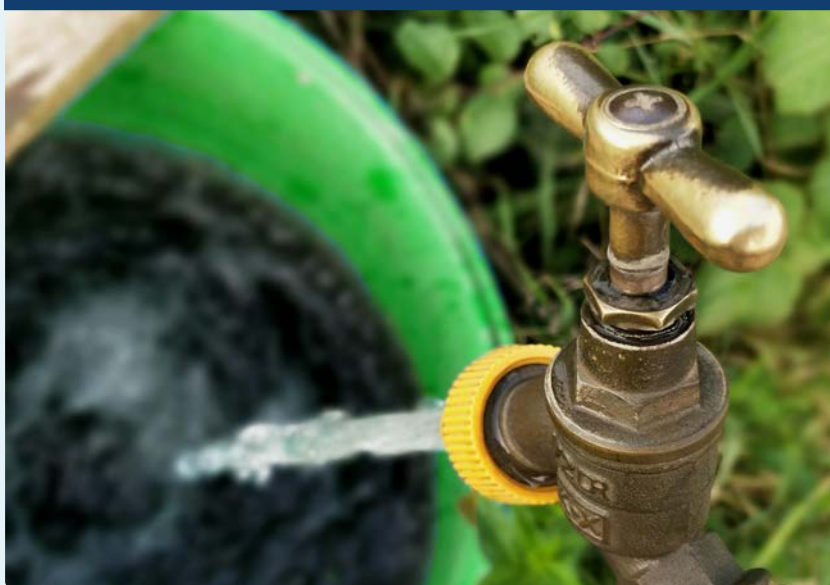


GreenFingers

Updates about Farnham allotments.

Summer 2026

Make the most of water this summer



Make the most of water in your allotments and gardens to support both your plants and local wildlife says Wilder Communities Co-ordinator Christa Emmett.

As all gardeners and growers know, water is an incredibly precious resource. Water sustains life and is fundamental for growing plants, produce and crops. However, water is not always available all year round, and with our changing climate, fluctuations in water availability are likely to be exacerbated.

By creating mini “reservoirs” within our allotment spaces we can ensure that water is available year-round for our plants, as well as local wildlife.

Rainwater harvesting

Collecting or harvesting rainwater is a great way to ensure you can water your plants during the summer without putting strain on the mains supply. According to the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) even in dry districts, 24,000 litres (5,280 gallons or 150 water butts) could be collected from the roof each year but water butts are still under-utilised. Rainwater is actually beneficial for plants, as it has a lower pH than treated tap water.

The higher pH of treated tap water increases the pH around the root zone of plants which can cause issues for nutrient availability.

Treating tap water also uses a high amount of energy and is not necessary for the needs of local wildlife and plants. By harvesting rainwater and storing it in water butts you can conserve precious water, reduce local flooding, reduce water bills, and water plants when they need it the most! Ensure water butts are covered to avoid the build up of debris and wildlife from drowning. When looking for a water butt try places such as Facebook Marketplace which can be a cheaper alternative than buying new.

Remember that when using rainwater from a water butt you should be mindful of the risks of Legionella's bacteria. There is a useful article on page 7 by Nathan Tidbury, a Legionella Consultant, from Immerse Water Services highlighting the risks and what you can do to mitigate them.

David Dearsley

We were saddened to learn that David Dearsley former site rep at Morley Road, passed away in February. As a member the Bourne Conservation group and an active allotment holder, David was a real champion of the natural world, and his knowledge will be greatly missed.

Our condolences go to his wife Kathy and daughter Ema.

> Summer into action!



With the growing season well underway, here are some tips for a productive growing season.

July

July is the heart of summer, with abundant harvests and rapid growth. The focus is on harvesting, watering, succession sowing and pest management to maintain production.



Vegetable work:

- Harvest beans, peas, courgettes and salad crops to encourage continuous production.
- Sow autumn crops such as carrots, beetroot, winter lettuces, and radishes for later harvests.
- Continue to support climbing beans and tomatoes with stakes or trellises.
- Mulch and water thoroughly, particularly during dry periods to reduce stress on plants.



Fruit work:

- Harvest currants, raspberries, gooseberries, and early apples.
- Net fruit to protect from birds and remove damaged or diseased fruit promptly.
- Water and feed fruit bushes to sustain healthy development.
- Keep an eye out for common pests like aphids, sawfly larvae, and birds.

If you are lucky enough to have a greenhouse:

- Keep greenhouse crops well-ventilated and watered.
- Pinch out side-shoots on tomatoes and peppers, feed weekly, and check for fungal infections.
- Sow tender crops to make room for late summer and early autumn harvests.
- Clear out spent crops to make room for late sowings.



Flower Work:

- Deadhead flowers to encourage continued blooms.
- Collect seeds from annuals and perennials for next year.
- Mulch borders to retain moisture and suppress weeds.
- Plant late summer bedding and hardy annuals for colour later in the season.

August

August is a month of harvest maintenance and preparation for autumn. Many crops are at their peak, but careful management ensures continued productivity and a smooth transition into next season.



Vegetable work:

- Harvest courgettes, beans, tomatoes, peppers, salad leaves, and other summer crops daily.
- Sow autumn and winter vegetables such as spinach, chard, radicchio, and winter lettuces.
- Prepare soil for overwintering crops like onions, garlic and broad beans.
- Clear out spent crops to make space for late sowings and succession planting.
- Continue deep watering and mulching during hot, dry periods.



Fruit work:

- Continue harvesting late summer fruit and early apples and pears.
- Net soft fruit to protect ripening crops from birds.
- Feed and water fruit bushes to support late-season growth.
- Prune summer fruiting canes after harvest and remove any diseased or damaged growth.

If you are lucky enough to have a greenhouse:

- Maintain ventilation and watering for greenhouse crops.
- Sow winter salads for and herbs for harvest later in the year.
- Clear spent crops and prepare beds for late crops.
- Monitor for pests and diseases particularly, in hot, humid conditions.



Flower Work:

- Deadhead flowers and prune to prolong blooms.
- Sow hardy annuals for autumn colour.
- Divide and replant perennials after flowering.
- Prepare borders for autumn planting of bulbs and late flowering perennials.

> Fees and charges

Rentals have not increased for 2026/27.



At the start of this year, councillors reconfirmed that allotments should operate on a break-even basis. Following a review, fees have been updated, with a standard plot now costing £67.50 from October 2025 and a minimum fee of £34.75 applying to half plots or smaller. The fee includes around £2 for the allotment society public liability insurance policy. Plots that are individually measured are charged at 54p per sq metre.

The administrative fee charged to new allotment holders is £70. Discounts apply for tenancies starting after 1 May. There has been an increasing number of late payments so a £20 fee has been introduced from April 2026 for any outstanding rent that is eight weeks overdue.

> Free allotment planners



The National Allotment Society has recently featured two free resources that might help you plan your allotment more efficiently.

allotmentplanner.com is a browser-based tool to help design your perfect allotment layout for free. Add plants from an extensive library of over 500 vegetable, fruits and herbs (each with growing information to help you make the most of your plot throughout the season).

The Allotment & Companion Planting Planner (free to use at www.backyard-farmer.com), created by UK Gardener, Fred Robinson, lets users map out beds, plan rotations, and check which plants grow well together and which ones to keep apart. Companion planting helps maximise space, attract pollinators and naturally deter pests. Fred has also created a UK vegetable planting calendar and biodynamic planting calendar.

Label up!



A quick reminder to all plot holders to clearly label your plot with your number in a visible position, as required in your tenancy agreement. Following the article in our last newsletter on plot marker signs, it's great to see many of you have already adopted some of the ideas - thank you! Here are some simple and creative examples...

Ideas for plot markers



Bin stickers on your shed/ water butt/ greenhouse:

cheap, cheerful, and probably the quickest solution. Grab some bin stickers next time you are at a shop, you might even be able to donate the numbers you don't need to a neighbour.

Wooden sign:

use some reclaimed wood to display your plot number. You could use paint, or give pyrography (wood burning) a go. Give it a varnish afterwards to help seal it.



Mosaic on a baking tray: this plot holder has integrated

their plot number into a mosaic, mounted onto a baking tray. Whilst this is more work it is very eye catching and unique.



Recycle old items:

get arty by reclaiming old items to upcycle into plot markers. This plot holder spray painted an old spade, and propped it up in some pipe. This can be a quick simple project to do, and is a great way to reuse things that would otherwise be thrown away.

Know your Site Rep



Site Reps act as the vital link between plot holders and Farnham Town Council, helping to share information, raise issues, and represent their site at Allotment Liaison Group meetings.

[Find out more](#)

Contact Mo Ashdown by emailing allotments@farnham.gov.uk

Alderley Farm:
Pete Crouch (AF16A)

Farnham Road:
Michael Nicholls (FR20)

Morley Road:
Liz Clifford (MR05A)

Shepherd and Flock:
David Wheeler (SF03)

Six Bells:
Sonia Pursley (SB29B)

West Street:
Steve Kibble (WS02B)

West Street (extension):
Vanora Davies (WSE12B/23A)

Wrecclesham:
Peter Dawes (W08A)

Dogs on Allotments



A gentle reminder that dogs are not allowed on allotments unless agreed in writing with Farnham Town Council.

Each exception to this rule will be managed on a case by case basis, taking into consideration the needs of the plot holder (assistance dogs) and the welfare of the animal (e.g. elderly dogs who cannot be left for long periods of time).

In all cases, dogs must not be allowed to roam the allotments and should be kept on a lead. Owners must clean up after their dogs and take the waste home. Previous written permissions are null and void and should be renewed if still required.

Outside workforce



During the winter and early spring, the outside workforce cleared 20+ neglected plots to prepare them for re-letting.

Scalplings/road planings were added to the entrances at Farnborough Road and West Street to reduce the amount of pooling water that impeded access. A hedge cutting programme – including the hedge between West Street and Coxbridge Farm – was completed. Further representations made to the owners of Coxbridge Farm request the height of the hedge is reduced.

New water points were installed at Wrecclesham.

Allotment competition



There will be a Best Newcomer (within 18 months) and Best Plot for each allotment site and then an overall Best Newcomer and Best Plot.

The allotment reps have agreed to be the judges but will not judge their own allotment sites. Judging will happen in July. Over the last couple of years support for the Allotment Show has dwindled. If you are interested in reviving it, or have any other ideas to strengthen our allotment community – for example holding open days or hosting social barbeques on each site – please let your allotment rep know. We are planning an allotment lecture to happen later in the year (October 26).

DT Brown Seed Scheme

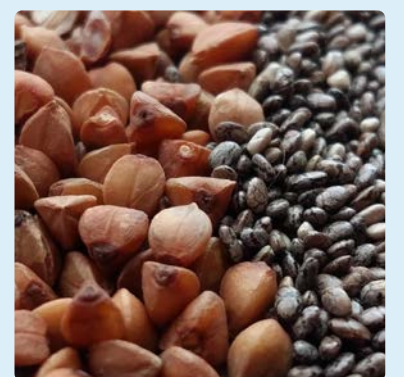
Farnham Town Council has been asked by allotment reps and plot holders - to rejoin the D.T. Brown Allotment Society and Gardening Club and it has been agreed to trial it later in the year – around October time. The club has some great benefits for members including:

- 50% off seed
- 20% off grow your own (potatoes, onions, shallots, garlic, veg plants + fruit)
- 10% off Darlac tools
- 10% off bird food
- P&P free on just seed to just one address
- P&P £4.95 on seed + live product orders per individual address

More information will follow about the detailed process and dates later in the year. However, we will need some help to make it happen – particularly if seeds are being delivered to a central address to take advantage of the free P&P.

[Find out more](#)

Contact Mo at allotments@farnham.gov.uk.



The Wildlife Corner: wildlife ponds

Nature

According to The Wildlife Trust over 10% of our freshwater and wetland species are threatened with extinction in the UK and we've lost 90% of our wetland habitats in the last 100 years.



Ponds play an integral role in supporting freshwater wildlife and even small ponds can support a huge diversity of life from amphibians, birds, hedgehogs and bats to beautiful invertebrates such as damsel and dragonflies.

There is much research about the benefit of mini ponds supporting natural garden pest controllers such as birds, hedgehogs and bats, however they can also bring more unwelcome visitors to an allotment plot like rats. Farnham Town Council is considering whether

the disadvantages outweigh the benefits of ponds on allotment sites but perhaps you could consider one at home. Whilst ponds are fantastic habitats, standing water is not. If you can, avoid collecting pools of additional stagnant water (unless in a covered water butt) as these can contribute to the spread of Usutu virus, a mosquito-borne disease which is fatal to our much-loved blackbird. By standing up wheelbarrows, plant pots and saucers, and diverting rainwater into a covered water butt, the spread of disease will be reduced whilst still reaping the benefits of rainwater harvesting. Around ponds, natural predators will help to keep mosquito numbers in check and larger bodies of water are cooler and less attractive to mosquitoes. Therefore, keeping ponds but removing unnecessary areas of stagnant water will keep a perfectly balanced ecosystem.



At home

If you haven't got a pond at home, it's quite easy to add one. By simply upcycling a watertight container (such as a washing up tub or old sink), adding gravel, stones, logs and a ramp, filling with rainwater (from your water butt!) and adding some native pond plants (try Lesser Spearwort or Miniature Waterlily) you can create a mini freshwater oasis which will quickly attract a diversity of wildlife. Avoid introducing frogs, fish or even water from other ponds as this can spread disease, plus fish eat the eggs of many of our native amphibians.

Saving water tips

We can all make a difference through simple actions to conserve water at home. According to Waterwise charity, showers, toilets and baths account for about half of household water use. Simple actions, such as opting for a low-flow showerhead, shortening shower times, upgrading your toilet to have a dual flush and only flushing biodegradable items down the toilet can have a huge impact on the quality and availability of our water.

Using dishwashers and washing machines on eco settings, avoiding pre-rinsing dishes and using a washing up bowl can all save water and reduce wastage by up to 50%.

Food and fashion choices also have a significant impact on our water footprint. Where possible, sourcing local and seasonal produce and buying second hand clothes, to reduce water-waste and consumption from cotton growing and dyeing, can help to conserve water and collectively reduce our impact.

Summer on the Allotment: Don't overlook Legionella



Summer is when allotments really come into their own. The plots are full of growth, watering becomes part of the daily routine, and everyone is keen to keep fruit, vegetables and flowers thriving through the warmer weather. But while most people are thinking about drought, weeds and pests, there is another seasonal risk worth keeping in mind: Legionella bacteria.

Legionella is a bacteria that can grow in warm, stagnant water, especially when temperatures sit between about 20°C and 45°C. People become ill by inhaling tiny airborne water droplets that contain the bacteria. In the UK, the summer months can create just the right conditions for this to happen on an allotment, particularly where water is stored, hoses are left lying in the sun, or equipment is only used now and then.

The use of sprinklers and hose pipes is generally not allowed on Farnham Town Council's allotments. Therefore, the main areas to think about are taps that are not used regularly, water butts and any stored water that has been sitting for a while. If water has been allowed to warm up and then comes out as a fine spray or

mist, that is where the risk increases. Research and industry guidance have also highlighted compost and potting mixes as another possible source, so it is not just water systems that deserve attention.

Water butts are especially popular in dry spells, but they need sensible handling. If possible, keep them covered and out of direct sunlight as much as you can, and avoid using stored water through anything that creates a mist. A watering can is usually a safer option than attaching a hose or spray. Hoses should also be drained after use rather than left full of warm water, and if one has been sitting for a while it is a good idea to run it through first while standing clear of any spray.

Compost deserves a mention too. Opening bags carefully, avoiding



putting your face directly over them, and damping down very dry compost before use can all help reduce the chance of breathing in dust or droplets. Anyone turning compost heaps or handling potting mix for long periods may also want to wear a suitable face covering, particularly if they are older, have a weakened immune system, or already suffer with chest problems.

The good news is that the risk can usually be kept low with a few simple habits: keep water moving, avoid warm stagnant storage where possible, steer clear of fine sprays, and handle compost with care. A little awareness goes a long way. By building these checks into the normal summer routine, allotment holders can keep enjoying the season safely while protecting both their crops and their health.

Save the date



Plans are underway for this year's historic Venison Dinner on Friday 13 November at the Bush Hotel.

First held in 1605 as a way to stop townsfolk from poaching deer from Farnham Park, this remarkable event combines heritage, hospitality and community. As well as fascinating speakers and ceremonial traditions, the five-course dinner promises a memorable night of great food, conversation and civic pride.

Email

events@farnham.gov.uk and request to be notified when tickets go on sale.

Improved visitor facilities at Gostrey Meadow



Visitors to Gostrey Meadow will see that work is underway to replace the sub-standard toilets with a brand-new multi-purpose amenity building.

As well as providing sustainable new toilets and baby changing facilities for visitors to the playground and Gostrey Meadow, the building will provide storage for equipment used at the many events that take place at the park and an extension of the playground. Work is due to be completed by spring 2027.

Meet Farnham's new town mayor



In May, Farnham Town Councillors elected Councillor

Graham White as the new Mayor of Farnham.

Councillor White has a background in building construction and civil engineering and retired from his lighting consultancy business in 2025. The Mayor is married to Judy and between them, they have two sons, two daughters five grandchildren with a sixth expected in August.

If you would like to invite the Mayor to an event, visit www.farnham.gov.uk and complete the online invitation form.

Look up!



When you next visit Farnham, look up and enjoy the hanging baskets which have been planted by volunteers and installed outside shops and businesses.

Many of the hanging baskets have been sponsored by local businesses and individuals wanting an unusual gift or a tribute to a loved one. If you are interested in sponsoring a basket, please email bloom@farnham.gov.uk.

New Clerk & CEO announced



Farnham Town Council is pleased to announce the appointment of **Lisa O'Sullivan**

as its new Town Clerk & CEO, following a rigorous and competitive recruitment process.

Lisa brings over 16 years of local council experience and will take up the post in September with existing Town Clerk, Iain Lynch beginning a flexible retirement and continuing on reduced hours on special projects.

Be a Friend

We are looking for volunteers to join two new gardening groups:

Friends of Farnham Station and Friends of Farnham Library Gardens. Light tasks such as watering, weeding, sweeping and maintaining flower containers will be carried out.

Email

bloom@farnham.gov.uk to find out more.



Further **GreenFingers** information at www.farnham.gov.uk/allotments www.farnham.gov.uk/bloom

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