



## FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL

### Report to the Annual Town Meeting of Electors

Thursday 24 March 2016

## Council

Farnham Town Council has 18 elected councillors who represent nine wards and a population of around 40,000 people.

In May 2015, the local elections returned the following political make-up:

- 12 Conservatives
- 4 Farnham Residents
- 1 Independent, and
- 1 Liberal Democrat



Farnham Town Council meets as a Full Council nine times a year and it is at these meetings that decisions are taken. Meetings are open to the public, and there is an opportunity for public questions on any matter.

The day-to-day work of the Council is undertaken through a number of working groups. These groups discuss the detail of projects and future plans.

Recommendations of the working group meetings go to Full Council for final decision.

Farnham Town Council's working groups are:

- Strategy and Finance, which has the following three sub-groups:
  - Infrastructure Planning Task Group
  - Human Resources Panel
  - Offices Task Group
- Cemeteries and Appeals
- Community Enhancement
- Planning and Licensing Consultative Group
- Tourism and Events

## The Mayor of Farnham 2015/16



Full Council meetings are chaired by the Mayor of Farnham. The Mayor for 2015/16 is Councillor Mrs Pat Frost. The Mayor represents the town at civic and ceremonial functions. During the mayoral year, the Mayor will attend over 300 community events.

The official Mayoral charity for 2015/16 is Farnham Assist, which is a charity that runs clubs and social events for older people.

## Services

Farnham Town Council provides many services for its residents including graffiti removal, providing allotments, cemeteries and funding CCTV as well as a year-long calendar of events. During 2016/17, based on an average Band D property, each household will pay £59.83 to Farnham Town Council. This helps to fund services with the balance of the budget funded by income from services, events and sponsorship.

Farnham Town Council's services include:

- Allotments
- Annual Town Meeting of electors
- CCTV and community safety
- Christmas lights
- Civic events
- Cemeteries
- Community enhancement including:
  - Farnham in Bloom
  - Noticeboards
  - Street furniture
- Farmers' Markets
- Graffiti removal
- Grants for community organisations
- Planning – statutory consultee
- Managing the South Street Trust
- Managing bookings for street banners above the highway
- Toilets
- Tourism and events
- Town twinning with Andernach in Germany and other friendships
- War memorials



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*The 2016/17  
Council Tax for  
residents living in a  
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## A look back over 2015/16

### Community enhancement

It comes as no surprise that Farnham is often cited as one of the best places to live in the UK. In 2015/16, we continued to make improvements to the town and surrounding villages. Community enhancement is about looking after our town and engendering civic pride.

### Cemeteries

In May, we carried out a five-year inspection to check the **safety of the memorials** in our cemeteries. We found we needed to take immediate action to make 340 memorials safe and wrote to memorial owners to request they took steps to make their memorial permanently safe.



2015 saw the official opening of **West Street chapel** as an artist's studio. This followed a major project to renovate the Grade II listed building and bring it back into community use. We also repaired the historic boundary wall and continued our programme of pathway resurfacing works in each cemetery.

A working group created in partnership with the Hale History Project to provide fresh impetus to the desire to find a sustainable use for **Hale chapels**, has made good progress and has set up the Hale Chapels Trust. A planning application has been submitted to Waverley Borough Council prior to seeking funding for the restoration of the chapels or finding another solution for the dilapidated chapels.

### Farnham in Bloom

2015 marked the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Farnham in Bloom. Even more people got involved in a range of community activities and events, which were designed to enhance Farnham.

Farnham in Bloom involves local people and community organisations working together throughout the whole year. The competition is about more than flowers with entries being judged on:

- horticultural achievement
- environmental responsibility, and
- community participation

Since 2008, Farnham has achieved:

- Gold in the Town Centre category five times
- Gold in the Large Town category four times
- Winner of the large town regional category three years in a row



In 2015, the Victoria Garden, which is managed by a group of volunteers again won *Outstanding* in the It's Your Neighbourhood Award and Gold in the Small Parks Category. Gostrey Meadow, which is managed by Glendale on behalf of Waverley Borough Council

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received Gold in the Small Parks category and a member of Glendale's staff won a horticultural achievement award.

The town is honoured to be the only town in Surrey to have been invited to enter Britain in Bloom in 2016.

### Big Pick

Fire extinguishers, tyres, cans and bottles are just some of the discarded items that have been removed from Farnham's streets as part of the twice-yearly community litter pick weeks known as **Big Pick**. Many volunteer hours are donated by individuals, businesses, councillors, children and voluntary groups towards making the streets cleaner.



In March, Farnham Town Council and many volunteers supported the national litter pick '**Clean for the Queen**'. This was held to mark the Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday in April.

### Getting involved

Farnham in Bloom inspires people to come up with ideas to get involved. The Dance Movement, which is a resident dance company at the Farnham Maltings

successfully applied for a grant to perform a **specialty choreographed dance**, which was performed before the judges by 150 children. A local artist also applied for a grant to put on free **collage-making workshops** on the theme of Farnham in Bloom. Both projects involved members of the community that may not otherwise have been involved.

### Farnham Carnival

Post 19, a Farnham-based organisation for young adults with learning difficulties, represented Farnham in Bloom in the **Farnham carnival**. The 'living' float was decorated with hundreds of plants and flowers that had been grown by the young adults.

### A winter celebration

Despite freezing cold weather, a hardy bunch of Farnham in Bloom supporters rounded off the year's success by coming along to the winter celebration at Gostrey Meadow. Farnham Brass Band provided the music for the **community carol concert**.

### Improving Farnham's streets

We like to think that we can get things done so, after receiving numerous complaints from local residents about the state of the railway bridge on **Firgrove Hill**, we decided to get involved.

For over two years, Farnham Town Council lobbied Network Rail to improve the visual appearance of the bridge. When we heard about plans to close Firgrove Hill for resurfacing, we decided that was the perfect opportunity to paint the bridge.

After further negotiations and with just two days left to take advantage of the road closure, we were very pleased to finally receive permission from Network Rail to carry out cosmetic painting.



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To help us to improve the efficiency of watering the town centre hanging baskets we have made a new addition to our vehicle fleet. Flora is a **hybrid electric utility vehicle**. The new vehicle is smaller than a conventional trucks so it is useful for reaching parts of the cemeteries and allotments, which are usually only accessible on foot.

The tipper-style truck can also be used to transport materials needed for repairs and maintenance as well as bulky items such as gazebos, chairs and equipment for events such as the Farmers' Market and Christmas lights switch-on. The vehicle was named by a member of the public who entered our competition to come up with a winning name.

## Communication

We continue to use a variety of communication tools to reach a wide range of residents.

Our **electronic newsletter** is distributed every 4-6 weeks and continues to be popular with over 850 people subscribing to receive it.

**Social media** is an important channel of communication. Our presence has grown and we have seen a large increase in the number of people visiting our website because of a post they have seen on Facebook or Twitter.

We were delighted to be **shortlisted as a finalist** in the Digital Communication of the Year category in the National Association of Local Councils' Star Council Awards. Farnham received a special mention for its online Report-It service, which aims to take the guess work out of deciding which authority to contact for common problems such as graffiti, a pot hole or a faulty ticket machine in the car park.



The majority of our **press releases** receive coverage in the local media. The reach of the news is extended by additional coverage on the radio and newspapers' associated social media pages and websites. All press releases are circulated to the area's borough and county councillors and residents' association representatives.



The **2016 Official Residents' Guide** was delivered to homes in Farnham. It was packed full of useful information including details about events, councillors' contact details and how to enjoy the best of living in Farnham.

The guide also includes information about the services provided by Farnham Town Council and how it spends its share of the council tax.

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## Community events and presentations

As home to the 3<sup>rd</sup> battalion of the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment we are always proud to show our support. We participated in **Armed Forces Day** in June and **Commonwealth Day** in March.

In November, as well as marking **Remembrance Sunday**, we were proud to see 12



schools taking part in a special service of remembrance at the town centre war memorial on **Armistice Day**.

Once a year, we seek nominations for Farnham's unsung heroes. In February, the Mayor of Farnham presented nine people with **Services to Farnham** awards in recognition of the outstanding or crucial service they provide to the community.

## Tourism and events

Tourism and events are important for our local economy and bring thousands of people into the town each year. In 2015, 'food' was a common theme in many of the year's events.

Farnham people continue to support local farmers by buying goods direct from the producer at the monthly **farmers' market**. The town has also supported producers from further afield by hosting two **Italian food markets**.

Live music was also a key feature in our events programme. The free summer time Music in the Meadow concerts held on a Sunday afternoon continued to be popular. Varying the style of music and providing opportunities for younger musicians to make their debut made the events popular with all age groups.



September's **Food Fortnight**. The two-week long Feast of Food provided people with a chance to try out a different menu every night at 14 specially selected restaurants and pubs. The celebration ended with a day-long **Food Festival** in Castle Street, which was attended by thousands of people.

Christmas is also a time for celebration in Farnham. The season started with the switching on of the **Christmas lights**, which was a family event enjoyed by thousands. In December, we held a **Christmas market**. Over 100 stalls lined Castle Street selling gifts, Christmas decorations, clothing, jewellery and freshly cooked food. A live Nativity and Father Christmas added to the day's entertainment.

The tradition of Christmas was remembered with the **Civic Christmas Carol Service** that was hosted by the Mayor of Farnham in partnership with the Farnham Herald. The highly acclaimed Farnham Youth Choir performed before the congregation, which was made up of volunteers and members of the public.



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## Supporting local causes

Every year, we **award grants** totalling more than £55,000. The grants are given to not-for-profit organisations that can demonstrate how their project will promote the environment and/or community life for residents who live in Farnham and the town's villages.

Many projects have been supported including a grant to carry out essential repairs to the pavilion at Farnham Cricket Club, the running of a programme of educational summer holiday activities for disadvantaged children with social, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and a community garden at a local school.

We also use the allocation of grants to leverage money from other sources. For example, we have launched an appeal to buy a new Hoppa bus for Farnham people. We have granted £5,000 and will match funding from other organisations of up to a further £5,000.

We are also trustee of the South Street Trust fund and oversee the granting of around £20,000 to educational art-based projects.



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## Community grants

During 2015/16, Farnham supported a wide range of local community groups. The recipients were:

Badshot Lea Football Club

Bourne Beautification Group

Brightwells Gostrey Centre

CAB Waverley

Change of Scene

Creative Response

Farnham Art and Design Education

Group (FADEG)

Farnham Brass Band

Farnham Competitive Music Festival

Farnham Cricket Club

Farnham Decorative and Fine Arts

Society

Farnham Local Food

Farnham Maltings

Farnham Maltings Association Ltd

Friends of Potters Gate School

New Ashgate Gallery Trust

Opportunities

Rowledge Cricket Club

Stopgap Dance Company

The 40 Degreez Centre

The Bishop's Meadow Trust

The Cobbett Statue Trust

The Dance Movement

The Farnham Pottery Trust Ltd

The Woodlarks Centre

Voluntary Action South West Surrey

Waverley Hoppa Community Transport

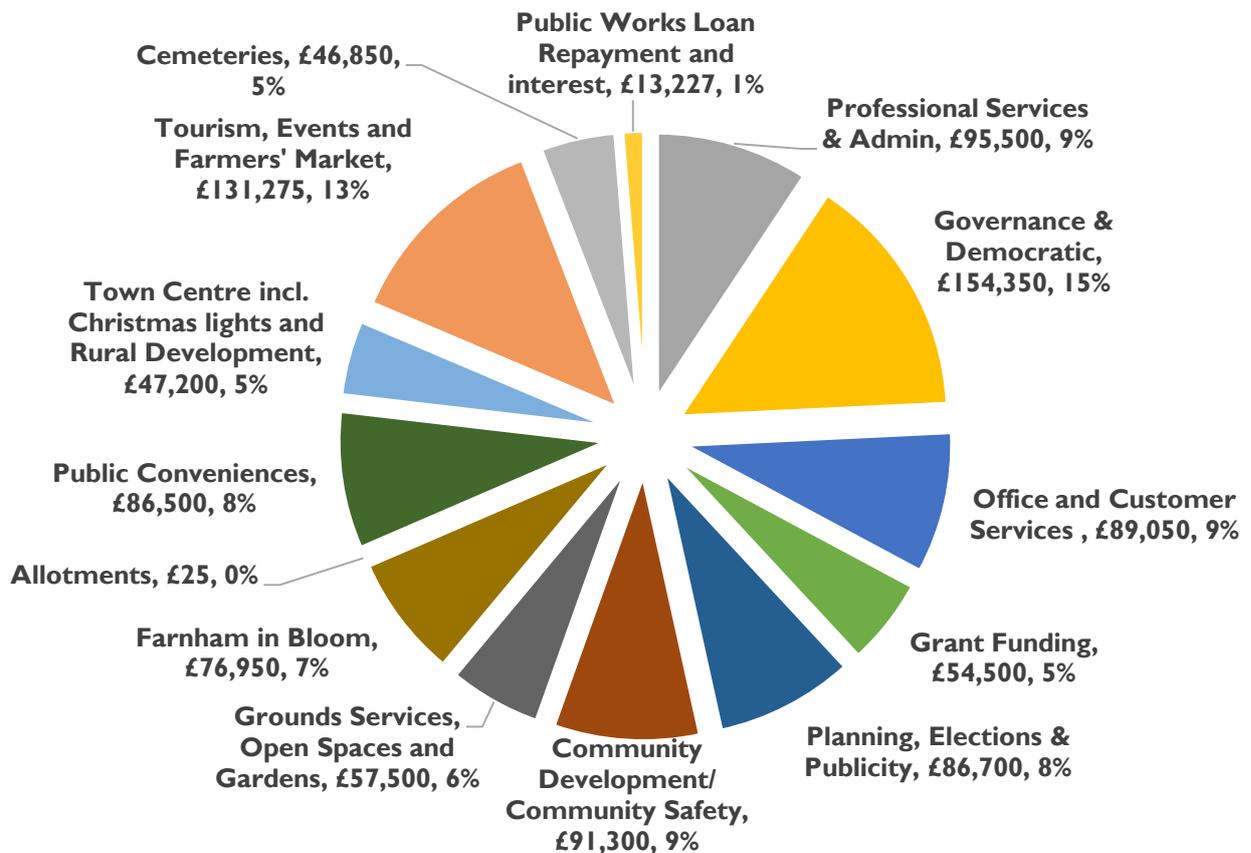


## Finances

### FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL PRECEPT 2016/17

Service Area	Estimated 2015/16 Expenditure			Estimated 2016/17 Expenditure		
	Gross Expenditure	Income	Net Budget	Gross Expenditure	Income	Net Budget
Professional Services & Admin	£103,370	£0	£103,370	£95,500	£0	£95,500
Governance & Democratic	£146,300	£0	£146,300	£156,350	£2,000	£154,350
Office and Customer Services	£75,200	£0	£75,200	£89,050	£0	£89,050
Grant Funding	£54,000	£0	£54,000	£54,500	£0	£54,500
Planning, Elections & Publicity	£77,485	£0	£77,485	£86,700	£0	£86,700
Community Development/Community Safety	£84,435	£3,700	£80,735	£95,800	£4,500	£91,300
Grounds Services, Open Spaces and Gardens	£75,215	£13,800	£61,415	£64,500	£7,000	£57,500
Farnham in Bloom	£99,720	£20,500	£79,220	£96,950	£20,000	£76,950
Allotments	£15,110	£13,100	£2,010	£15,525	£15,500	£25
Public Conveniences	£68,560	£0	£68,560	£86,500	£0	£86,500
Town Centre incl. Christmas lights and Rural Development	£50,200	£6,000	£44,200	£53,200	£6,000	£47,200
Tourism, Events and Farmers' Market	£153,545	£45,500	£108,045	£180,775	£49,500	£131,275
Cemeteries	£142,525	£72,500	£70,025	£123,350	£76,500	£46,850
Public Works Loan Repayment and interest	£18,227	£4,500	£13,727	£18,227	£5,000	£13,227
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£1,163,892</b>	<b>£179,600</b>	<b>£984,292</b>	<b>£1,216,927</b>	<b>£186,000</b>	<b>£1,030,927</b>
Less Government Local Parish Council Tax Support Funding			-£23,235			-£19,745
<b>PRECEPT</b>			<b>£961,057</b>			<b>£1,011,182</b>

## 2016/17 budget at a glance



Farnham Town Council Council will sign off its accounts for 2015/16 at its June meeting for submission to its external Auditor BDO.

The Audited accounts for 2015/16 will be available from September 2016.

## Feedback

If you have any comments or questions, please do get in touch.

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Mayor of Farnham 2015/16  
 Councillor Mrs Pat Frost  
 Deputy Mayor of Farnham 2015/16  
 Councillor John Ward  
 Leader of the Council  
 Councillor John Ward  
 Town Clerk  
 Iain Lynch  
 Town Crier  
 Jonathan Jones

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