



# FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL

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## Notes Environment Working Group

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### **Time and date**

4.30 pm on Wednesday 28th February, 2024

### **Place**

Council Chamber - Farnham Town Hall

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### **Environment Working Group Members Present:**

Councillor Mat Brown  
Councillor George Hesse  
Councillor Mark Merryweather  
Councillor Graham White  
Councillor David Beaman  
Councillor Alan Earwaker (ex officio)  
Councillor Murray (left at 18:10)

Officers: Iain Lynch (Town Clerk), Iain McCready (Business and Facilities Manager) and Stacey Wills (Community Enhancement and Projects Officer)

#### **1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr Jackman and Woodhouse.

#### **2. To receive any declarations of interest**

None received.

#### **3. Notes of the previous meeting**

The notes of the previous meeting were agreed.

#### **4. Climate Change**

Councillors and Officers received an informative and inspirational presentation from Alister Young about the work the volunteer Water Rangers and The River Wey Trust undertake in testing the condition of the rivers in and around Farnham. The presentation delivered at the Working Group was forwarded to all members of Council. It was suggested that FTC may have

a historic Septic tank at the depot. Officers will look to confirm the location and investigate the condition to rule out any potential impact on the local water supply.

The Group were informed by Officers of some of the initiatives for mitigating Climate Change this year with Officers looking at water catchment from Council owned buildings to help with watering of the seasonal displays at the Town Hall and also water catchment throughout the Town Centre if permission is allowed from businesses and residents.

**The Group recommended that:**

- 1) **Officers seek to purchase water butts and irrigation systems to help with the watering of the seasonal floral displays and encourage businesses and residents to adopt the same;**
- 2) **Water testing kits be purchased for schools (3sets) and individual volunteers (6 sets) at a cost of £1,500 from the 2023-24 Community Initiatives budget.**

## **5. Biodiversity Legislation**

The Working Group discussed the training delivered by Surrey CC (slides to be circulated to all councillors) and felt that Farnham Town Council were undertaking the activities and measures talked about already and that Officers should continue to progress and increase Biodiversity projects and initiatives where ever possible.

## **6. Allotments**

The Working Group were given an update on the available plots with the allotments which were currently at 20 and noted the work Officers are undertaking to fill the vacancies with some prospective allotment people taking a while to respond back. It was hoped due to the amount of people on the waiting list being at approximately 100 this would not take too long.

Councillor Brown updated the Working Group on the recent allotment liaison meeting stating that it went well and that all the representatives from the allotments were present.

All the allotment representatives were informed that there would be a rent increase in the next year with another £5 per single plot. The group was informed that this was due to increased costs and that the allotment service has to be self-sustaining.

The group briefly discussed allotment insurance and that it was good that it was mandatory (at £2 per tenant).

It was agreed that the allotment show would be held in September and that some members of the group would be attending the Farnham in Bloom Community Day on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March showcasing all of Farnham's allotments.

It was also agreed that the allotment lecture would be held in May and the topics covered would be helping to improve Biodiversity and the use of alternatives to chemicals within the allotments.

Councillors and Officers spoke about the land between the Six Bells Allotment site and the Hale Road. The land isn't registered and allotment tenants have asked Councillors if FTC can register the land so improvements can be made to the area currently used for parking by allotment holders. The Working group noted this had been agreed at the January Council meeting and was being progressed.

## **7. Parks and Open Spaces**

Councillors were given an update on the current works program and were informed that the following works had been completed.

### **Gostrey Meadow**

- The area to the rear of the Bowling Green had been cleared of old structures.
- The chain link fence had been removed and the area was now open to park users.
- The Rose beds adjacent to the South Street entrance had been cleared with any decent roses re located and the area to be planted with perennial plants which will thrive better.
- The large Lombardy Poplar had been removed from Gostrey Meadow.

### **Riverside**

- The Willows along the Riverside path were to be pollarded in March as part of the annual tree program of works
- Councillors were informed that Wey Valley House had expressed a wish to extend their garden into an area of grass belonging to FTC along the Riverside. Councillors were favourable to this as long as the boundary was continuous without a gate. Councillors asked Officers to measure an appropriate amount of the grass area prior to responding to Wey Valley's request.

**The Working Group have recommended to Strategy & Resources that Officers contact Wey Valley House to ascertain the suitable size of grass area to be leased, as long as it doesn't affect future Farnham Town Council plans and has no access onto the rest of the Riverside Green Space, to enable them to extend their green space/garden due to a redevelopment project.**

### **UCA, Battings and Haren Garden**

Councillors noted the recent work of tree planting and another large Lombardy Poplar removed from Haren Garden

### **Green Flag**

Councillors were informed that all the Green Flag portfolios had been submitted with Hale Cemetery being entered for the first time and that judging for this Cemetery will be in May or June. Other sites will be mystery judged at some point throughout the year.

## **8. Street Furniture**

Officers gave the Working Group an update on the following items:

### **1. Graffiti**

Officers informed the group that graffiti has recently escalated throughout the town centre with lots of tags and markings placed on street furniture. The Group were also informed that Aquarius who undertake the graffiti removal for Farnham Town Council conducted another run in the last month to clean up the town. The Working Group were also informed that there is a lot of Graffiti around the new Brightwell's development and Councillor's asked Officers to report this to Waverley Borough Council. Cllr Murray spoke regarding a large piece of Graffiti near to the Bourne stream and that he has spoken with the resident who owns the wall and they have agreed to fund the purchase of anti graffiti paint to cover the wall which Farnham TC will purchase on their behalf and a community group will undertake the painting with some assistance from Farnham Town Council Outside Workforce which would clear a path to the wall.

### **2. Benches / Bins in open spaces**

The Working Group were notified that the three remaining Coronation benches would be installed by the end of March with them being placed in Halifax Gardens in Rowledge, Hale Cemetery and along Riverside.

### **3. Notable names of Farnham Wall.**

Officers gave an update on the progress of 4 of the names agreed at full Council to go onto the wall. They are as follows:

- Brigadier Paddy Blagden CBE – 26<sup>th</sup> June as part of Armed Forces week. (provisional)
- Author Edgar Austin Mittelholzer – 6<sup>th</sup> May 2025 being 60yrs of death. (provisional)
- Founders of the Rural Life Living Museum Madge and Henry Jackson MBE – possible date of the 24<sup>th</sup> April 2024 when it will be the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the set up of the museum Charitable Trust.
- Distinguished illustrator (including Lord of the Rings and Narnia), Pauline Baynes – possible date of the 20<sup>th</sup> October 2024 being the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first illustrated Tolkien book “ Farmer Giles of Ham” by Pauline Baynes was released.
- A further name of a Rowledge resident recommended to be included was Alan Mitchell, (1922-1995), an Internationally acclaimed Tree expert and Dendrologist. He was recommended for inclusion in 2025, the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death.

#### **Recommendation to Council**

Alan Mitchell, (1922-1995) Internationally acclaimed Tree expert and Dendrologist be included on the Notable Names of Farnham wall.

### **9. Farnham in Bloom**

Officers updated members regarding the appointment of Pat Evans as chair of the Farnham in Bloom Community Group. The next meeting of this group was on the 6<sup>th</sup> March where the group would be asked for input on schools competitions and Secret Garden categories.

Members noted the list of events for 2024. Officers outlined the plans for the Farnham in Bloom Community Day on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> March. The take up from community groups was good with a children’s animal farm booked, volunteering opportunities and live music.

Farnham in Bloom are entering 5 categories this year for South and South East In Bloom and had also been nominated to take part in RHS Britain in Bloom final in the Town Centre category.

Sponsorship confirmed to date includes The Patio Black Spot Removal Company Ltd (Gold), BBS Ltd (Gold), Zenzero (Silver) and Bush Hotel (Silver).

### **10. Cemeteries and Burial Matters**

Officers gave an update on the current burial figures. The figures were very similar to those of last year. The income is slightly down against budget but Officers informed the Councillors that there were two funerals booked for March so the figures should improve. Councillors noted that the expenditure was also down.

Officers gave an update on the current grounds maintenance works within the cemetery and Councillors noted that the main hedge in West Street would be cut in March before the nesting bird season.

Councillors were also updated on the recruitment for the replacement of Adrienne Owen and that it had been re advertised with interviews before the end of March.

### **11. Finance**

Councillors noted the current financial position.

**12. Date of the next scheduled meeting**

The date of the next meeting was agreed to be held on the 5<sup>th</sup> June 2024 at 4:30pm.

The meeting ended at 7.00 pm

Notes written by Iain McCready