



FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL

B

Notes Environment Working Group

Time and date

4.30 pm on Wednesday 25th September, 2024

Place

Council Chamber - Farnham Town Hall

Environment Working Group Members Present:

Councillor Mat Brown (Lead Member)
Councillor Mark Merryweather
Cllr Hesse (attended remotely)

In attendance

Councillor Alan Earwaker (present but not a member of the Working Group)
Councillor Andrew Laughton (present but not a member of the Working Group)
Councillor White (present but not a member of the Working Group)

Officers: Iain Lynch (Town Clerk) and Iain McCready (Business and Facilities Manager)

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Jackman and Woodhouse

2. To receive any declarations of interest

None were declared.

3. Notes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 28th February was agreed.

4. Farnham in Bloom

The Working Group covered several important topics related to Farnham in Bloom and community activities:

Awards Ceremony: Officers informed the group that the awards ceremony will be held at Squires Garden Centre on 9th October.

Mayor's Special Award: The group reviewed nominations and agreed that Gemma Ball from Badshot Lea School for her ongoing support of Farnham in Bloom. Over the years, she has been instrumental in integrating gardening activities into the school's curriculum, encouraging students to engage with the environment and promoting horticultural practices. This award highlights the importance of youth involvement in environmental stewardship and sets an example for how schools can play a vital role in community-driven projects like Farnham in Bloom. should receive the award for her support of Farnham in Bloom, particularly in promoting gardening at her school.

Bloom Awards Update: Officers reported success at the South and Southeast in Bloom Awards, achieving 5 golds with 3 being best in category. Looking forward, the Group discussed entries into the 2025 competition. A key focus was on the Town Centre category, especially since planned FiP (Farnham Infrastructure Programme) works could disrupt the judging route.

The Group agreed to keep the Town Centre in the competition but retain the flexibility to withdraw the entry if the ongoing works make it impractical.

Green Flag Nominations: The Group recommended that the Library Gardens be included in the 2025 Green Flag Award nominations. The Working Group were informed that as the lease from Surrey CC is 10 years a management plan would be beneficial for the site and progress will then be monitored and managed as per the plan.

Litter Pickers: The Group discussed improving communication and management for Farnham's litter pickers and agreed to explore Spelthorne Council's model for better coordination on a ward basis. It was agreed that Councillors should encourage their ward volunteers in any new ideas and help collate information for the officers. The Group also agreed locations for the 2 minute litter boards which had been agreed with the previous administration.

Grants for Schools: The idea of providing grants to schools for horticultural equipment and seeds was briefly discussed, and the Group welcomed a further report on this at a later date.

5. **Parks and Open Spaces**

The Working Group received and welcomed the officers' report, acknowledging the extensive work carried out throughout Farnham this year. The Group was informed that tree planting for the Queens Green Canopy along the Riverside is scheduled for autumn, with additional trees to be planted across the town as part of ongoing environmental efforts.

The Town Clerk advised that the external assessment report regarding the removal of the Lombardy Poplar in Gostrey Meadow still needed to be submitted to Waverley Borough Council's Enforcement by the Business & Facilities Manager, explaining the reasons for the removal. Officers clarified that both the tree in Gostrey Meadow and the Lombardy Poplar in Haren Garden had been surveyed. The tree in Haren Garden showed signs of significant decay at its base, while the tree in Gostrey Meadow exhibited decay above ground, which, due to its location, posed a safety risk, leading to its removal.

Officers also updated the Group on the progress of transferring the management of Library Gardens from Surrey County Council to Farnham Town Council. Although no fixed date has been set, the transition is expected to occur very soon.

Councillor Brown left the meeting

As the Meeting was no longer quorate (from appointed members) the following items were discussed for information

6. Street Furniture

Graffiti

Members were informed that training had been undertaken by Officers to enable them to deliver training to councillors and staff on graffiti removal and the safe use of chemicals.

Benches

Officers informed the group that there had been a lot of repairs undertaken so far this year on council owned benches and that Men in Sheds had helped refurbish and repair some benches around the town.

Notable names of Farnham

Councillors noted that the Pauline Baynes celebration is booked for the 18th October and invites had been sent out.

The Group was also informed that a provisional date had been set for the celebration of author Edgar Austin Mittelholzer on the 6th May 2025 being 60yrs since his death.

7. Climate Change

Councillor White gave an update on the work WBC are undertaking to combat climate change and suggested that Farnham Town Council undertakes the work needed to calculate its own Carbon Footprint. Once this was ascertained then a meeting of the Climate Change Task Group would be scheduled.

8. Cemeteries and Burial Matters

Members noted the current burial figures and work undertaken throughout the summer.

9. Allotments

Councillors noted the current position with regards to the vacancies and noted the increase in the allotment rent £5 which was agreed at a previous council meeting for the coming year.

10. Date of next scheduled meeting

The date of the next meeting is the 27th November 2024.

The meeting ended at 6.22 pm

Notes written by Iain McCready