



# FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL

# B

## Notes Environment Working Group

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### **Time and date**

27<sup>th</sup> February 2025, commenced at 16.30

### **Place**

Council Chamber

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

Councillor Matt Brown (Lead Member)  
Councillor Alan Earwaker  
Councillor Tim Woodhouse  
Councillor Chris Jackman  
Councillor David Beaman

Officers: Iain Lynch (Town Clerk) and Ben Binnell (Interim Business and Facilities Manager)

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

Apologies were received from Councillor Hesse

#### **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 27<sup>th</sup> November were agreed.

#### **4. Farnham in Bloom**

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

- i) Proposed volunteer events for 2025:** Councillors agreed the proposed dates for 2025.

- ii) **In Bloom entries for 2025:** These had been previously agreed with Councillors with the understanding that the town centre may still be removed due to the town centre road works. At the meeting this was reiterated.
- iii) **Hive Helpers and the Bee Trail:** The Working Group discussed the two options that Officers presented to them for the Oak rubbing posts at 12 locations throughout Farnham. Option one, with a brass plaque costing £2,236.80; option two with synthetic stone plaques costing £1,680. Councillors asked if Men and Sheds could create the holes in the post in both options.

Officers presented an option to extend the idea of oak posts with rubbing plaques to cemeteries, for example one for stag beetle loggery, one for bug hotel, wildflowers etc. A productive discussion was held as to which cemeteries this could be trialled and the benefits the scheme might bring to children and adults. Following a trial in Badshot Lea Cemetery (in Champion of Champions Category for South and South East in bloom 2025, and Hale a wider roll out could be implemented.

The siting of a proposed native hedge at Gostrey Meadow close to the Farnham sign was discussed. This was requested by GreenUp Britain. Councillors felt that perhaps this was not the best location of for the dead hedge and that it may be more impactful if part of a wider wildlife corridor.

#### **Recommendations:**

- i) **To progress Option two for the oak posts for the bee trail at a cost of £1,680.**
- ii) **To progress with a trial of further oak post trails in Badshot Lea and Hale cemeteries, with West Street cemetery and Green Lane being considered thereafter.**

It was agreed that Officers return to a future meeting with a proposal for the resiting of the bug hotel at Gostrey Meadow and areas in the town where a cohesive wildlife corridor with native hedging could be created. Officers should consider talking to the Biodiversity Action Group for a steer on this.

## **5. Sponsorship update**

The Working Group discussed the drop in sponsorship compared with recent years, and the lack of a main sponsor this year. Councillors discussed using their contacts within the community to get new sponsorship.

The Working Group discussed approaching major contractors working in the town such as Ringway for the headline sponsorship as part of their CSR programme noting that funding had been achieved from South East Water when disruption had been caused previously. It was agreed other existing supplier should be approached as well.

Councillors discussed which local business and individuals could be approached noting this was often best led through personal contacts, which Councillors were likely to have.

It was agreed officers approach a range of potential sponsors for the year ahead and that all councillors should propose which they could assist with.

## **6. Parks and Open Spaces**

The Working Group received and welcomed the officers' report, acknowledging the hedge cutting and the plug planting taking place through March.

### **Library Gardens**

It was noted that work had commenced on Library Gardens but that the licence agreement had not yet been signed. With SCC, work needed to take place before nesting season commenced. There was

the outstanding question of Japanese knotweed on site and whether it had all been treated through 2024, which SCC will confirm.

### **Green Flag**

Officers confirmed that full Green Flag judging will take place at Gostrey Meadow, Badshot Lea Cemetery and West Street Cemetery and that Hale Cemetery will be mystery shopped. All management plans had been submitted.

### **Composting**

The current arrangements for composting and green material disposal was discussed. The bulk of the material was currently taken to the yard at West Street and disposed of into skips. Having proper formalised compost heaps at the key sites for example Gostrey Meadow, West Street cemetery, Badshot Lea, amongst others, would reduce the number of skips needed and would also increase productivity as it would reduce travel time back and forth to the depot. An option to purchase a chipper was discussed as this would dramatically reduce green waste costs and increase productivity. Finally, the Work Groups discussed the option of having mulching decks on the mowers instead of removing the grass to skips

### **Tree Survey**

An update was presented on the latest tree survey being undertaken by RMT Tree consultancy. The Working group was advised on the lime tree at Badshot Lea Cemetery that required urgent felling, and was due to take place in early March. It was noted that a rough estimate on the cost of the remedial work overall, could be in the region of £100K, phased through the next three years. A report would be submitted once the whole survey had been completed.

### **Surrey County Council Community Highways Volunteering initiative**

The Working Group discussed the merits of signing up to the Surrey County Council initiative on volunteering, which has replaced the Lengthsman scheme. It was felt that this may have too much focus on work outside of the realm of responsibility of FTC and that the priority should be to concentrate effort on FTC assets. However, signing up to the scheme did not require the work to be done but enabled activity on relevant land if needed.

### **Recommendation:**

**FTC sign up to the SCC Highways volunteering initiative.**

### **Hard Surface weed control**

Officers presented the options currently available for hard surface weed control which included manual removal, herbicide, acetic acid, hot foam and a home remedy of household products consisting of a mixture of salt, vinegar. The benefits and drawbacks of each were discussed.

### **Recommendations:**

**It is recommended that:**

- 1) Compost bays are created at key sites, including Gostrey Meadow, West Street Cemetery, Hale Cemetery, Badshot Lea Cemetery, Evelyn Borelli Garden of Remembrance.**
- 2) A chipper and mulching decks be purchased to improve efficiency**
- 3) FTC signs up to the SCC community highways volunteering scheme but target the activities that would benefit Farnham in Bleem**
- 4) An experiment of using a salt and vinegar mixture for weed control be implemented.**

## 7. Street Scene

The Working Group received an update on the following

### i) Graffiti

The issue of graffiti at the Woolmead site was discussed, noting that it was a blight on the entrance to the town. It was a matter for Waverley to remove, but WBC has said it will only remove offensive graffiti. It was noted that heras fencing instead of the hoarding may be an option which would reduce the opportunity for graffiti but would show the site awaiting development.

The option for painted panels by UCA or local schools was also noted, and it was agreed subject to further discussion with Homes England that own the site to recommend FTC clear the current graffiti.

### ii) Notable names of Farnham

The Working Group considered adding Lieutenant-colonel John Luard a veteran of the Peninsular war and Waterloo and founder Chairman of the Farnham school Science and Arts, to the notable names of Farnham wall.

### iii) Bus Stops

The poor state of a number of bus stops was discussed including two in Alama Lane. The Surrey bus stop specialist, Alison Houghton, had been contacted to see if there was any outstanding Section 106 funding available to refurbish these. The ownership of the bus stops was uncertain and it was noted that real time information could be provided on any replacement bus stops. It was agreed to recommend using CIL funding if there was no Section 106 funding remaining and that FTC would take ownership of the new bus stops.

The options for updating vinyl wrapping for bus stops was also discussed noting that the revised designs were to be circulated to the Working Group for their observations.

## Recommendations

**It is recommended that:**

- 1) FTC raise the need for further treatment of all graffiti at Woolmead with Waverley and Homes England and that depending on the response FTC do a one-off paint of the hoarding graffiti.**
- 2) FTC Officers review with Homes England (or the subsequent developer) the possibility of UCA and local schools being commissioned to do art panels for the hoarding.**
- 3) Lt Colonel John Luard be added to the Notable Names of Farnham wall.**
- 4) FTC seeks any remaining SCC Section 106 funding to replace the two obsolete Alma lane bus stops and agrees to allocate partial or full FTC CIL funding to enable the project to go ahead.**

## 8. Cemeteries and Burial Matters

- 1) The Working Group noted the current burial figures.
- 2) The Working Group considered an appeal for a Kerb Set in West Street Cemetery and agreed with the determination of the officers and Town Clerk that the circumstances did not justify an exception to the Regulations. The Appeal was not upheld.

## **9. Allotments**

Councillors noted the current position with regards to the vacancies and demand and a revised process for letting the allotments to reduce the vacancy period and loss of income. Following a recent situation on one allotment, the need for a social media policy was discussed and this would need further discussion at the Allotments Liaison Group. Councillors discussed the role of the site reps as discussed at the last Liaison Group and noted that considerations should be given to an appropriate reward for the responsibilities of site representatives.

## **10. Date of next scheduled meeting**

The date of the next meeting was to be confirmed

The meeting ended at 8 pm

Notes written by Ben Binnell