



FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL

B

Notes

Community & Culture Working Group

Time and date

10.30 am on Wednesday 16th April, 2025

Place

Council Chamber - Farnham Town Hall

Community & Culture Working Group Members Present:

Councillor Alan Earwaker
Councillor Andrew Laughton
Councillor Michaela Martin
Councillor Brodie Mauluka (ex-Officio)
Councillor Kika Mirylees (Lead Member)
Councillor Graham White

Officers: Oliver Cluskey (Events Manager), Megan Cross (Events Assistant) and Iain Lynch (Town Clerk)

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Dickson.

2. Disclosures of interest

None were made.

3. Notes of the last meeting

The notes to the last meeting were agreed.

4. Recent events

a. Music in the Vineyard

The January and February events at the Vineyard Centre were well-attended and there has been good feedback from those who attended. The March date was quieter due to a clash with Mothering Sunday and good weather.

Action: Ensure future dates do not clash with UK Holidays (Easter Sunday, Mother's Day etc.)

b. Farnham Literary Festival – 6-16 March 2025

Members discussed the fourth annual Farnham Literary Festival and agreed that it was a huge

success. Headline authors included David Walliams, Lorraine Kelly, Louis De Berniere and Rev Richard Coles. Members were informed that over 50 events took place across 11 venues in 11 days, and it was estimated that over 3,000 tickets were sold with a further 2,000 school children participating in the Schools Programme organised by the Blue Bear Bookshop. 25 events were organised and run by Farnham Town Council with 17 being held in the Council Chamber. Feedback from both attendees and authors was extremely positive with the most popular events being 'celebrity' authors and entertainers, panels and performances. The 2025 festival was successfully completed well within budget.

Highlights included:

- The Schools' Programme facilitated author visits to 9 local schools, reaching approximately 2000 children.

- 3 competitions took place; Farnham's First Five Pages (novel writing), Farnham Flash Fiction and Farnham Poetry Competition.

- Youth Events:

 - Author Talk: Lisa Stickley 4-8 years and 9-11 years (Frensham Heights)

 - Author Talk: Nick Sharratt's Picture Book Drawalong (Farnham Maltings)

 - Performance: Macbeth (Frensham Heights)

 - Workshop: Drawalong Storytime with Sharon Davey (Farnham Library)

 - Workshop: Fantasy Workshop with Sam Stewart

 - Author Talk: Nicola Garrard, Young Adult (Farnham Library)

- 19 Sold out events:

 - Panel: Mum's the Word (60, FTC)

 - Pub Quiz (Farnham Waterstones)

 - Comedy: Andy Zaltzman: The Zaltgeist (Farnham Maltings)

 - Author Talk: An Evening with Louis de Bernières (200, FTC)

 - Performance: LGBTQ+ Stories Through Movement and Words (Farnham Library)

 - Illustrated Talk: A Tour of the Architecture of Castle Street with Michael Blower (60, FTC)

 - Performance: An Audience with C.S. Lewis by Jonathan Jones (60, FTC)

 - Panel: The Craze for Cosy Crime (60, FTC)

 - Author Talk: An Evening with Reverend Richard Coles (200, FTC)

 - Workshop: Reading High Frequency Words Accurately and Fluently (25, Helen Arkell Dyslexia Charity)

 - Panel: Beginner to Bestseller (40, Oxfam Books & Music)

 - Author Talk: Lennie Goodings: The History of Virago Press (40, Oxfam Books & Music)

 - Author Talk: Celebrating Local Authors (50, Farnham Library)

 - Panel: Current Affairs (60, FTC)

 - Author Talk: Doon Mackichan (60, FTC)

 - Author Talk / Performance: David Walliams (384, FTC)

 - Workshop: Fantasy Workshop with Sam Stewart (40, Farnham Library)

 - Workshop: How to Get Published (12, FTC)

 - Author Talk: Santa Montefiore (60, FTC)

Members were informed that there were several challenges with the co-ordinator, not being Farnham-based. This would be reviewed for 2026.

A further challenge was that FTC had organised and run 24 of the events. There were further logistical obstacles with other venues needing assistance managing their events.

Members suggested that it be made clear to external organisations and venues that they need to be responsible for the organising and logistics of their own events in 2026.

Members suggested getting local restaurants involved as venues for 2026.

5. Future events and projects

a. Farnham Town Football and Rugby Club Bus Parade – Monday 21st April

Members discussed the FTFC and FRC bus parade due to take place on bank holiday Monday in celebration of winning their leagues. Farnham Town Council were offering financial support of £2,500 as well as officer time and equipment.

b. VE Day 80 – Thursday 8th May

Members discussed the evening event to be held in Gostrey Meadow between 8pm and 9.45pm which would end with a beacon lighting with the High Sheriff.

Confirmed schedule:

20.00 Alder Valley Brass Band

20.40 Parade from War Meadow to stage area.

20.45 Speeches, singer and confetti cannons. Dismiss parade participants.

21.20 Farnham RBL to return to stage area to form-up ahead of Beacon.

21.30 Beacon lighting and singing of God Save the King.

21.45 Turn off Beacon. Event ends.

c. Farnham Walking Festival – 10th May – 1st June

Members were informed that despite efforts, no volunteer Walking Festival coordinator had been found to help support shaping the programme. However, over 30 walks had been confirmed, and the brochure was now complete.

Action: Look to recruit a volunteer coordinator to organise the Walking Festival

d. Sustainability Festival – 18th May

Members were informed that approximately 40 stalls had been confirmed.

Members agreed to the rebranding of Farnham Sustainability Festival to encompass wellbeing.

Members agreed to allow Farnham Cycle Campaign to set-up in Gostrey Meadow free of charge to provide a 'Dr Bike' service. Members suggested to reach out to Farnham Cycle Campaign about offering this service at Farnham Sustainability Festival.

Action: Agree 3 dates with Farnham Cycle Campaign for this initiative

e. Music in the Meadow

Members were informed that the Band and Charity spaces were almost complete (list in the agenda). Members agreed to extend World Music Day to 12pm – 6pm

f. Chillout Picnic

Members agreed the proposed change in timings to 10am – 7pm with the addition of yoga sessions in the morning.

Action: Check FTC public liability

g. Central Car Park Markets

Members were informed of the confirmed dates for 2025.

Antiques and Brocante: 13th April, 15th June, 21st September

UK Artists and Makers: 18th May, 5th October, 30th November

Vegan Market: 6th July

h. Farnham Film Festival

The Events Manager informed members that January was the most suitable time having spoken to potential organisations and raised concern about capacity with the Literary Festival being so close. There was concern that UCA may not be in a position to offer much which would leave the Maltings and Reel who in business terms were technically competitors.

Members were still keen to progress a weekend Festival and agreed to organise a small meeting between Jack Jewers, Cllr Kika Mirylees, a representative from both Reel Cinema and Farnham Maltings and UCA if possible.

Potentially go ahead with a coordinator (employed by Farnham Town Council) responsible for putting together the programme, marketing materials (brochure, posters), sponsorship and accessing the community. Cllr Loughton and Cllr White offered support.

The Events Manager suggested Farnham Town Council offer a grant system to encourage organisations or individuals (Film students) to organise events

Action: Events Manager to organise an initial meeting with the core group and look for a Farnham Film Festival coordinator.

i. World Craft Town

Artist in Residence – Cristina Lorenzet

Members were updated on the second Farnham Craft Town Residency which took place between 3rd February and 16th March 2025. The final piece, created by ceramicist Cristina Lorenzet and gifted to the South Street Trust, was currently exhibited in the Craft Study Centre.

The Artist in Residence applications were due to open for February / March 2026 in July 2025.

Members commented on the success of the Farnham Craft Town social media content.

ii. Farnham Lantern Festival

Members agreed to keep the date of the Farnham Lantern Festival as Friday 31st October 2025.

6. Business Update

a. BID

Members noted that the BID Manager role was now vacant as Cat Mitton had resigned. The BID Rangers were now in post and had been offered a space initially at the Council Offices to leave belongings and charge equipment (radios/phones).

Members were keen to steer organisations together like the Visitors' forum had in the past and agreed that 2025 was extremely important for the future of the BID.

Members agreed that with a Farnham-based Manager, the BID should prove to be a success.

b. Coffee Van in Gostrey Meadow

Jamies coffee van had recently started trading in Gostrey Meadow and it was noted that electric was being used on a regular basis. It had been previously agreed that the vendor would only use electric when the solar panel electric ran out. A meeting had been organised to discuss this as well as the upcoming playground work which was due to start in June for 6 weeks. Members agreed that once the playground was finished, footfall would dramatically increase.

7. Sponsorship

8a. Sponsorship for 2024 -25

Members noted the position of sponsorship for 2024-25

8b. Sponsors confirmed for 2025-26

Principal Summer: £3,000 Kidd Rapinet

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Gold Food and Drink Festival: £1,000: Kidd Rapinet

Gold Food and Drink Festival: £1,000: Bush Hotel

Silver October Craft Month: £500 Frensham Heights

Gold Christmas Market: £1,000: Kidd Rapinet

Principal Farnham Literary Festival: £3,000 Frensham Heights

Current total (as of April 2025): £12,500 e to increase.

Members noted that Shaw Gibbs (3 year deal agreed from 2024-25) and Kidd Rapinet had confirmed. The Events manager informed members that other approaches were awaiting response.

Members suggested targeting a number of specific businesses which were noted.

8. Financial Update

There was no update due to the date of meeting at the beginning of the new financial year.

9. Community Update

There was no update given.

10. Items for future meetings

There were no additional items discussed and nothing requested to be added

11. Date of next meeting

Date of next meeting was agreed as Thursday 10 July 2025 at 10.30am

The meeting ended at 1.30 pm

Notes written by Oliver Cluskey