



FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL

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Notes Environment Working Group

Time and date

10th September 2025, commenced at 4 p.m.

Place

Council Chamber

Environment Working Group Members Present:

Councillor Matt Brown (Lead Member)
Councillor Graham White
Councillor Mark Merryweather (attending via Zoom)

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

1. Apologies for absence

Councillor Tim Woodhouse, Councillor Chris Jackman and Councillor Alan Earwaker.

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 16th July 2025 were agreed.

4. Tree Survey 2025

The members were updated about the tree survey carried out by RMT at the beginning of 2025. 188 trees were assessed across 17 sites. All the priority 3 works would be completed by the end of 2025. It was also mentioned that one of the large trees in Haren Garden which was taken down will be made to a eat. The works will be carried out on the 19th of September.

5. Allotments

The Working Group was informed about the revised allotment wating list - as of 01.09.25 with 230 applicants on the wating list.

Prospective tenants will be encouraged to accept the unallocated, unpopular plots on the basis that the Outside Workforce will clear the area—strimming to ground level—prior to the commencement of the tenancy agreement and where required rotavate the plot.

It was noted that the number of uncultivated plots now stood at over 40. All relevant plot holders had been issued with a Notice to Improve, and it was anticipated that some plots would become available following the termination of tenancy agreements. The Working Group suggested that a polite notice was placed on each of the uncultivated allotments informing that FTC is aware and dealing with the uncultivated allotment.

Farnham Town Council officers will conduct visits to all allotment sites and meet with site representatives with a full update provided at the next meeting.

The Working Group noted the main point for discussion at the upcoming allotment Representatives meeting would be the uncultivated plots on each of the allotments.

The Working Group members were updated on a small number of complaints from both existing and new allotment holders regarding double occupancy and unclear plot boundaries. In response: Officers will agree a standardised format for plot marking with new plot markers placed where required.

All impacted allotment holders would be notified accordingly.

Resolved complaints included:

- Removal of overhanging branches at Shepherd & Flock
- Dripping tap repaired at Six Bells and Morley Road

The Working Group noted the current projects which included:

- Two additional taps and a water butt to be installed at the Wrecclesham site;
- The pathways between plots are to be reinstated (and maintained) to 2 feet width;
- Reinstatement of water extraction from the river (by West Street allotments) was being considered.

Numbering of Allotment Plots – Officers will be contacting all allotment holders to remind them of the requirement to clearly mark their plot numbers, in accordance with clause 8.22 of the agreement.

The Working Group noted that there had not been an allotment show in 2025 (in line with the Site Representatives agreement) but suggested that produce competition should be reconsidered for all allotment sites. The Working Group also discussed the requirement for a revision, sometime in 2026, of the allotment rules.

6. Parks and Open Spaces

Gostrey Meadow Playground

The Working Group was updated on the Completion of Phase 1 of the playground redevelopment project and the official opening ceremony held on 1st August 2025 noting Phase 2 was scheduled following the completion of the amenity block. It was further noted specialist consultants had been commissioned to assist with the tendering process of the Amenity Building.

The Borelli Shelter.

The Working Group noted the options for The Borelli Shelter following a survey by the Garrick Consultancy. The detail would be decided as part of the wider Gostrey Amenity Building project.

Union Road/Longbridge Junction Entrance – The Working Group was updated on improvement works to the northwest entrance to Gostrey Meadow, located at the Union Road/Longbridge junction which would be carried out shortly.

Gostrey Footbridge – The Working Group noted Officers were obtaining quotes for some minor remedial works.

Gostrey Meadow – other: The Working Group was informed about the long overdue Gostrey Meadow grassy area renovation to restore its health and appearance. The works would include weed treatment, fertiliser application, spiking and re-seeding (to ensure even coverage across the lawn). These improvements would be carried out by the Outside Workforce.

The Working Group also noted that the raised flower bed adjacent to the War Memorial was due to be removed as part of ongoing landscaping enhancements.

Library Gardens

The Working Group noted the significant programme of clearance and cleaning which had recently been completed at the library gardens which included overgrown vegetation removal and power washing the paved surfaces surrounding the fountain and the upper sitting area.

Plans to open the back gate at the bottom of the gardens, providing direct access to the Bishops Meadows site were pending subject to installation of CCTV and the installation of an Alert Bell notifying closure of the gardens.

Riverside (by Brightwells Tennis Club)

Members noted the community-led vegetation clearance event along the riverbank was taking place on 25th September 2025 led by Surrey Wildlife Trust, the Farnham Biodiversity Group, and Farnham Town Council (FTC). All were welcome to take part. The project aims to raise awareness about local biodiversity and the importance of maintaining healthy waterways by enhancing water flow and supporting the ecological health of the river corridor.

Town Centre

The Members were updated on the expected timeline of the 220sqm of raingardens being ready for FTC to take over and undertake planting. These sustainable drainage features are designed to capture and filter rainwater, reduce surface runoff, and promote urban greening. The planting in Union Road would start mid to end of October with a variety of native and pollinator-friendly plants will be planted to enhance the gardens' visual appeal and ecological value. Members noted these installations were part of a broader effort to improve climate resilience and green infrastructure within Farnham's urban landscape.

Members discussed the potential issues with watering the gardens, the potential use of standpipes and the idea of planting herbs in the freestanding planters.

Nursery

The Working Group was updated on the works to a new improved composting area in the FTC nursery. This initiative was designed to significantly reduce green waste generated from grounds maintenance and horticultural activities across the town with the composting area also being integrated into the nursery's operations.

SANG

The Working Group was informed about Farnham Town Council discussing the potential management of the Moor Park (SANG). This could align with FTC's ongoing strategic objectives to manage local green infrastructure and public open spaces and help spread the operational overheads. A meeting between FTC and the developer's planning advisor has been arranged for 11th of September – an update would follow.

OTHER MATTERS

Loss of contract – Members were made aware of a loss of a new contract for a neighbouring parish's summer and winter flowers after they had decided to use a private contractor.

Litter Picker Trolleys - The Working Group were updated on the popularity of a litter picker trolley given to a regular Sunday litter picker group by FTC. The group had now requested further trolleys -estimating that around eight trolleys would be ideal. As each trolley costs approximately £150, officers were seeking local businesses who might sponsor the project to support this valuable community effort as part of Farnham in Bloom.

7. Cemeteries and Burial Matters

The Members received a detailed update on current burial figures and the administration of Farnham's cemeteries as well as memorial testing and repairs.

Appeals. The Members were updated on appeals - no appeals since the last meeting although the breach reported to the last meeting was rediscussed following a positive response from the copyright holder. The Panel also expressed serious concern about the rude and aggressive behaviour of the out-of-area stonemason to a member of the Council staff and agreed that this was unacceptable and could not be tolerated. The Appeal Panel's decisions are set out at **Exempt Annex I**.

Cemetery Project Work

The Working Group was updated on planned and project works which included

- the repair of tree-damaged historic flint wall in Hale Cemetery; and the Lych Gate refurbishment. Which was awaiting Luard Conservation Ltd's condition report and recommendations.
- The refurbished listed gates (undertaken by Lost Art) in West Street Cemetery had become rusty around the lock and officers are following up with Lost Art to find a solution to preserve the gates long term.
- Prepare management plans and submission for a Green Flag award in Green Lane Cemetery along with restoring the top path to a safer condition (where tree roots have lifted the path). The scheduled tree works to 25 trees in the cemetery would be carried out in December 2025 and a plan drawn up for the replacement of the trees. In addition extensive work on hedge cutting/control was scheduled towards the end of 2025.

Cemetery Regulations

The Members discussed the need to do a formal review/update the Cemetery Regulations in place since 2016. It was agreed to do this in 2026, with a representative from ICCM invited to meet with Councillors prior to the regulations update.

Date of next scheduled meeting

The date of the next meeting was agreed as 27th November 2025

The meeting ended at 6.15 p.m.

Notes written by Lucy Dorkins