



# FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL

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## Notes

## Community Working Group

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### **Time and date**

9.30 am on Wednesday 5th July, 2023

### **Place**

Council Chamber - Farnham Town Hall

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### **Community Working Group Members Present:**

Councillor Alan Earwaker (ex-Officio)  
Councillor Andrew Laughton  
Councillor Brodie Mauluka  
Councillor Kika Mirylees  
Cllr Dixon (via zoom)

#### Officers:

Oliver Cluskey (Events Manager)  
Lara Miller (Communities officer)  
Iain Lynch (Town Clerk)

#### **1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllr Dixon and Cllr Jackman. Cllr Dixon joined by zoom.

#### **2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

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

As this was the first meeting of the Communities Working Group, there were no minutes to review.

#### **4. Overview of the work of the Community Working Group**

Member received a presentation on the work of the Community Working Group which covered the annual events programme and community projects. Members were encouraged to review the programme but it was noted that the programme was up to capacity with regard to existing staffing resources. Members discussed the objectives of the programme which were to create a vibrant community, increase footfall to support local businesses, attract visitors and to improve wellbeing. It was noted that the ambition was to have something happening in Farnham every month (not all organised by the Town Council) so that Farnham was always seen as a place to

go. With the Farnham Maltings programme and events organised by community groups there was a positive benefit for all.

There was a discussion about the Ron Lancaster Memorial gates in Gostrey Meadow, which were a challenge for some drivers. The Working Group heard of several options that had been considered for replacement gates in Longbridge or widening the space in Union Road, and these had been considered in the context of future plans for Gostrey Meadow and the alternate option of moving the Falkner fountain. It was noted this was under active consideration and would be further discussed at the Assets task Group and Strategy & Resources.

The Working Group received details of events currently led by Farnham Town Council recognising that these may not always be something that had to be done by the Town Council:

- **Music in the Vineyard (January-April)**  
Programme of live music for the elderly demographic in the winter months.
- **Farnham Literary Festival (March)**  
A varied and inclusive festival targeting all demographics and included a Schools' programme. Members were informed that there was a £10,000 budget which included a co-ordinator.
- **Walking Festival (May-June)**  
The 2023 Walking Festival had over 30 walks and included 2 runs. Members noted the benefits of recruiting a volunteer co-ordinator if possible.
- **Music in the Meadow (May-September)**  
Weekly outdoor music concerts with regular attendees. The programme covers a wide range of music genres and included a young artists show case each year. Members were informed that due to the number of regular attendees it was inappropriate to change the programme too radically.
- **Sustainability Festival (May or June)**  
Members were informed that the Sustainability Festival replaced the Spring Festival and was a partnership with the Farnham Community Farm. All proceeds from stalls were transferred to FCF as this was the basis of the agreement.
- **Proms and Pop in the Park (June)**  
A popular event following Farnham Carnival where the infrastructure costs are shared with the Lions.
- **Young People's events (August)**  
Members noted that the Younger people task group was set up in 2019 with a budget of £10,000 which was put towards young people's events such as the 'extreme mountain bike show' and 'ramp jam'. The 'Extreme bike show' was booked to return in August. The target group is 13-19 year olds but the events are popular with families.
- **Gin and Fizz Festival (September)**  
Members noted that the location had changed to Badshot Lea Kiln as the previous administration wanted to trial having an event outside the Town Centre. Members noted that the potential income was expected to be lower and the costs were likely to be higher with additional infrastructure and security required and rather than a previous surplus making event this was budgeted to have a £2,000 deficit.
- **Food and Drink Festival (September)**

Members noted the success of previous festivals and the footfall it brings with significant visitors. The event surplus is used to subsidise other events in the programme. Although oversubscribed, the 2022 surplus was restricted due to fewer stalls post COVID to give more space to public. Members discussed the possible use of Brightwells once opened and noted that the latest plans with proposed wider kerbed footways in Castle Street included in the Town Centre Infrastructure works would significantly reduce the capacity of Castle Street events.

- **Craft Month (October)**

Members noted that October Craft month was the annual celebration of craft in Farnham with a budget of £15,000. Members noted that there was also an additional grant from the South Street trust over the next five years towards a maker's residency from one of the other World Craft Cities. Members discussed the challenges facing graduates and makers such as the cost and availability of makers' space. Members agreed that craft should continue to be an integral part of the strategic plan of tourism in Farnham.

- **Christmas Lights Switch on (November)**

Members noted the positive community involvement with schools and arts groups. Cllr Mirylees presented the idea of a light festival with lanterns created by children in craft month and this was welcomed by the Working Group.

- **Christmas Market (December)**

Members noted that the Christmas market surplus helped pay for the Christmas Lights switch-on event.

- **Monthly Farmers' Market**

Members briefly discussed the monthly market and noted that it was one of the most successful farmers' markets in the South East and included craft stalls to boost numbers in quieter months.

- **West Street Market**

Members were informed of two complaints from residents of Kingham Place who had asked for vehicle access during the West Street Market events. Members agreed with the officers' decision that the nature of the road closure was such that access could not be permitted on safety grounds and noted that the residents could also raise with Waverley Borough who authorised the closure to see if there were other options. Members agreed to explore the idea of moving the market to Brightwells once some clarity had been established on space available and opening dates.

- **Business support**

Members discussed the proactive response by FTC when businesses had faced challenges such as COVID and the West Street road closure. FTC had supported businesses with various schemes like the Christmas snow windows and the current 'Treat yourself in Farnham' campaign developed in partnership with South East Water to bring people back to Farnham after the long road works closure that had been so disruptive.

Members discussed the challenges faced by graduates of UCA and makers due to lack of space and high rental prices and noted the efforts made to create makers' spaces and incubator spaces. It was further noted that efforts were being made for underused properties owned by Waverley and Surrey to be used for economic benefit.

- **Business Improvement District**

The Working Group received a brief description of the proposed Farnham BID (Business Improvement District). Members were also informed that the BID was business-led but being coordinated by FTC and WBC with support from an external consultant (Mosaic) up to the vote stage which was to be held in October. It was noted that the BID would be funded by a supplementary business rate (of up to 2%) and all eligible business rate payers, including Farnham Town Council, in the designated zone (essentially most of the Town Centre Conservation Area) would be able to vote on the proposed business plan. It was noted that the monies collected would be retained by the local BID group for locally agreed projects unlike nearly all of the rest of the business rates which were passed back to central government for redistribution.

- **Sponsorship**

Members were informed that it was a challenging time for confirming sponsors and were requested to pass on any potential leads. All members had received an invest in Farnham brochure which set out the benefits from partnering with Farnham Town Council.

- **Wellbeing and Younger People**

The Working Group noted it oversaw well-being activities as a specific Task Group had not been created for 2023/24. The Young People Task Group had been created.

The Working Group met on its own and with partner organisation. The efforts made to engage with young people after a series of anti-social activities at summer events and across Farnham were noted. This had led to the Youth Shelter at Borelli Walk being agreed on Waverley land, part-funded by the Police and Crime Commissioner. There had been some incidents around the shelter, and FTC had provide an increased grant for 40 Degreez to support outreach work from the centre. The work at Hale funded by a lotter grant for three years which was making a beneficial impact was noted as was the role of FTC in co-ordinating the Young People Task Group which provided a useful information sharing opportunity for groups working with Young people in Farnham. The Working Group noted that supporting young people was a stated priority of the new administration, and future activities would be further discussed, particularly when planning for the future.

Members noted the discussions that had taken over a potential BMX track to replace the former one at Sandy Hill (in land that was part of the Thames Basin Heath) and that Waverley BC was leading on this with different sites including Brambleton park being discussed.

- **Community Grants**

Members noted that Community Grants of up to £2,000 were available to any not-for-profit organisation for one-off projects that promote the environment and/or community life for residents who live in Farnham. Previous successful applications have included projects for young people, leisure sport and cultural activities, community buildings, environmental projects, play projects, activities and help for older people and people with disabilities.

In addition, members noted that Farnham Town Council operates a 'light touch' service level agreement scheme where organisations are providing important social or community services that fit with the objectives of the Council. Organisations that receive SLA contributions (usually £2,000 or above) can use their funding for general purposes as agreed and are groups that may receive funding over a longer period whilst their objectives and activities meet the outcomes desired by the Council. There was a small budget for in-year grants of up to £250 for groups that had not received other support, managed by the Town Clerk in line with the council criteria.

- **Community Centres**

The Working Group heard that the Wrecclisham Community Centre was a Farnham Town Council asset managed by a volunteer trust. Broadly, the fabric of the building was the responsibility of the Town Council with the internal items the responsibility of the trust. Other community centres and halls including the Hale Community Centre, the Hale Institute, the Kiln in Badshot Lea, the Rowledge Village Hall, Brambleton Hall, St martin's Hall in the Bourne, and Weybourne Village Hall provided important community space managed by volunteer groups often with some grant funding for community activities.

**5. Finance report**

The Working Group considered the finance report attached to the agenda noting the finances approved in the budget for the activities of the Working Group for 2023-24 and that changes could emerge after the Strategy Workshop scheduled for October.

**6. Matters for future meetings**

There were no specific matters raised beyond those discussed.

**7. Date of next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was agreed as Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> October at 9.30am.

The meeting ended at 13.30 pm

Notes written by Oliver Cluskey/Iain Lynch

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