

# **Annual Parish Meeting**

## **8 April 2024**

### **Written Reports**

## **Table of Contents**

1. Farnham Common Girl Guiding
2. Farnham Common Community Library
3. The Farnhams Magazine
4. Farnham Common Village Hall
5. Farnham Royal Village Hall
6. Burnham Beeches & Stoke Common
7. Burnham Beeches Rotary
8. The Royal British Legion (Farnham Common Branch)
9. Farnham Common Sports Club
10. Farnham Royal Cricket Club
11. Farnhams Open Gardens

## **Farnham Common Girl Guiding - Guides, Brownies and Rainbows.**

Farnham Common Guides (10 to 14 years old) has had another strong year, 8 new girls doing their promises at the end of last term. We also opened a Rangers unit (14-18 year olds) running alongside our Guides unit. We also gained another enthusiastic Guide leader, the lovely Rosie Bounds.

We have had many older girls leave and lots of younger local girls join us this year and always run at full capacity but try never to leave any girl behind. We try to create a fun, safe environment for young girls to see their friends and escape the pressures of life for an hour and a half each week. The focus is always empowering young girls by learning, experiencing new things whilst being part of a stable, traditional organisation.

A recent Girlguiding survey found that Girlguiding members are 12% less likely to feel nervous in new situations than girls who aren't in guiding. So, it's an important part of the community.

This year we have done many exciting things including, Abseiling, Gladiator challenge, Archery, Art classes, first aid, the traditional two match Guiding challenge and making buddy burners to cook pancakes on. We attended, with our flag, the local

Remembrance service and raised funds for our unit at the orchard day fair. More fun and experiences are being planned for this term.

This year has also been a busy year for Rainbows and Brownies with the usual fun activities.

Sadly, Jamie Miles retired as Brownie leader this year and we wanted to thank her for leading the Brownies for 12 years and all her hard work and dedication.

We are very lucky that Ella Paton has taken over running Brownies and has a wonderful team supporting her. She now runs Brownies and Rainbows and is planning lots of fun events for the Summer Term.

We are always looking for funds and more supporters. Any enquiries please contact [1fcguides@gmail.com](mailto:1fcguides@gmail.com).

**Claire, Rosie and Ella**  
**Section Leaders**



## **Farnham Common Community Library**

Following a truly transformational and successful 12-year term as Library Chairman, Michael Mills decided to stand down at the end of 2023 and David Picton succeeded him as the new Chairman at the beginning of this year.

Fortunately, we have not lost Michael's experience, knowledge and connections as he has kindly accepted a role as a Patron of FCCL. His continued presence and involvement strengthens the team and we are delighted that Michael will remain available to help support our library's continued growth.

Overall, the library and its services remain very strong, with increasing numbers joining the library and membership up by 10% on last year; we also have one of the highest percentages of active members in the county. The finances of the library are very well managed and, despite the very challenging financial environment, the accounts have been balanced successfully. Steps were taken last year to improve energy efficiency and negotiate better energy contracts in the face of dramatic cost increases.

**Books** – In this past year there have been numerous comments from local people (and even other libraries) about the great selection of books we have on offer in the library. Book issues are level year-on-year, contrasting with the national trend of libraries in general seeing a reduction in book issues.

**Children's activities** – Activities for younger members continue to be a strong element of the library and help to support the future generations of library users. Our arts and craft sessions and outdoor activities are extremely popular, bringing in adults and children and adding to the number of library members and book issues. The garden in the raised beds by the front entrance encourages children to participate in growing flowers and vegetables around the village, including our amazing sunflowers! Our weekly Lego club continues to be extremely popular. There has been a slight drop in schoolchildren using the library since Covid and it would be great to see more families back in the library; we are keen to explore ways in which we can collaborate even more closely with local schools.

**Events** – We've had a busy programme throughout the year, including:

- Coffee mornings – these are always very well-attended and raise significant funds for charities such as Samaritans and Macmillan as well as for the library itself.
- Our annual quiz in October
- Our monthly Lunch Club is very popular, with 43 attendees at La Cantina in February!
- The Christmas get-together is a local tradition enjoyed by many and we changed it from a supper to a lunch in 2023 based on user feedback.

All these activities help to raise much-needed funds for the library while also providing important opportunities for social interaction and building community spirit.

**Other activities include:**

- Participation in Orchard Day last year to raise awareness of the library.
- A stall at the Signature Care Home Christmas market
- A regular book group which meets in the library in the daytime, and we are exploring possible interest in an evening book group too
- The Farnham's Open Gardens organised by Pat Marshall will be held at the end of May, raising funds for the library
- The Annual Summer Reading Challenge and World Book Day
- Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme volunteers
- The Farnhams & Hedgerley Community Church is based at the library
- The Chiltern and South Bucks health visiting team hold weekly clinics for children
- Working with Burnham Beeches Rotary, for the last two years we have provided 'Dictionaries 4 Life' (D4L) to pupils in Farnham Common JS, St Mary's, Farnham Royal and Stoke Poges School
- We provide a regular quarterly newsletter to Friends and library users, and contribute to the Farnhams magazine and local press
- We host a collection point for the Food Bank

We continue to rely on, and be incredibly grateful to, our fantastic team of volunteers who ensure the library operates smoothly and stays open for our users. Our 280+ "Friends" play an important role by giving annual donations which support book purchases and other activities. We are always keen to sign up new members, Friends

and volunteers, and we need the local community to support us by visiting the library, taking out books, and attending our events. FCCL is an incredible resource and we hope even more local residents will use it and support us to ensure we preserve it for generations to come.

**We look forward to seeing you all this year.**

**David Picton**  
**Chairman**



**Farnham Common**  
**Community Library**

Registered Charity No. 1189181

## The Farnhams Magazine

The Magazine's new Editor, Barry Clarke, has successfully taken over the production of our magazine. Helen Williams has also joined us, bringing the talent of being an excellent proofreader to help Barry.

The magazine committee also recruited two advertising people in 2023, Eva Silva-Costa and Lydia Fry who are urgently seeking the required new advertisers to help fund the magazine, by emails and visits.

Financially, more advertisers are being sought, but it is expected that our 2023 year (started with the December 2022 issue) will draw more than £3,500 from the reserves of some £25,000 set aside to ensure magazine continuity by the Parochial Church Council for just such a deficit caused by rising costs and reducing advertising revenue.

To break even on our costs, we need five and a half more pages of advertising revenue to return us to the twenty-eight pages we used to have. We can fill these pages with editorial content, but they need to be converted back to advertising to ensure financial stability in the future.

The financial position for the magazine is deteriorating severely because of increased deliveries set by the Post Office making us cover the whole SL2 3 area, thus including Hedgerley which has a magazine of its own. We will need to face and deal with this problem.

Due to this problem with the Post Office:

- Printing an extra 10% copies, costing £400 a quarter (£1,600)
- Postage extra £360 a quarter (£1,440)

So, with these increases and reduced advertising revenue of £2,400, we expect to lose a further £5,400 of our reserves this advertising year including September 2024 production.

With a new overhead of £19,800 annually, up from £16,800 and only 23 pages of advertising sold at about £13,000, it will cost us 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of our reserves.

Barry has recommended taking the magazine online which will cost about £2,500 to set up. Thanks to two donations each with Gift Aid, the editorial team will start the process immediately. It is hoped this will enhance advertisers' support for the magazine and gain sales of these five lost pages.

Going online will afford advertisers the opportunity to ask the editorial team to post special events or offers fairly instantaneously, instead of just each quarter year.

We will also seriously review our postage costings and how we gain Royal Mail cooperation to reduce the unnecessary delivery area of Hedgerley, and thus a print run reduction, which could make us viable again in 2025.

However, this will require several **willing volunteers**:

- We will need at least three to assist Barry with Editorial work and page planning, and On-Line, to prepare us for his standing down next March 2025.
- And at least four volunteers to take on advertising sales and marketing to assist Eva and Lydia, since these 28 pages of adverts are our main income source.

The Magazine can return to break even if we: -

- can sell all 28 pages, with advertisers benefiting from online as well, at an average £620 a page,
- obtain funding from third parties for example, support grants from Buckinghamshire Council, Beeches Community Board, parish council and other donors,
- reduce the print run back to 3,600, and postage to exclude Hedgerley,

We thank Sasha Randall, our accounts treasurer for managing our finances. We will be seeking several bookkeepers to assist her and to take over her treasurer's role when she stands back in the spring of 2025.

More volunteers are sought Urgently. More advertisers as well.

**Jerry Houdret**  
**Deputy Chairman of Editorial Committee**



## **Farnham Common Village Hall**

As always, the hall has been well occupied over the last 12 months. We continue to be delighted to see so many local residents of all ages coming together for a wide range of regular activities as well as one-off events. Some of our hirers have been with us for over 25 years, and we have new ones joining us soon to bring new classes to our programme.

Our small but dedicated committee was devastated to learn of the sudden passing of our Chair, Marilyn Rolfe, at the end of January. Marilyn was the lynchpin of the hall. She will be sorely missed, but we are committed to ensuring her powerful legacy lives on. A decision has been made to use funds donated in her memory to create a gallery wall in the hall, celebrating its history and her devoted service.

Fortunately, and with huge thanks to Marilyn's family for their timely handover of documentation, we have been able to continue our hall operations with no disruption to our normal schedule. Our hirers have been patient throughout the transition, and we are very grateful for their understanding and support.

Shortly before her death, Marilyn completed the work to install a full new kitchen into the hall, with much appreciated financial support from the Beeches Community Board. At the same time, she also oversaw the addition of a new kitchenette into the Small Hall. Further improvements completed this year also include some important electrical work including upgrades to LED lighting. We have received great feedback about these improvements.

Our Village Cinema is going from strength to strength and we are enjoying a collaborative marketing relationship with Southmead Surgery. In cross-promoting our events, we are working together to ensure villagers are aware of the choice of activities available.

It is now just over a year since the Parish Council moved into their new home at the rear of the hall and we are very pleased to report that everything is going well.

Our two biggest challenges currently are our overheads (especially energy costs) and the recent loss of not only Marilyn but also Jean Walker, who served the hall as a Trustee for decades. Our priority now is to strengthen our team and then to consider the next round of building improvements needed to ensure our precious community hub endures for future generations.

**Victoria Veninga**  
Trustee



## **Farnham Royal Village Hall**

Village Halls continue to be affected by substantial rising energy and property costs and reduced activity due to customers having to be mindful of their outgoings. There is much competition from other venues especially children's adventure activities.

Despite this we continue to promote and support our long-standing residents: - the new "Little Ducklings" Preschool and the Farnham Royal Social Club, both of whom have capacity to accept new members.

With the internal decor and facilities remaining at a high standard, we have now refurbished the large Car park area, upgraded the external signage and lighting, added stage lighting and re-roofed a large area. We are sure this makes us more visible and appealing to visitors.

Slimming World, Ballet classes, Aikido, Karate, Baby Sensory, and Pilates continue to use the facilities with the addition now of "Moo Music" for toddlers, Dog training and the Scouts. The Friday night "Jive" evening remains a popular event. As always, we also welcome any bookings for Weddings, Children's Parties, Wakes, Meetings and Charity events.

We welcome all to the Hall, which is there to serve the whole community throughout the year. The diversity of events and visitors are rewarding to see and contribute to the success of our Village Hall.

We are a very small Committee and therefore always looking for volunteers to help our management team. Please contact us if you can help us in any way.

### **The Management Team Farnham Royal Village Hall**

<https://www.facebook.com/Farnham-Royal-Village-Hall-852740968144383>

Website [www.farnhamroyalvillagehall.co.uk](http://www.farnhamroyalvillagehall.co.uk)

Contact: [FRVH@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:FRVH@hotmail.co.uk) Tele : 07474 713758

## **Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common**

### 1. Introduction

It is easy to take the Beeches and Stoke Common for granted when they are on our doorstep and visited very regularly. These nationally and internationally important nature reserves are small islands in an ever changing, increasingly developed, landscape and also a haven for visitors from the local area and all over the UK with many hundreds of thousands of visits made to them each year.

The impact of those visits is obvious at times and cannot be ignored. The Coronavirus pandemic highlighted how fragile sites like these are and how easily areas can get trampled, paths widened and new ones created. This damage is still occurring at some times of year and the team & volunteers have repaired & improved some particularly badly damaged paths bringing them back to more normal widths, and this work will continue.

At the Beeches seasonal path and area closures will be a necessary and ongoing part of protecting the important features of this very special place. We thank local visitors in particular, many of whom visit nearly every day come rain or shine, for their help in keeping to made up paths as much as possible and not creating new paths and desire lines.

Visitors to Stoke Common can also take positive steps to support the wildlife there by also keeping themselves and any dogs to main tracks as much a possible when visiting, particularly in the bird nesting season March - August. Stoke Common is especially important for birds that nest on or near the ground and it has been shown that these are highly susceptible to disturbance. With your support these amazing places will still be as rich in wildlife and a lovely place to visit in the future

### 2. Finance

Burnham Beeches is a registered charity, owned and managed by the City of London since 1880. As ever the charity relies on grants, income and the non-taxpayer funded, City of London Trustee funding, for delivery of core services and works. The Beeches received some welcome filming income last year despite the writer and performer strike action. Everything earned is used to help care for this remarkable nature reserve.

The City has also restructured its operations and is undertaking a charity review to look at how best to support the Beeches and Stoke Common in the future. The Beeches team will continue to look at ways to reduce running costs and raise income to care for these two unique nature reserves whilst ensuring the features that make them special remain protected.

## **20223/24 achievements/projects**

### 3. Phenomenal Nature Reserves

The Bucks Fungus Group obtained a grant administered by City of London for groups wanting to undertake supportive work on City managed sites. The grant funding paid for the group to do undertake detailed identification of specimens collected at both Nature Reserves – including DNA analysis to confirm the identification of tricky specimens, over a number of years. The result is that they turned up a number of new species to the UK and some even new to science! Such studies highlight the incredible importance of the Beeches and Stoke Common as a reserve for wildlife in the reality of a biodiversity crisis. Many of the species found here are more normally associated with much larger ancient landscapes like, for example, the New Forest.

A study supported by our eco-volunteers looked at the viability of seeds on the juniper bushes at the Beeches. Regeneration from seed is a real problem for juniper across the UK. Preliminary results indicate that there is a slightly greater proportion of seed viability from our bushes than others previously sampled elsewhere in the UK, which may help to explain why we are getting good numbers of young bushes. The volunteers also carried out a project looking at the lichens on oak trees in Burnham Beeches in relation to air quality (see below).

Funding from Scottish and Southern Electricity (SSE) in relation to the power station on Slough trading estate that was used to look at air pollution around the Beeches came to an end this year, concluding with a webinar to discuss the results. The ammonia and NOx results indicated that levels within the nature reserve are not exceptionally high although the management of land and the proximity of busy roads around the edges does have an impact. In contrast, the lichens indicated that the nature reserve does not have particularly clean air. This contrast in findings maybe because the lichens are indicating the legacy of the past few decades whereas the air quality has actually improved. We are now discussing the results with Natural England to discuss future implications.

#### 4. Site protection

As reported previously, the local planning authority is required to protect Burnham Beeches Special Area of Conservation (SAC) from harmful impacts of development locally via a range of methods. One includes collecting payments from developers adding new dwellings between 500m and 5.6km from the Beeches to be used for mitigation against the detrimental impacts of extra visitors. This money is now being collected by Bucks Council and has started to be used for agreed projects including the employment of an Engagement Ranger to help mitigate the impact of any increase in visitors on the Beeches.

We continued to work with Slough BC and Natural England to find a suitable long-term solution to mitigating the impact of development within 5.6km of the Beeches that falls within the Slough BC boundary. We received developer contributions from Slough Borough Council, one funding the air quality work (mentioned above) the other for a 5-year ranger post, who like the other ranger above was also appointed in January of 2023.

The two Engagement /Mitigation Rangers have been with us now for a full year and have been out and about meeting visitors to the reserve while also making connections with partners in the wider area – developing opportunities for new (and existing) residents to explore the local area without needing to visit the Beeches. They have also held engagement weeks, events with schools and community groups, again often away from the Beeches although they have also been a very regular presence on the nature reserve itself. They have been working on methods to best monitor their effect in reducing the impact of visitor pressure on this vulnerable, small and highly protected reserve and have lots of plans for the coming year.

The Public Spaces Protection Orders in relation to dog walking at the Beeches were renewed for a further 3 years in December 2023 following the required public consultation throughout 2023. Thank you to everyone who engaged in the consultation – as ever the PSPOs were introduced to help ensure that all visitors have an equal chance to enjoy the site, with or without a dog.

#### 5. Stoke Common

With completion of the final part of the large-scale heathland restoration at Stoke Common SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest), in 2021/22 we moved to the ongoing maintenance and habitat development phase of the management plan. Key to this is the continuation of the successful grazing programme at the Common and the fantastic efforts of the Friends of Stoke Common and other volunteers.

Wildlife surveys continue to guide and support practical management on the ground. In addition to regular monitoring of birds, reptiles and vegetation this year the Friends took on regular bat transects for national bat monitoring programmes. In addition, an undergraduate student compared the data that has been collected comparing grazed and ungrazed plots and the results should be available soon. The common supports important populations of birds, invertebrates, amphibians and reptiles and plants associated with the, now sadly, rare heathland habitats being restored at the reserve.

#### 6. Young & Old pollards and wood pasture

Over 50 ancient Beech or Oak pollards were cut again on rotation during the winter of 23/24. Each of the old trees has its own individual work plan, tailored to its current condition. Work to prop up particular trees and to give them more light and space were carried out and this work continues to attract interest across the country and beyond. Burnham Beeches hosted several visits of other land managers carrying out ancient tree management to exchange ideas on techniques.

More young pollards were also created as part of ongoing wood pasture restoration work across the Beeches. The aim of this partially grant funded work is to join up isolated patches of existing wood pasture ensuring this important habitat is as robust as possible and is better connected across the SAC.

As ever the aim of all the work plans is to keep the old trees alive for as long as possible, so that the extraordinary and unique habitats they provide for wildlife continue to be available in future years. The younger pollards, created in the last 30 years, will hopefully then have time to develop these valuable habitats before the older ones finally die. This is expensive work and grant funding only pays for a part of it – if you want to help look after these remarkable trees you can donate directly toward their care by following the link - [www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/donateBBtrees](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/donateBBtrees)

Volunteers have also helped with an ongoing experiment to look at the impact on trees of cutting at different times of the year which we are carrying out on some groups of young pollards. We have been measuring all the branches

cut off, and those remaining in an attempt to calculate carbon budgets for the trees – the findings of these long-term experiments will help guide future work practices.

#### 7. Livestock grazing at Burnham Beeches

The use of invisible fencing continued in 2023/24 with around 85% of the Beeches grazed by cows and ponies. The heavily supported vision for the site, as expressed in the management plan, continues to be that as much of the remaining un-grazed area as is practical will also be grazed in future. In 2023 we successfully grazed all the virtual fenced areas with a new satellite based invisible fence system. The new system should allow some remaining un-grazed areas to be included in the grazing areas in future.

#### 8. Events and volunteers

A normal programme of ranger led and community events took place at the Beeches in 2023/24 including meet the ranger days, historical walks, a night walk, running events, orienteering and many school visits to name just a very few.

Volunteers provided over 5500 hours of support in the last year at Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common. This included practical support such as habitat and site management work, livestock looking, wildlife surveys and litter picking as well as helping at events and walks – we have a never-ending list of jobs! Their work this year also included the replacement of a bridge below the quarry and fencing along the dam wall at Middle Pond and path repairs at several location both at the Beeches and Stoke Common.

The support of all our volunteers is greatly appreciated and helps make the nature reserves the lovely places they are for everyone to enjoy.

#### 9. Celebrating History

The Hillforts project 'Beacons of the Past' - in partnership with the Chilterns AONB and National Lottery Heritage fund, concluded. The project was celebrated with an event in November attended by representatives of the City of London trustees, the AONB, the Burnham Beeches consultation group and around 60 children from Farnham Common School. At the event a new information board was unveiled and an augmented reality application launched. The app allows visitors of all ages to see how the Hillfort has been used from the Iron Age through to use as a WW2 vehicle depot. Overall, the project resulted in a LIDAR survey across the whole of the Beeches and Stoke Common, 3 investigative digs (2 of them public), 2 Iron Age open day events and a new management plan for all the ancient monuments at the Beeches – thank you to everyone involved over the last 4 and a bit years.

#### 10. Forthcoming projects

With the repair of the Middle Pond embankment in 2022 it is now possible to look at further pond restoration as identified in the current management plan and how this can be achieved. We hope to carry out some dredging to remove silt and excess vegetation over the next 18 months to 2 years.

The Beeches grazing project will continue to use invisible fences in 2024 and look at future expansion towards the long-term vision of grazing as much of the Beeches as is practical this will again include the main common.

The Conservation Officer will continue to liaise with local planning authorities and Natural England to ensure the needs of the Beeches are considered in future development plans. 2024 will see delivery of various mitigation projects and the two new mitigation rangers developing their roles and influence.

The team will continue to try to influence the management of land around the Beeches to provide a buffer to the very special habitats found here and improve the opportunity for species living here to spread beyond the boundaries of the Beeches itself. This work requires working with a range of partners to try and deliver a landscape scale vision to aid the long-term survival of Burnham Beeches as an internationally important wildlife site.

**Martin Hartup**  
**Head Ranger**



## **Burnham Beeches Rotary**

We have continued to hold in person meetings at Burnham Park Hall, where we meet at 8.00 pm on the second and fourth Wednesday of the month. President Louise Dance has officiated throughout the year and will continue in this role for 2025.

Our efforts to make our Club more accessible and attractive for prospective new members have paid dividends and membership remains at over 40.

We continue to prioritize helping the local community and supporting young people, but also during the year made significant donations to Shelterbox, AquaBox and Mercy Ships. These charities help those suffering in disaster situations all over the world. During the year we have pushed ahead with many projects. These have included:

- Providing continuing hands-on support for Burnham Youth Club and Burnham Grammar Interact Club
- Distributing 'Dictionaries4Life' to year 4 pupils in eight local Primary schools
- Hosting the Rotary Young Writer, Young Photographer and Young Environmentalist competitions at both Primary and Secondary schools
- Raising around £8,200 for Children in Need working with local schools
- Commenced working with Arbour Vale School and local employers to facilitate work placement and employment opportunities for pupils with specific learning needs.
- Providing support for Burnham Care & Share Food Distribution Projects
- Sourcing, packaging, and delivering around 320 Xmas food parcels to Pupil Premium children and families. We worked with Burnham Care & Share, St Peter's School Burnham, Lent Rise School, Farnham Common Junior/Infants and St Mary's Schools
- Donating around £26,042 to local good causes including Alexander Devine £2,000, Care and Share £1,600, Thames Valley Adventure Playground, South Bucks Riding for the Disabled ££1,750, The Well at Lent Rise and Burnham Youth Club ££1,000.
- Working with local schools and community groups to promote the avoidance of single use plastics and staging litter picking events.
- Organising and helping at Xmas events including the St Peter's Church Carol Concert
- Continuing to collect disability aids for onward shipment those in need overseas through PhysioNet

We also staged several community events, including Farnham Common Orchard Day and 'Almost the Donkey Derby' in Burnham Park. We are busy planning our 2024 Donkey Derby event which takes place on 25<sup>th</sup> May this year.

We have an active Social Media presence and have worked with local magazines and the press to keep the local community informed of our activities.

**Louise Dance**

**President, Rotary Club of Burnham Beeches**



## Royal British Legion Farnham Branch

Your local branch has been concentrating on the need to raise money for both our Veterans as well as ensuring that Remembrance activities are maintained.

The 2023 Poppy Appeal raised over £29,000 for the charity and the Branch was awarded two trophies in recognition of our efforts in the Bucks area: one for the best result from a branch that does not have a club and the other as runner-up for Branch Efficiency [the certificates are on display in the Parish office; the trophy in The Stoke Poges Village Centre bar].

There will be a 'thank-you' party on 21<sup>st</sup> April in the Stoke Poges Village Hall to thank the valiant supporters who helped over the Appeal. As the years roll by, we are in need of others to help – all enquiries can be addressed to our Organiser Chris Leister-Crow on 07942 016072.

We are planning to erect a memorial bench in the area – depicting scenes from the 1<sup>st</sup> World War in wrought iron – as part of our determination to keep the message of remembrance alive for succeeding generations.

Also plans for replacing our aging shed in which all our collecting and publicity materials are stored are under way: more activity for the summer months.

Finally, we are resuscitating our messaging technique for our membership – to bring the Legion locally into the 21<sup>st</sup> century: emails rather than hand-deliveries will be the order of the day – watch this space.

As we look for new members, we remain mindful of the many unstated needs of veterans to whom we owe so much. New members of the Legion are welcomed.

**Peter Henry**  
**RBL Branch Secretary**



## **Farnham Common Sports Club**

The Sports Club continues to provide the community with sport and entertainment.

This year membership has grown substantially in both the Tennis club and the junior Cricket section. In all, we have nearly 700 members who play sport or use the club socially and a further 300 associate parent members. This demonstrates how important the club is to the Parish.

We continue to grow our partnership with the Farnham Common Junior School, by allowing them to use our facilities for sport. We have also agreed to installed an artificial Cricket pitch at the school that can be shared by the club and school.

The club bar refurbishment has been completed.

### **Rugby**

- Grassroots Rugby faces many challenges and all small clubs are finding life difficult. In September Drifters RFC celebrated their 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a ball at the club. Sadly, We no longer have a senior Rugby team but there are plans to restart one next season. stopped Mini Rugby on Sunday mornings continues to be very well attended with over 150 boys and girls attending.

### **Cricket**

- We entered 3 teams into the Thames Valley Cricket League and all performed well with the 1<sup>st</sup> XI narrowly missing out on promotion. The junior section under Scott wilcox's management continued to grow, Friday nights during the summer has become a social highlight of the week.

### **Squash**

- Our squash courts remain a secret to many in the community, we have 2 courts that are underused during the week, new members are welcome. The junior section is very healthy and the coaching by Matt Davies is excellent.

### **Tennis**

- Tennis has seen its membership numbers grow substantially since the pandemic. We are now nearly full. Allison Sharpe has joined us as our new club coach, she is a great addition to the club and has put in place a number of initiatives to improve all our members tennis skills.

### **Lacrosse**

- Lacrosse train on Monday nights and currently field one mixed team in the league. They are a new club but are growing steadily.

I would like to thank the Parish Council for their continued support and the unpaid club committee who give up their time to run the sports club.

**Richard Thomas**  
**Chairman**



## **Farnham Royal Cricket Club**

Here is a quick rundown of the 2023 year at Farnham Royal Cricket Club.

Starting with cricket, our 2<sup>nd</sup> XI had a good season and maintained their position in division 7b. The 1<sup>st</sup> XI did exceptionally well, winning their division and earning promotion into division 3b. Onwards and upwards for 2024!

With a reduction in players and opposition available for Sunday games, we decided to look for other clubs which may want to make use of our facilities. We were pleased to welcome Ramzan Cricket Club who used FRCC as their home ground for last season. They provided entertaining games on a Sunday in the South East Shires Cricket League Premier Division, finishing 6<sup>th</sup>. We look forward to welcoming them back this season.

As usual, our social team also provided good entertainment on Friday nights with a mix of inter-club games and local opposition. They have a full calendar for 2024 so roll on balmy summer evenings!!

The Thames Valley league starts again on the 11<sup>th</sup> of May and we will have some preseason games before that. All fixtures are up on the FRCC website and keep an eye open for more details on the pre-season games.

In other sports, the Royal Arrows mens darts team were runners-up in the league and the Royal Roamers crib team won the league yet again. They also secured the four-game winners trophy.

From a social perspective, the club is building its relationships in the local community. St Mary's Primary School have recently revitalised their PTA to raise money for important projects within the School. Their quiz night, held at the Club recently, was well attended and they were delighted with the support and assistance we provided to make it a success. We are hoping to work with them on more events throughout the year to the mutual benefit of both of us.

We are also in regular contact with the Church and contribute to the local Parish magazine. We want to build on this to create more awareness of FRCC within the local community, hopefully opening opportunities for sponsorship and fundraising but also establishing ourselves as somewhere for local families to enjoy an evening out, social events and of course cricket!

We have a full social calendar for the start of 2024 with live music, party nights, food nights and quiz nights planned. Please keep an eye on our website and Facebook page for further details. The club is open 7 nights a week and we welcome new members so if you are looking for somewhere different to go, please don't hesitate to come in and see us!

**Ruth Wildman**  
**Club Secretary**





## **Farwell Short Mat Bowls Club**

Short Mat Bowls started Farnham Common Village Hall 16 years ago as there was a drive to encourage regular hirers of the hall to support its service to the community. Since that time, we have thoroughly enjoyed our weekly sessions. Whilst there is obviously a keen competitive spirit, we look forward to seeing friends each week, chatting over a cuppa, having a laugh and generally “putting the world to rights”.

In the meantime, we had been running our original short mat club in Richings Park since 1994, celebrating our 30 years in July this year. With this club, we successfully won the South Bucks League on 10 occasions throughout our 25 years of competition. Some players played at county level and we had a range of local clubs where we played “friendlies”, including a couple of clubs when we went on club holidays. All this changed in 2019 when the church hall we had been using was sold and we had to move to new premises. We did plenty of research and the obvious answer was to move to Farnham Common Village Hall.

Then lockdown hit and, like everyone else, we had to twiddle our thumbs while we waited to be allowed to continue.

Since 2020 we have had the benefits of the village hall and last year, we finally combined the two clubs under the name Farwell Short Mat Bowls Club (named after one of our founder members.) This has made it much easier to administer as we have now combined the admin, insurance and expenses. It also means that club members can now play in either the evening or afternoon session each week as part of their membership or just one of their choosing. We continue to be members of the English Short Mat Bowls Association via Hertfordshire Association. As a result, some of our younger members play very successfully at county level, in country-wide competitions and even in Norway and Ireland.

We are a happy club and look forward to many more years of playing this great game.

**Rosemary Followell**  
**Organiser**

## **Farnham Common Open Gardens**

Farnham Common open gardens will be held on Sunday 19th May from 1pm to 5 pm.  
Afternoon tea will be available in one of the gardens. There will be a raffle and plant sale.

There are 7 gardens opening this year, all but one within walking distance of the village.  
Tickets must be booked in advance and will be available from Farnham Common community library and myself approximately 2 weeks before the date.

Signature care home in Farnham Common have offered to get involved on the day. They have 2 gardens that visitors can visit and will be providing afternoon tea from 3pm to 5pm.

All proceeds from the event will go to Farnham Common Library.

**Pat Marshall**

**Organiser**