



Godalming

Town Council

**Annual Report
2025-26**

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19 March 2026



MAYORAL REVIEW



As I near the end of my Mayoral year it is time to look back and reflect. Being handed the position when the preceding Mayor completed his term of office in May 2025, it was with mixed feelings of surprise, excitement, and a little anxiety that I started out on my year in office.

My first duty was to give out the prizes for the Godalming Run and my persisting memory is of a community of families and volunteers supporting each other and their children at that event demonstrating the sense of community I have found everywhere on my journey through the year.

It has also revealed the wide range of community work and activity across the town, the vast majority of which is undertaken by volunteers, and I have sensed Godhelmians' pride and passion for the town with so many coming out to watch the fireworks at the Rugby Club or participate in the Town Show on the Burys Field.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to the many volunteers who help run so many activities for the town, including the Go Godalming and Sport Godalming organisations who provide over-arching support to many local organisations.

Special mention goes to the Farncombe Community Gardeners, and those maintaining their own gardens around the town and participating in the annual Godalming in Bloom event. I had the privilege to see many of the wonderful gardens and meet some extremely experienced gardeners, and others who are just starting out on their horticultural journey, one which I'm sure will provide them with much joy and satisfaction.

In keeping with a horticultural theme, I was delighted and extremely proud to attend the South & South-East In Bloom presentation awards at RHS Wisley. The Council's staff, whose hard work and dedication in creating and looking after the floral displays that add so much colour to our High Street, achieved a Gold award. In addition, Gold awards were presented for Godalming's cemeteries with Eashing Cemetery winning an overall best in class for the whole of the south and South-East region. Of special note was the Gold Award, achieved for the first time entry of the Youth Centre Wellbeing Garden.



Throughout the year I attended some 90 different events including:

- Opening the Ragged Robin where I pulled my first pint!
- Cutting the ribbon on the roof garden to formally open the new Pepperpot House assisted living retirement homes in Brighton Road, the view from the roof garden is of a green vista bringing home how precious our environment is.
- Sharing mince pies with residents at the Hydon Hill Leonard Cheshire Home and being given tea and a warm welcome at Ladywell Convent.
- The Jubilee House 25th anniversary celebration marked with a great Abba singalong, spreading happiness for the residents and visitors.
- Rain poured down on us celebrating the opening of a new activity playground for Moss Lane school; tea and cake were well earned by everyone who stayed the course that day.
- The Mayor's Charity Quiz evening, raising over £1,500 for my two Charities - What Next and Charlie's Promise, with local businesses generously giving raffle prizes.
- My appointment to become the first Mayor to be made President of Godalming District Scouts and attending the Scout & Guides' Carol Service at Charterhouse.
- Attending communal gatherings for Christmas lunches at the Farncombe Day Centre and on Christmas Day morning at the Baptist Church in Godalming, organised by Churches Together for those who might otherwise have spent Christmas lunch alone.
- The Godalming Round Table Town Show where I was surrounded by mythical creatures both old and young whilst balancing on the back of a Land Rover.
- My trip to Joigny on the 40th anniversary of our twinning, accompanied by my daughter Kathryn, who was participating with the Farncombe and Godalming Jazz Choirs. Under Phoebe Gaydon's direction they gave great outside performances at 3 locations across the town and in the Parish Church spreading happiness with Joigny's own choir. We were thoroughly overwhelmed by the Joigny Town Council's hospitality and generosity. In return, later this year, it will be our turn to welcome Joigny to Godalming and show them what I hope will be a similar rich calendar of events, which are being put together by the Godalming Joigny Friendship Association.
- Having a keen passion for music in all its guises I have taken great pleasure in attending a number of music events throughout the year including the Conservatoire concerts, ChoirBLAST! (with its success in raising money for local charities and putting Godalming on the map across the UK for this annual gathering of Community Choirs) as well as the regular Music in the Park events throughout the summer filling the Phillips Memorial Ground with family picnickers.
- Visiting the properties opened up for the annual Heritage Weekend, made me realise the deep roots Godalming has with the past, starting I believe with a simple bridge across the Wey and the wool trade that enabled a community to build into what it is today.
- Being one of my charities, WhatNext? kindly invited me to its regular suppers where I met up with Neil Willis who is passionate about preserving the Lammas Lands given its significant levels of biodiversity in flora and fauna, something that is close to my heart.



Jubilee House 25th Anniversary Event

I was honoured to have a Civic Service for the Mayor at the Godalming Minster Church of St Peter & St Paul's, and to be invited to do a reading at Rev Chris Lion's Installation as Rector of Godalming Minster.

After 3 years of planning there was a service to officially open the newly built Binscombe Church which will enable it to provide more space for local community groups to meet. I also visited St Mark's Community Centre and met the volunteers who were busy organising their local Food Bank.

There have been two significant church services – the first being a service of thanksgiving to mark the 80th anniversary of our allied victory in Europe led by Rev Simon Willetts at the War Memorial and the second being the annual Act of Remembrance at which I laid a wreath on behalf of the people of Godalming. It was a very moving occasion with so many young people present. I also attended the multi-faith service organised by the local Interfaith Forum that has the worthy aim of building understanding between all faiths.

There have been many opportunities for me to meet local people in our Town's High Street during our festival Street Markets and whilst enjoying the music provided by our local choirs and the Godalming Band. As well, of course, the highlight of the switching on of the Christmas Lights watched by a packed High Street where I was accompanied by characters from the cast of the Godalming Theatre Group's Pantomime 'The Three Bears' under our beautifully restored, iconic Pepperpot.

Throughout the year I have had magnificent support from Lynne Purnell and the Town Council office team, under the direction of our town CEO Andy Jeffery, and not forgetting Veronica my wife who has ensured that I am ready for each event and who has accompanied me to many, as my consort.

Sadly, I must pay tribute and celebrate the life of Pete Harris our Sergeant-at-Mace and the Go Godalming Youth Canoe Club leader who unexpectedly passed away on 1 February this year. He gave me great support in preparing for Council meetings. When we both visited Busbridge Infants School for its OFSTED celebration the children were entranced seeing and hearing about the mace Pete was carrying. A fuller tribute to Pete is in this report.

In closing I see it as an honour and privilege to have served as Mayor for the people of Godalming and I wish my successor all the best for their term in office.

Bob Crooks

Councillor Bob Crooks
Mayor of Godalming 2025/26



TRIBUTE: On the sad news of the sudden and unexpected death on 1 February 2026 of the Mr Peter Harris, Godalming Town Council's Sergeant-at-Mace, at the Meeting of the FULL COUNCIL on 12 February, the Mayor gave a tribute to Peter on behalf of the Council and its staff.

The loss of Peter Harris has come as a shock to us all.

Pete was not just our Sergeant-at-Mace; he was part of the fabric of this Council and of the town we serve. For many years, he was a familiar and reassuring presence at our meetings and civic occasions, carrying out his duties with quiet authority, dignity and pride.

The office of Sergeant-at-Mace is an ancient and honourable one, symbolising the continuity of the Council and the role of the Mayor. Having supported 13 Mayors, Pete understood the importance of that role instinctively. He gave it the gravitas it required, while never losing his warmth, his good humour, or his humanity.

Long before his appointment in 2014, Pete was already well known to officers and Members alike. He was someone who belonged here, and when he took on the role, it felt entirely natural. Calm, dependable and unflappable, he was a steady presence, and it was always reassuring to know that when Pete was in attendance, things would run as they should.

Pete was especially associated with Remembrance Sunday, where he led the Council in the annual procession with solemnity and respect. Beyond his civic duties, he was

deeply involved in the life of the town and was known to many different groups across the community, including through his long-standing involvement with the GoGodalming Youth Canoe Club.

Service was a constant thread throughout Pete's life — from the Royal Navy to the fire service, to the police, and finally to his valued role with this Council. In every capacity, he served with commitment, professionalism and kindness.

Pete will be greatly missed by Members, officers and by the wider community. We remember him with respect, gratitude and affection, and we extend our sincere condolences to his family at this very sad time.

Godalming Town Council

This Annual Report provides a flavour of the many activities, events, and services organised or delivered by Godalming Town Council (GTC) during the 2025 civic year. Full details of the Town Council's services, meetings, policies and financial arrangements can be found at www.godalming-tc.gov.uk

GTC is one of the largest town councils in the county, being in the upper quartile of local councils nationally. It is a member of the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) network for super councils.

Godalming Town Councillors represent the community on a voluntary basis. Members receive no salary for their work on behalf of residents. GTC consists of 18 councillors representing 5 town wards.

Ward	Councillors Per Ward
Binscombe	3
Charterhouse	3
Farncombe & Catteshall	4
Holloway	4
Central & Ockford	4
Total No Cllrs	18

GTC is completely independent of both Waverley Borough Council and Surrey County Council. This is particularly important at a time when local government in Surrey is undergoing major change, with both Waverley and Surrey County Council due to be dissolved at midnight on 31 March 2027 and replaced by the West Surrey Unitary Authority.

The Town Council delivers a wide range of quality-of-life services and community activities, including the Wilfrid Noyce Centre, Broadwater Youth & Community Centre and the town's iconic Pepperpot. It also funds the Youth Service and Museum, maintains public toilets, cemeteries, allotments and Floral Godalming displays, and supports Christmas Lights, festivals, markets and civic events.

The Council runs the Staycation holiday programme, the annual Remembrance Parade, and assists in the management of markets in both Godalming and Farncombe. In addition, support is provided to community-led events such as Sport Godalming's Community Run and the Round Table's Town Show, all of which help make Godalming such a vibrant community.

In 2025 GTC carried out an extensive refurbishment of The Pepperpot, which developed into a major restoration project as serious structural issues emerged. While the works cost significantly more than expected, The Pepperpot will remain the symbolic heart of the town for generations to come.

GTC continues to support local organisations through its grants programme. In 2025, 27 grants totalling £64,150.12 were awarded.

Following an extended period of approved absence, Cllr Nina Clayton (G) resigned in September 2025, triggering a by-election from which Cllr Robert Marshall (LD) was elected.

The current political makeup of GTC is Liberal Democrats (11), Labour (2), Green Party (3) and Conservative (2).

Cllr Paul Follows (LD) is Leader of the Council and Chair of Policy & Management Committee, with Cllr Clare Weightman (G) as Deputy Chair. The full list of Members elected as Chair/Vice Chair of council committees is shown below:

Policy & Management:			
Chair: Cllr Follows (LD)		Vice Chair: Cllr Weightman (G)	
Environment & Planning:			
Chair: Cllr Kiehl (LD)		Vice Chair: Cllr Williams (G)	
Staffing:			
Chair: Cllr Heagin (LD)		Vice Chair: Cllr S Downey (L)	
Audit:			
Chair: Cllr Thomson (LD)		Vice Chair: Cllr Thomson (L)	

Much of the Council’s work is undertaken through its committee structure. Committees manage delegated matters or make recommendations where decisions must be taken by Full Council.

Full Council approved significant CIL awards during the year, including support for Baden Hall’s restoration, Moss Lane School’s playground enhancement, Farncombe Day Centre’s feasibility work and floodlight replacement at Guildford Hockey Club. Payments are made only as projects are delivered and evidenced.

The Council adopted a consolidated CIL Policy and agreed a temporary moratorium on new awards until October 2026, reflecting uncertainty arising from Local Government Reorganisation. A £25,000 contingency was set aside for urgent community needs.

May is always a busy time for the Council. Full Council adopted updated Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, alongside refreshed Health & Safety arrangements and a revised Community Engagement Strategy.

At the Annual Meeting ('Mayor Making'), Cllr Bob Crooks was elected Town Mayor for 2025/26, with Cllr Tom Kiehl elected Deputy Town Mayor.

During the year Full Council continued to demonstrate strong financial governance. Revised Estimates for 2025/26 and the Budget for 2026/27 were approved. Reserve transfers were agreed and further improvements were made to financial controls.

A major focus of the year was The Pepperpot Restoration Project, with urgent structural works approved to safeguard this important historic asset.

The Council is proud to have supported the cultural and community life of the town, confirming a full support package for ChoirBLAST 2026 and promoting initiatives such as Smartphone-Free Childhood.

Local Government Reorganisation remained a significant strategic issue. In January 2026 Full Council approved Heads of Terms for the transfer of key community assets from Waverley Borough Council, including Canon Bowring Recreation Ground and areas of Lammas Land.

Overall, Full Council's work during 2025/26 reflected its strategic leadership, strong governance and preparation for the challenges arising from wider local government change.

Environment & Planning Committee

The Environment & Planning Committee (E&P) addresses policy and discharges the Council's functions relating to the local environment, infrastructure and planning. It considers planning applications, highways matters and wider issues affecting the town's natural and built environment.

E&P plays an important role in scrutinising planning applications, ensuring proposals comply with the Godalming & Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan and that the character, heritage and amenity of the town are protected. To date, 277 planning applications have been included on the Committee's schedules during the year.

The Committee also engages with neighbouring authority consultations where proposals may affect Godalming, including at Aarons Hill.

During the year, E&P continued to raise objections where applications were considered harmful, including concerns relating to overdevelopment, highways impact, biodiversity and flood risk.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

E&P scrutinises applications for Neighbourhood CIL funding and makes recommendations to Full Council where projects provide value and community benefit.

During 2025/26 the Committee recommended significant projects, including support for Baden Hall, Moss Lane School, Farncombe Day Centre and Guildford Hockey Club.

Environmental Leadership

In 2025 the Council adopted a new Environmental Policy and approved a Carbon Reduction Action Plan for 2025–2028, strengthening its commitment to sustainability and biodiversity.

The Committee supported practical initiatives to enhance biodiversity locally, including work at Broadwater Youth & Community Centre. It continued improving council allotments, dealt with access issues and oversaw Floral Godalming and the Town Council's participation in South & South-East in Bloom.

Looking Ahead

The Committee's work demonstrates the Council's commitment to protecting Godalming's environment, shaping sustainable development and supporting civic pride through high-quality public spaces.

Policy & Management Committee

The Policy & Management Committee (P&M) is the Council's principal business and scrutiny committee, responsible for overseeing service delivery, ensuring strong financial governance and providing strategic direction.

During 2025/26, P&M monitored operational performance, reviewed policy frameworks and ensured that services and community facilities remained responsive to local needs.

Financial Governance and Budget Oversight

P&M scrutinised expenditure and schedules of payments, reviewed budget performance and recommended the Council's precept alongside Revised Estimates and medium-term financial planning.

The Committee also oversaw the award of community grants, supporting schools, charities, sports clubs and voluntary organisations across the town.

Assets, Property and Capital Projects

P&M was active in progressing key asset and infrastructure decisions. Early in 2025 the Committee approved repairs to the Pepperpot Clock, ensuring the continued upkeep of one of the town's notable heritage features.

The Committee considered fleet and procurement decisions during the year, including revisions to the Council's electric vehicle programme to ensure best value and operational reliability.

Local Government Reorganisation

Preparing for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) was a major priority. The Committee established a Devolution Task & Finish Group, supported Community Asset Transfer work and authorised Expressions of Interest for key assets.

This was followed in February by approvals for further transfers, including The Burys Field, bringing the total agreed transfers to nine. All will be absorbed within existing council budgets. The council will consult residents before making further asset transfer requests if this will entail increases to our precept.

Community Initiatives

P&M supported initiatives including the Youth Hub Summer Programme and a Community Book Token Scheme. The Committee also agreed correspondence relating to highways issues, including support for 20mph measures.

Organisational Resilience

The Committee supported recruitment planning and interim staffing arrangements to ensure continuity of service delivery.

Looking Ahead

P&M's work reflects its vital role in ensuring the Council remains financially sound, operationally effective and strategically prepared for future challenges.

Staffing Committee

The Staffing Committee ensures that Godalming Town Council remains a good employer, with appropriate policies, structures and procedures in place to support effective service delivery.

During 2025/26, the Committee kept employment policies under review, ensuring the organisation continues to operate in line with best practice and evolving legislation.

Key workplace policies were updated, and the Employment Rights Bill was added to the work programme to prepare responsibly for future changes.

The Committee supported recruitment and structural decisions, including arrangements for senior and specialist roles, alongside job evaluation and regrading outcomes.

Budget provision was approved for recruitment activity relating to the Deputy Chief Officer and Finance Manager roles.

Looking Ahead

The Committee's work demonstrates the Council's commitment to strong employment governance and resilient staffing structures that support effective delivery of services.

Audit Committee

The Audit Committee ensures that strong financial governance, internal control and risk management remain central to the Council's work. It provides independent oversight of financial systems and assurance arrangements.

During 2025/26, the Committee maintained close scrutiny of the Council's governance framework, ensuring processes remain robust, transparent and compliant.

Key areas of internal control were reviewed, and Financial Regulations were kept aligned with procurement requirements. An Internal Control Assessment was approved, reinforcing good governance and risk management.

The Council continued to receive strong assurance from its internal audit arrangements, with internal audit reporting noting no recommendations during the year.

Looking Ahead

The Committee's work demonstrates the Council's continued commitment to maintaining high standards of accountability and financial oversight.

Godalming Youth Services



Godalming Youth Service continues to provide high-quality youth work for young people across the town. The service is universal and open access, offering a safe environment where young people can take part in positive activities, build friendships and receive guidance from trusted youth workers.

During 2025, the Youth Service delivered a wide-ranging programme including after-school drop-ins, evening group work, outreach projects and holiday activities.

Growth and Engagement

The Youth Service experienced another year of substantial growth, with 491 registered young people and 195 new registrations in 2025. Across all projects, more than 10,000 attendances were recorded during the year.

After-school drop-in sessions at Broadwater Youth Centre remain the cornerstone of delivery, with 4,823 attendances across 147 sessions and daily averages often reaching 35–40 young people.

Targeted Support and Group Work

Evening sessions recorded 1,730 attendances, with Girl's Group, Boy's Group and Juniors programmes providing trusted spaces for discussion, wellbeing support and personal development.

The Juniors groups have been particularly valued in supporting young people through the transition into secondary school.

Outreach and Holiday Activities

The Youth Service expanded outreach beyond Broadwater, including school sessions and targeted work at the Ockford & Aarons Hill Community Hub.

Holiday provision continued to grow, including Easter activities, a five-week summer programme and a Christmas offer.

Looking Ahead

The Youth Service remains in a strong position, with high engagement and clear plans to continue evolving provision in response to young people's needs.

Community Events

Report from Godalming Town Council's Community & Communications Officer

Godalming Spring Festival

The Spring Festival kickstarts Godalming's annual events calendar in style. The town centre came alive with bustling food, drink and craft stalls, alongside the ever-popular Cider Festival. Circo Rum Ba Ba brought laughter and spectacle with their Restoration Ladies on stilts, while local performers entertained crowds at The Pepperpot. Free Punch & Judy shows kept younger visitors smiling all day long.



Morris dancing is a quintessential part of the Spring Festival with Godalming's own Fleur De Lys Dancers delivering vibrant performances throughout the day.

Thank you to Seymours Estate Agents and Surrey & Hants Property Agents for sponsoring the event's advertising boards in support of the Mayor's and other local charities.



*Circo Rum Ba Ba
Restoration Ladies*

Spring Festival 2026 takes place on Saturday, 4 April

Godalming Food Festival

In conjunction with the Godalming & District Chamber of Commerce, the Food Festival took place on Sunday, 6 July alongside the Classic Car Show held on The Bury's Field.



Godalming Food Festival 2026 takes place on Saturday, 4 July

Godalming Staycation 2025

Godalming Town Council remains one of the few local councils in the UK to deliver a full-scale Staycation programme — helping residents 'holiday at home' during the first week of August. Running annually since 2010 (with the exception of 2020), Staycation continues to grow in popularity.



Paradox Parlour's Puzzle Trail

The 2025 programme combined returning favourites with exciting new experiences. Residents enjoyed tennis, bowls, football coaching at Godalming Town FC, Park Run, swimming sessions, canoeing, kayaking, paddleboarding, drumming workshops, ukulele sessions, handbell ringing, ballet, musical theatre and fitness. Ladywell Convent welcomed visitors for tours and afternoon tea for its annual open day.

There were opportunities to try fishing, brass instruments, foraging walks, dance, exercise classes, yoga and tree trail walks. Families also enjoyed library crafts, singing sessions, free board games afternoons and a visit to Godalming Fire Station.



A special *Travel with Confidence* rail trip, courtesy of SWR, saw five families travel from Godalming to London, building confidence using train and Hovertravel services.

Another highlight was the bespoke *Puzzle Trail* created by Paradox Parlours Escape Rooms. Over 110 participants followed clues across the town to crack the challenge.

Staycation thrives thanks to the generosity of local businesses and community groups. It continues to offer residents the opportunity to try new things and to have a 'holiday at home' experience.

Staycation 2026: Saturday, 1- Sunday, 9 August

Remembrance in Godalming

Remembrance Sunday remains one of the most significant civic occasions in the town calendar.

The Act of Remembrance, including the two-minute silence, took place at the War Memorial at the Phillips Memorial Ground. Wreaths were laid by civic leaders, service organisations, youth groups, faith representatives and community organisations.



Service personnel, veterans, emergency services and youth groups paraded through the town, led by the Godalming Band and Parade Marshall, Neil Godden. The Mayor of Godalming accompanied by Sergeant-at-Mace Peter Harris, Deputy Mayor of Godalming, and the Mayor and Consort of Waverley Borough Council took the salute in the High Street.

Remembrance Sunday 2026: Sunday, 8 November

Godalming Fireworks



In partnership with Guildford Rugby Club, the Council delivered the Town Fireworks event which was held on Friday, 7 November at the Rugby Club. Over 3000 tickets were sold, with a fun fair for children, food concessions and warm hospitality from the Club; a great evening was had by all.



Godalming Firework Display 2026: Friday, 6 November.

Godalming Pop-Up Events and Markets



Godalming's markets continue to flourish. The Friday Market at Crown Court, Pepperpot Undercroft stalls and themed street markets remain firm favourites.

Regular Friday anchors include Alfold Nurseries (*Phil the Flower*), Household Heaven and The Watch Stall, alongside a rotating mix of independent traders.

Danny's fruit and veg stall continues to trade from the Pepperpot Undercroft throughout the year.

The popular Plant-Based & Artisan Market returned across four Saturdays in 2025. During the year a new Antiques & Vintage Market joined the calendar.

Antiques & Vintage Market 2026: Saturday, 7 March & Saturday 9 August

Antiques and Artist's Makers' Market 2026: Saturday, 3 October

Farncombe Station Market

Godalming Town Council works closely with South-Western Railway (SWR) and serves as the official station adopter for both Godalming and Farncombe stations.

In partnership with SWR and through the Hills to Harbour Community Rail Partnership, four markets were held at Farncombe Railway Station car park, March, June, September and a Christmas Market on Saturday, 6 December.



Thank you to SWR for supporting this initiative.



Farncombe Station Market

Farncombe Station Markets will continue throughout 2026 — Dates confirmed Saturdays, 14 March, 6 June and 19 September. Christmas market date tbc, *lookout for the banners advertising the dates.*

Railway 200

Further to the artwork installation on the Northbound Platform, SWR gave permission for artworks to be installed on the Southside Platform to complement the installation already in place on the opposite platform.



The Mayor of Godalming, accompanied by fellow councillors, invited guests, and representatives from SWR, attended the unveiling of new station artwork on the southside platform at Farncombe Station. The project was delivered by Godalming Town Council in collaboration with the Farncombe Station Volunteer Group.

The Mayor formally opened the exhibition with a ribbon cutting ceremony. As part of the initiative, a poster created by a local young artist was commissioned and incorporated into the display.

In addition, a new “station-to-station” walking route was developed and curated by local volunteer Martyn Sandford. The event formed part of the wider Railway 200 celebrations in 2025, with notable figures from the railway community in attendance.

Christmas In Godalming

Godalming Christmas Lights Switch-on

Returning to The Pepperpot, the Christmas Lights Switch-on was held on Sunday, 23 November and featured performances by the Godalming Rock Choir, Guildford and Godalming Jazz Choirs and the Godalming Theatre Group. Thank you to the team at Godalming Minster who bought nativity characters to the High Street to give out glowsticks.



BBC's Mark Carter was on hand to MC proceedings and we are grateful for BBC Radio Surrey's support at GTC events and for Mark, once again, getting the countdown spot on so that the Mayor, assisted by Godalming Theatre's Group's Panto Characters, turned on the Christmas lights exactly at 5pm.

Godalming Christmas Lights Switch-on 2026: Sunday, 22 November

Godalming Christmas Festival Market

Held on the Saturday after the Switch-On, the Christmas Festival Market filled the High Street, Church Street and Crown Court with artisan food, crafts and festive gifts stalls.

The Pepperpot hosted a packed entertainment programme, including Moss Lane School and the Guildford & Godalming Jazz Choirs. Bluey was a big hit for little ones who were excited to have a photo taken with the popular character.



Santa's Grotto at Godalming Museum gave children the chance to meet Santa who was ably assisted by Chief Elf, Holly and Godalming Theatre Group Elves. Children had the opportunity to post letters to the North Pole, with Santa's Sleigh stationed outside courtesy of Godalming Round Table.

Thank you to Surrey & Hants Property Agents for supporting Bluey's visit, and to Priory Antiques and The Peter Caudle Memorial Trust for providing selection boxes for children visiting Santa at the Museum.

Godalming Christmas Market 2026: Saturday, 28 November

Farncombe Christmas Lights Switch-On

Organised by the Town Council and hosted by Farncombe Day Centre, the annual switch-on takes place on the first Friday in December.

Farncombe Infant School delighted the crowd with festive songs and Santa arrived on his illuminated sleigh courtesy of Godalming Round Table.

Reverend James Rattue joined the Mayor, Councillor Bob Crooks, to lead carols after the 5pm switch-on. Refreshments were kindly provided by the Farncombe Day Centre team.



Farncombe Christmas Lights Switch-on 2026: Friday, 4 December.

Throughout the year Godalming Town Council supports and assists many local organisations who provide community events, including *Sport Godalming (Godalming Community Run) Godalming Rotary (Spring Fair and Duck Race), Godalming Round Table (Town Show & Carnival) and ChoirBLAST.*

Grounds Maintenance and Floral Godalming

Godalming Town Council's Grounds & Facilities Team plays a vital role in maintaining the town's public realm, open spaces and cemeteries to a consistently high standard. Through skilled horticulture, environmental stewardship and strong community partnership, this work reflects a long-term commitment to sustainability, biodiversity and civic pride.

Floral Godalming and Town Centre Displays

Floral Godalming, introduced in 2018, has continued to expand year on year. Over the last five years the Council has taken on 32 additional planters, refurbished existing displays and introduced larger permanent planters to provide year-round interest in the historic town centre.

A major development in 2025 was the first full season using the Council's new polytunnel and irrigation system. This enabled the team to grow more planting in-house, reducing reliance on imported seasonal bedding and improving sustainability. During the year the team successfully delivered the planting of hanging baskets, lamppost troughs and railing planters, with the ambition of bringing all displays in-house in future.

Sustainable Practice and Biodiversity Enhancement

Grounds management continues to focus on environmentally responsible practices. Peat-free compost, organic fertilisers, plant pot recycling and manual weeding remain central to reducing chemical use and supporting pollinators.

The team expanded wildflower and meadow planting across the town, creating new pollinator-friendly roadside areas and trialling mini meadow planters to enhance biodiversity in prominent public spaces.

Sustainable watering practices have been employed, with water abstracted from the River Wey and delivered using an electric vehicle and bowser system, reducing waste and supporting greener operations.

Cemeteries: Excellence in Care and Conservation

The Council's cemeteries remain important to both local heritage and biodiversity. Eashing Cemetery, which serves as the Council's maintenance base, continues to be managed to the highest standards combining dignity, environmental care and ecological value. Wildflower meadows, habitat creation, composting and pollinator-rich planting have all contributed to its continued success.

Judges in the South & South-East in Bloom Awards described Eashing Cemetery as “**an exemplar on so many levels of excellence**”, praising the Grounds Team's professionalism, sustainability and ambition for self-sufficiency through plant production and conservation practice.

At Nightingale Cemetery, the team progressed rejuvenation work including tree replacement, rewilding areas and restoration of historic Grade II listed railings, alongside continued partnership with Skillway, whose workshops provide vocational opportunities for young people.

South & South-East in Bloom Success

Godalming Town Council was again recognised in the South & South-East in Bloom Awards 2025. Eashing Cemetery was overall category winner in the Large Cemetery sector, and Nightingale Cemetery continued its strong Gold-standard record.



The Youth Service Garden achieved a first-time category win, and the Farncombe Station Gardening Group was commended for its outstanding volunteer contribution.

In the town centre category, Godalming achieved a Gold Award, with judges highlighting the quality of planting, town cleanliness, strong community involvement and the Council's sustainable approach.



Following this success, Floral Godalming was selected to represent the South and South-East Region in the 2026 RHS Britain in Bloom UK Finals, reflecting the dedication of staff, volunteers, sponsors and the wider community in keeping Godalming a welcoming and attractive town.

Looking Ahead

The Council's grounds and floral work remain a visible symbol of civic pride and identity. Through traditional care, modern sustainability and partnership with volunteers, businesses and community groups, Godalming Town Council continues to enhance the town's environment for residents and visitors alike.

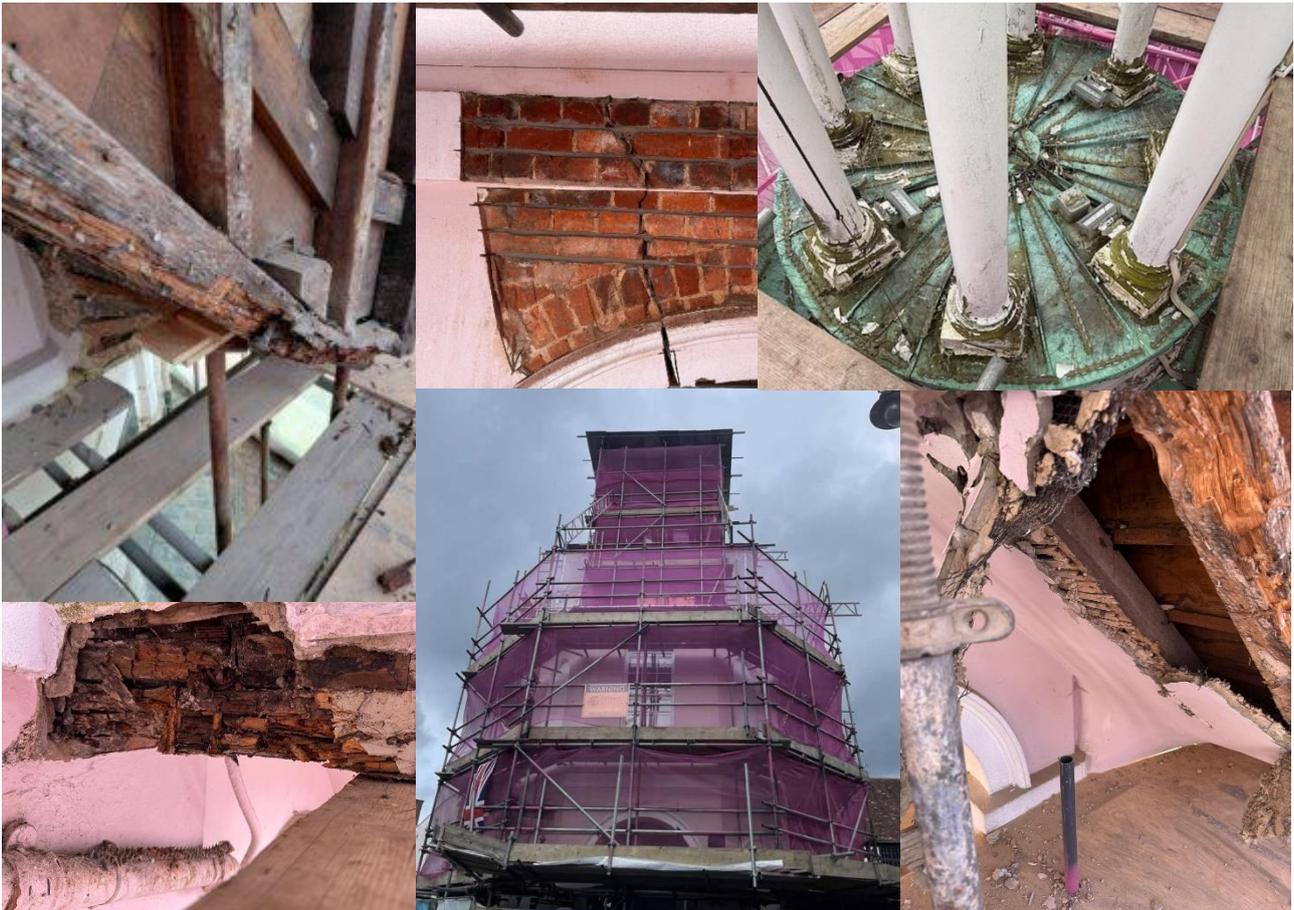
Public Realm, Streetscene and Heritage Assets

Godalming Town Council takes pride in maintaining a high-quality public realm that balances everyday functionality with community identity and heritage stewardship. During 2025/26 the Council's maintenance team delivered practical improvements to the street furniture and bus shelter provision. Throughout the year the team carried out work to maintain and improve areas of the public realm, which although not directly a GTC responsibility, provided a benefit for resident.

Public Conveniences: Loo of the Year Recognition

Godalming's public conveniences continue to set a high standard for cleanliness, accessibility and service. In 2025 the Council's Crown Court toilets received a Platinum Award at the Loo of the Year Awards, with Platinum Plus for accessibility. Additionally, GTC was placed in the "Premier League" of top 20 local authorities, reflecting consistent investment in maintenance, standards and customer care. This recognition underlines the importance placed on well-managed facilities that support town centre vitality and visitor experience.

The Pepperpot — Caring for a Town Icon



The Pepperpot is one of Godalming's most distinctive heritage buildings. Built in 1814 to replace a medieval market hall, it served as the town's council chamber and later the home of the local museum. Today it remains a Grade II listed symbol of the town's history, hosting markets, community meetings and events.

During 2025/26 the Council acted decisively to secure The Pepperpot's long-term future. Following surveys identifying structural issues, emergency works and further funding were approved to enable comprehensive restoration. Investment, now totalling over £300,000, addressed critical timber decay in the cupola and other elements, improved joinery and roofing, and enabled specialist conservation work under careful heritage oversight.

Works included restoration of the historic clock by Smith of Derby, specialist treatment of the copper roof and structural repairs to



support columns and brickwork. With scaffolding removed during the year, The Pepperpot has regained a more elegant presence in the High Street, while further conservation continues into 2026.

Quality Public Realm and Streetscene Work

Alongside major projects, the Maintenance Team continued its programme of routine work: maintaining hedges, keeping alleyways accessible, managing planting and planters, and responding to community reports. This steady work underpins resident satisfaction and complements wider civic improvements.

Museum Report

Godalming Museum continues to play an important role in preserving and celebrating the town's heritage, providing a valued resource for residents, schools and visitors. At a time when many small local museums face growing financial and operational pressures, Godalming has sustained a strong museum service through the commitment of staff, volunteers and Trustees, and through the partnership between Godalming Town Council and the Godalming Museum Trust.



A significant success was achieved with the accreditation of the Museum by Arts Council England. Thanks go to the Curator and her team for the incredible amount of work required to meet the exacting standards.

The Museum maintained a busy programme of public lectures, talks and events, with attendance continuing to grow. The season included well-supported speaker evenings delivered with local historical and civic organisations, alongside regular displays, exhibitions and book launches.

Community engagement and fundraising were strengthened through special events, including a highly successful Quiz Evening. The Museum launched its inaugural, sold-out “**Spooky Godalming**” narrated walks, exploring some of the town's more colourful and less respectable characters and presenting local heritage in an entertaining way for new audiences.

The Town Council wishes to record its thanks to the Trustees of the Godalming Museum Trust for their governance, strategic direction and fundraising support, helping to sustain the Museum and safeguard Godalming's heritage for future generations.

Volunteers remain central to the Museum's success, supporting opening hours and visitor experience. The Trustees and Council noted the ongoing challenge of maintaining sufficient volunteer capacity.

The Museum shop continues to provide an important income stream and visitor offer. Christmas trading was particularly strong, and work continues to expand and refresh the shop to support long-term resilience.

Looking Ahead

Through the continued Council–Trust partnership, and with the support of staff, volunteers and the wider community, the Museum is well placed to build on its strong foundations and continue developing as a cultural and educational asset for Godalming.

Community Grants and Support to Local Organisations

Godalming Town Council recognises the vital role played by voluntary organisations, schools, charities and community groups in supporting wellbeing and resilience. Through its grants programme, the Council provides targeted support to help sustain valued services, encourage participation and strengthen community life across Godalming and Farncombe. During 2025/26 the Council allocated £65,150 through three principal streams: Service Level Agreements (SLAs), Council Community Grants and Grant Aid in Kind.

In addition, recognising the immediate pressures facing Farncombe Day Centre, the Council approved a further one-off £15,000 grant from the Emerging Projects Fund to provide short-term stability while trustees continued work to secure a sustainable long-term future.

Service Level Agreements

The Council maintains SLAs with key organisations delivering essential support. In April 2025 SLA funding totalling **£45,500** was confirmed for:

- Citizens Advice South-West Surrey (£35,000)
- Farncombe Day Centre (£7,500)
- Wharf Nursery School (£3,000)

These partnerships help ensure specialist support remains available locally.

Community Grants

Alongside SLAs, a wide range of grants supported projects that enhance education, health, sport, culture and inclusion, including:

- Farncombe Infants School (bike rack cover)
- Moss Lane School Association (non-fiction library books)
- Sport in Mind (weekly yoga supporting mental health)
- Farncombe Youth Football Club (team kit)
- Army Cadet Force (replacement ceremonial standard)
- Farncombe Jazz Choir (cultural visit to Joigny)

Later awards supported school residential access for lower-income families, playground improvements, community facilities and environmental projects, including grants to Godalming Junior School, St Edmund's PSA, St Mark's Community Centre and Roots for the Future.

Grant Aid in Kind

Grant Aid in Kind enables groups to use Council premises at reduced or no cost, supporting organisations such as Godalming Round Table, Go Godalming, Godalming First Responders and ChoirBLAST, and helping community events including the Town Show and Godalming Run.

Looking Ahead

The grants programme remains an important part of the Council's commitment to sustaining community life. Through financial support, practical assistance and partnership working, Godalming Town Council continues to help local organisations thrive and deliver lasting benefit.

Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Fund

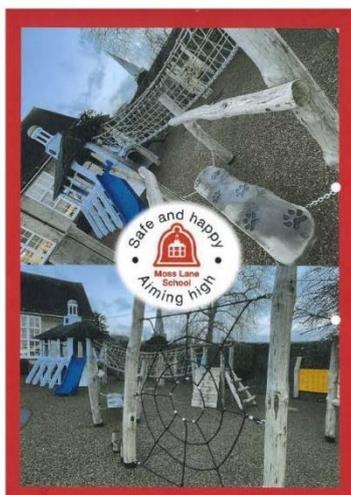
When new development takes place in the borough, Waverley Borough Council can collect the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). This funding helps provide infrastructure and community improvements needed to support growth.

A proportion is passed to Godalming Town Council through the Neighbourhood element of CIL, enabling the Council to help ensure local facilities keep pace with change.

Neighbourhood CIL can be used to:

- improve or maintain local infrastructure, or
- support projects that address the pressures that development places on Godalming.

In practice, this allows the Council and local organisations to take a broad view of local priorities. Projects can include improvements to community buildings, schools, sporting and recreational facilities, open spaces, transport infrastructure and other community needs.



The Town Council works with community groups and infrastructure providers to identify suitable schemes and encourage strong applications that deliver lasting benefit. As CIL income depends on the level of development, it is not a guaranteed funding stream, so the Council takes a careful and strategic approach to awards.

During 2025/26, the Council approved significant Neighbourhood CIL awards, including support for Baden Hall's restoration, improved play and outdoor learning facilities at Moss Lane School, and upgraded floodlighting around the artificial pitches at Broadwater School to support wider community access and sustainability. Support was also given to Farncombe Day Centre to help develop future plans for this important local service.

As with all CIL funding, grants are released only as projects progress and costs are evidenced. Recognising uncertainty arising from Local

Government Reorganisation, the Council agreed a temporary pause on new Neighbourhood CIL awards until October 2026, alongside a **£25,000** contingency for urgent community needs.

CIL Awarded in 2025/26

£153,835 was awarded for the refurbishment of Baden Hall in Farncombe.

£12,000 was awarded for upgrading of practice facilities at Farncombe Cricket Club.

£66,000 was awarded for improvement to play and outdoor learning infrastructure at Moss Lane School.

£18,600 was awarded to Farncombe Day Centre to undertake feasibility and design works for refurbishment and remodelling works to enable expansion and increased capacity of the Day Centre facilities.

£100,000 was awarded for upgrading of the sport pitch floodlights at Broadwater School.

Completed CIL Projects

£26,836.00 was awarded to St John's Farncombe for the installation of emergency and escape lighting.

£23,199 awarded for the installation of new bus shelters at Eashing Lane and Franklyn Road saw the new shelters arrive within weeks of the order being made and were ready for use before the end of the summer.

£35,000 was awarded to the Farncombe Cricket Club for the internal refurbishment and enlargement of the existing changing facilities to provide umpire changing facilities, improved changing facilities suitable for the female teams, storage space for junior sections' training and playing equipment.

£108,890 funded the Broadwater School Outside Recreational Garden Project and specifically the 'The Canopy Garden' which provides much needed additional seating for pupils at breaktimes and performance space, with planting and new trees creating a more relaxing environment.

£13,580, supported the Farncombe Community Garden Project for the construction of accessible pathways throughout the garden, which will make the garden accessible and safe to the public and enable the garden to be open to everyone in the community.

£83,548 funded the construction of new offices at the Youth Centre to support Godalming's youth workers at Broadwater Youth & Community Centre.

£51,306 was allocated as the community's contribution to the Crown Court Public Toilets renovation project.

£125,000 helped create Busbridge Junior School's new Multi Games Activity Area which will be used by school and community groups.

£23,000 enabled Godalming Junior School's to refurbish its existing all-weather play area.

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