

Introduction

This document sets out for Members, staff and the community, how the Town Council will work effectively in the best interests of all who live, work and use the Town Council's services. It will lead and determine the direction of all internal strategies and help to guide the Town Council when setting its budget. In order to facilitate this the Council will plan on a three year horizon. This document will also be used to monitor the performance of the Council and will be regularly reviewed and updated as the Town Council meets its priorities and new projects come into being.

Godalming Town Council will always seek to reflect the priorities of the community.

Our Community (GU7)

Godalming, is a vibrant and expanding historic market town of approximately 22,000 residents. Visually appealing with good transport links and a strong sense of identity and community, Godalming is considered a desirable, albeit expensive place to live. Although predominately a prosperous area, Godalming is not without areas of difficulty, with two out of the top three most disadvantaged Super Output Areas in Waverley Borough located in the town.

The administrative area that is Godalming encompasses a number of different communities including Aarons Hill, Binscombe, Catteshall, Charterhouse, Crownpits, Farncombe, Holloway, Ockford Ridge and (almost all of) Busbridge. Of these special mention is made of Farncombe because that community has a distinctive “village” identity and history of its own.



Godalming Town Council

Godalming Town Council, which has been in existence in one form or another since 1575, is the first tier of Local Government and closest to the community. The Town Council has an overall responsibility for the well-being of its residents. The work of the Council falls into three main categories; representing the community, delivering services to meet the needs of the community and striving to improve the quality of life in the town.

Godalming Town Council manages, facilitates, or is responsible for a range of services and activities including; Community Centres, Godalming Museum, cemeteries, public toilets, allotments, the bandstand, a number of bus shelters, public benches and other street furniture within the town, as well as a major flood alleviation scheme in conjunction with the Environment Agency. The Council also works with a wide range of community stakeholders including the Chamber of Commerce and the Farncombe Initiative, and promotes activities that provide benefit to the town such as the Christmas lights, town wide festivals and celebrations including Staycation. The Town Council works with Surrey County Council (www.surreycc.gov.uk) and Waverley Borough Council (www.waverley.gov.uk) to ensure the effective delivery of services to the local community.



Significant Outcomes 2015 – 2018

During the previous three year period (from May 2015) Godalming Town Council has achieved the following significant outcomes:

Improved and expanded community facilities required for a growing population

Having taken over a short lease of the old and somewhat dilapidated Wilfrid Noyce Centre, Godalming Town Council negotiated a new 125 year lease at a peppercorn rent which allowed it to invest in the future of the centre. Planned in two phases, the initial refurbishment and extension of the existing facilities, completed in March 2016, proved so successful that demand exceeded capacity, leading the Council to bring forward phase two of the project. The Oglethorpe Hall was completed in October 2017. Both phases of the project were completed within budget.



Increased Revenue

Godalming Town Council has increased the usage of its community facilities, whilst keeping hirer charges low for Godalming residents, charities and voluntary organisations. By utilising specialist software income from community buildings has increased by 61% since 2015.

Ownership of the Godalming Museum

In 2017 Godalming Town Council signed an agreement with Waverley Borough Council to transfer the Freehold of Godalming Museum to the Town Council. As part of the agreement Godalming Town Council has been able to secure funding for the future maintenance of, at 600 years old, one of the oldest buildings in Godalming. The Town Council, working with The Godalming Museum Trust, has provided a secure long term future for this valuable, educational and important asset to the Town.



Neighbourhood Plan

With the support of the Town Council, community volunteers produced The Godalming and Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan which was adopted by Godalming Town Council as the Qualifying Body for submission to public consultation.



Management of Public Conveniences

Faced with the prospect of the town centre and Farncombe village not having public toilets, Godalming Town Council secured the lease of each of the buildings and took over the management of these important community facilities in November 2017. The Council has begun a programme of upgrading the facilities and has provided hygienic baby changing facilities at each location.



Godalming Fireworks Night

Following the stepping down of the previous organisers, Godalming Town Council undertook, along with a number of community groups within the town, the organising of the annual town firework display.



Staycation

The Town Council has sustained and grown the annual Staycation event increasing the number of activities by 50% since 2014 so that residents have a choice of 75 events they can partake in. Staycation not only provides benefit to residents but also the organisations and businesses who provide the Staycation activities.



Boarden Bridge

Following the closure, due to structural weakness, of the ancient footbridge across the River Wey, Godalming Town Council, with the generous support of The Caudle Memorial Trust, worked with its own contractors and Surrey County Council to reopen this much loved and important historic bridge.

Floral Godalming

Working with supporters, partner and stakeholder organisations, including the Caudle Memorial Trust, Godalming Town Council has introduced Floral Godalming aimed at improving the visual aesthetics of the Town Centre.

Farncombe Initiative

The Town Council continues to support the Farncombe Initiative, which has seen local residents identify and undertake improvement projects within the Farncombe and Binscombe area.



Efficient Delivery of Services

Godalming Town Council has undertaken a significant review and reorganisation of its staffing resource to ensure the Town Council is able to deliver an increasing range of services as efficiently and effectively as possible.



Economic Development

Working with the Godalming & District Chamber of Commerce, Godalming Town Council has helped to sustain and grow the economic vibrancy of the primary retail area, through its support of farmers' markets, annual festivals and Christmas light displays. Additionally Godalming Town Council has supported 'mystery shopping' exercises in order to provide feedback and advice to participating retailers and businesses.



Future Aims

Godalming Town Council aims to provide the best service possible within the available resource. The Council will fulfil its statutory duties and obligations and strive to maintain, improve and enhance its service provision to the community.

The Town Council has set the following general aims for the next three year planning cycle:

- To Improve Communications with our residents and local businesses
- To maintain and improve the built and visual environment
- To promote the Godalming and Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan
- To engage with and support local community, voluntary and charitable organisations
- To continue to support the provision of a major flood alleviation scheme
- To promote the economic vibrancy and vitality of the town

This document will be reviewed by the Council on a regular basis



