NEIGHBOURHOOD
Area Committee
Farnham

MAKE IT HAPPEN

Farnham Neighbourhood Area Committee (NAC)

Meeting Notes 24 November 2025



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Chair:
Name – Organisation

Vice Chair:
Name – Organisation

Attendees:
Name – Organisation

Apologies:
Name – Organisation

Welcome and Introduction

On 24 November 2025, the Farnham Neighbourhood Area Committee (NAC) held its second meeting following an initial workshop in September and a first official meeting on 3 November.

The tone of the room was one of excitement, trust and collaboration, similar to the previous meeting, where members had looked at shared goals. The NAC priority area had also been formulated at the November meeting, where members agreed that children's and young people's mental health was the focal issue.

To build on this, subject matter experts presented on the priority to provide deeper context and evidence. A buzz of activity followed, as table groups reflected on the insights which most resonated. A common reflection was the lack of knowledge from adults on how to engage meaningfully with young people in crisis and the need for training on becoming a trusted adult. The need for positive male role models was also highlighted.

Another topic that was introduced was young people's use of mobile phones and issues with social media. It was widely agreed that mobile phones and social media appear to have a detrimental effect on young people's mental health, and that therefore their usage should be limited. One participant even recounted being told by a young person at an event that they wanted adults to "actually be the adult" and lay down stricter rules on phone access. However, a different perspective on phones was also acknowledged – school curriculum and resources are provided online, and young people may be more comfortable using online mental health resources rather than in person.

Despite the initial difference in opinion, it was agreed that if they are seeking help online, young people should be engaging with mental health professionals (the

example of Kooth was given), rather than unqualified resources such as ChatGPT or other AI models. The difficulty organisations, particularly mental health organisations, are having with engaging schools was another point that resonated widely across the NAC.

Through the lively discussions on the insights, ideas on what success would look like for young people began to take shape. Multiple safe spaces for young people, as well as being able to have meaningful conversations with trusted adults and opportunities to develop skills in their areas of interest all emerged as key ideas. To support these ideas and keep momentum, lists of immediate and long-term actions were made.

Immediate actions included the provision of mental health training for adults in the lives of young people (MECC training was suggested), the creation of mental health resources such as a directory of mental health services and a poster explaining what to do if a young person is in crisis.

Additional immediate actions included engaging stakeholders as well as setting up meetings between Primary Care Networks, Mindworks and schools to improve relationships. Long-term actions included studying good examples of schools that engage effectively with mental health services. Investment in the voluntary sector, as well as local sports clubs to support facilities that improve young people's mental health was also suggested.

A common theme in discussions was the lack of development opportunities for young people with skills and interests other than formal education, leading to young people being NEET (Not in Education or Employment) which can impact mental health. A long term action was proposed to find facilities for young people with non-academic interests. Whilst the enthusiasm to act was clear, the group remained grounded, keeping in mind the practicalities of their ambitions by reflecting on potential challenges and enablers.

Challenges raised included the lack of awareness amongst GPs on mental health support teams in schools, creating a disconnected system. Another challenge was the lack of awareness of Farnham Town Council's investment in outreach youth services (through 40 Degreez, Jubilee Hub and Hale Community and Youth Centre and grants for school holiday activities). Limitations on volunteer resources, and resistance to collaboration between schools, mental health services, and the NHS were also highlighted.

In terms of enablers, it was suggested that using existing mental health trainers within the NAC network would be sensible. Key people in the NAC network with solid presences in schools would act as an enabler for relationship building. Leveraging corporate social responsibility from local businesses and using spaces provided by them for community initiatives was also discussed. Funding from business and the BID, a current improbability, as all sectors are being asked to do more with less.

Although the NAC members' discussions were guided by questions designed to prompt reflection, conversations around the room often took a life of their own and opened new avenues for discussion.

Farnham Connects, established during Covid, could communicate through established membership the need for trusted adults. An initiative to upskill volunteer base to become trusted adults could be implemented. This gave way to other ideas on upskilling and collaboration, such as introducing youth mentoring programmes using 18–25-year-olds as trusted adults. These young people could be recruited through Duke of Edinburgh and other youth upskilling initiatives or programmes. Building partnerships with Surrey County Council cultural services (such as the Youth Events run by Surrey Arts), Shepperton Studios, and Netflix to engage young people and create more creative local youth initiatives.

The meeting ended with a sense of drive and clarity on the next steps ahead of the third Farnham NAC meeting on 15 December.