

Contents

- Introduction to Farnham Craft Town
 - Partnerships
 - Organisation
 - Our objectives
- Community engagement
 - October Craft Month
 - Lantern Festival
 - Children's craft workshops
- Knowledge exchange
 - Artist in Residence
 - Sharing experience
 - Making connections
- Professional development
 - Rising Stars
 - Creative Business Programme
 - Surrey Artist of the Year



Farnham is a historic market town in the heart of Surrey, celebrated for its rich heritage, picturesque landscapes, and vibrant community spirit.

It is home to an astonishing number of craft makers, from those just getting started to the internationally renowned – as well as craft organisations, creative micro-businesses and independent creative industries.

Makers work from home, from retail outlets, in dedicated workshop spaces and from bespoke craft studios in the town.

Farnham's reputation for craft has made it an attractive and distinctive tourist destination with an appealing blend of craft heritage; high quality contemporary craft for sale; regular craft festivals and pop-up events; a month of celebration and activity each October; and a creative buzz.

The town has also proved a magnet for a diverse mix of makers from around the world which helps enrich the day to day and make Farnham a great place to live.



Farnham Craft Town partnership

Since Farnham was designated a World Craft Town in 2020, local craft organisations have worked together in partnership to strengthen our position as a centre of excellence for craft and a key destination for visitors.

- A network of 20 organisations gathers bi-monthly to plan, collaborate, and exchange creative ideas for craft events.
- A dedicated steering group works together to shape the strategic direction.
- Key individuals collaborate weekly to coordinate and promote all craft events taking place across the area.

[See a short film here about Farnham.](#)



What makes us unique?

Our Craft Town Partners

- Farnham Town Council
- Farnham Maltings
- Farnham Creatives' Network
- Farnham Pottery
- New Ashgate Gallery
- Crafts Study Centre (CSC)
- University for the Creative Arts (UCA)
- Pierrepont Farm
- Creative Response - supporting people with mental ill health, learning and physical difficulties
- Surrey Hills Arts
- Enterprise 19 - for young adults with learning disabilities



Farnham Craft Town

Steering Group

- Farnham Town Council
- Farnham Maltings
- Farnham Creatives' Network
- New Ashgate Gallery
- Crafts Study Centre (CSC)
- University for the Creative Arts (UCA)

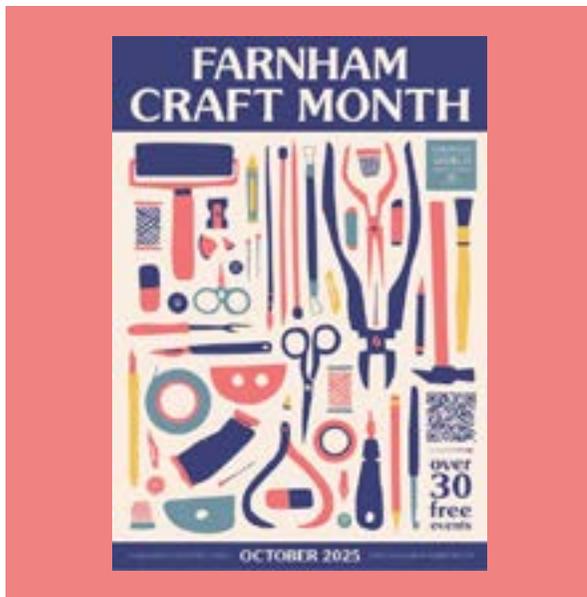


Our Objectives

- The UK destination for Craft
- Vibrant marketplace of craft-makers
- Economic business support and learning opportunities for makers
- Community engagement, especially for the young
- Reason to visit
- Boost the local economy
- Improve loneliness and isolation through craft connections



Community Engagement



October Craft Month



Lantern Festival



Children's Craft Workshops

Every year we celebrate October Craft Month

In 2025 we held 159 craft events during October across Farnham and our local villages, the largest number ever.

[Visit our interactive brochure for full details](#)

We kick off the month with a vibrant Launch Event – a Craft Day, hosted by one of our craft partners, featuring demonstrations, interactive workshops, try-it-yourself sessions and opportunities to purchase items from local makers.

Throughout the month local organisations and makers organise workshops, exhibitions, talks and social events, which are promoted through [our website](#) and [social media](#) platforms.



2024 launch event at Pierrepoint Farm

Craft Trail

We have a very active community of makers, many of whom work from their homes or garden workshops.

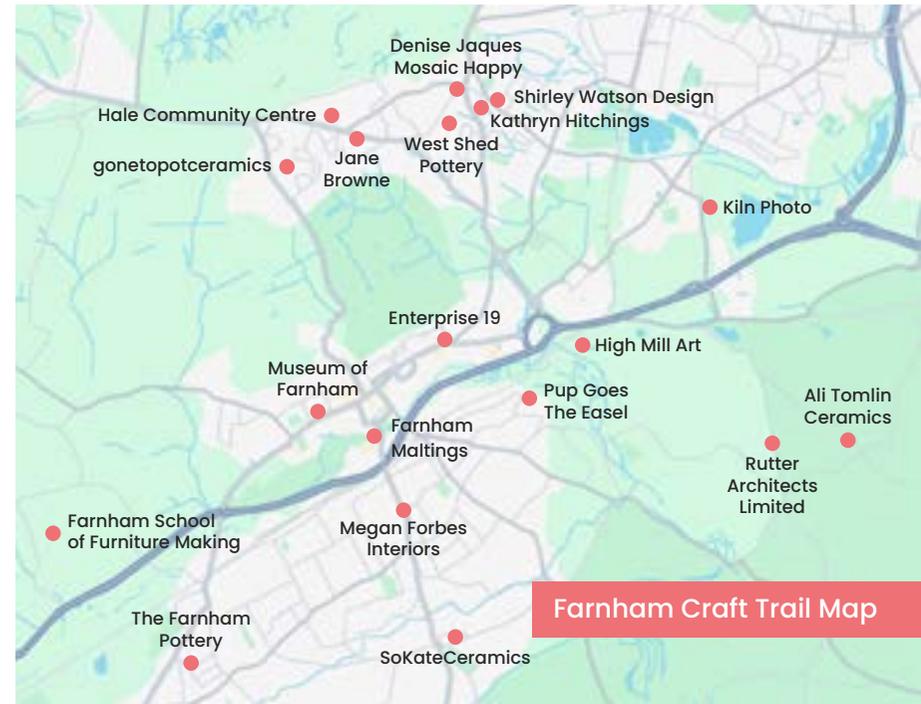
In 2024, we set up a Craft Trail, which enabled visitors to see craftspeople at work, in their own environment.

The feedback from both visitors and participants was very positive, and it has become a regular event in our craft calendar.

“Wonderful exhibition of unique local talent. We loved it. Creators were so friendly and welcoming too, happy to show us what they were crafting at the time.”



Enterprise 19 Open Studio



Farnham Craft Trail Map

Farnham Lantern Festival

We wrap up October Craft Month with a magical community lantern festival. Volunteers come together to create 800 lantern-making kits—complete with willow, paper, instructions, and a light—which are distributed to local families and community groups. Creativity is encouraged, culminating in stars, houses, hats, animals, birds, and even spaceships appearing alongside traditional willow lanterns. As dusk falls, people gather and walk together to the Church, where the lanterns are displayed for all to see. This enchanting event has quickly become a wonderful new craft tradition in Farnham.

[See a film of the 2024 Lantern Festival here.](#)



Children's craft workshops

Throughout the year the New Ashgate Gallery runs children's craft workshops supported by the South Street Trust in conjunction with local artists at local community events. The aim is to introduce children to craft at a young age.

Results so far in 2025:

- 636 participants recorded to date.
- 91% of participants reported learning new craft skills.
- 89% said free, quality activities are very important.
- 63% already knew Farnham is a World Craft Town, while 37% discovered this through attending, showing the project's clear role in raising awareness.
- Artists and volunteers gained new facilitation, communication, and leadership skills.



Knowledge exchange



Artist in Residence



Sharing Experience

The Wind from Craft Town
May 23 2025



Making connections

Artist in Residence

In 2024 we secured funding from the Farnham South Street Trust, a local charitable trust, to run a craft residency programme for five years. Our intention is to work with artists from other centres of craft around the world. The University for the Creative Arts in Farnham hosts the artists, providing access to their world class workshops for glass, ceramics, jewellery and metalwork.

Our first AiR was a glass artist from Ireland, who worked with the local community to create pieces inspired by Farnham, followed by a ceramic artist from Italy.

Each artist creates one piece for Farnham, which will form a craft collection for the town. Our 2026 AiR will be a jeweller.

[See our video about the Artist in Residence programme here.](#)

The South Street Trust was set up following the sale of the Farnham School of Science and Art. Proceeds from the sale of the school were invested and the income is used to provide annual grants for art-based activities.



Fiona Byrne Artist in Residence 2024



Fiona's community workshop as part of her residency

The Wind from Craft Town

In May 2025 we were involved in an international forum [The Wind from Craft Town](#), held at the Victoria & Albert Museum. Director of the Crafts Study Centre, Stephen Knott gave a short talk 'How a town of craft might be run' reflecting on the five years that Farnham has been a World Craft Town, with a series of slides provided by all the partners of Farnham Craft Town.

The title of the talk is a reference to Professor Simon Olding's lecture at a 2011 conference, ['How a town of craft might be planned'](#) where the former Director of the CSC talked about what it takes for a town to be a centre of craft.

Simon's lecture discussed local political support, a grassroots investment in craft among the residents, the importance of education, and how traditions of craft need to be explored, discussed and vitalised through contemporary practice.

Stephen Knott outlined how these elements are present in Farnham's experience as a craft town to date, driven by particularly strong engagement among community groups, individual makers and the town's key craft-based organisations.



Crafts Study Centre



Dr Stephen Knott at the Victoria and Art Museum

Sharing experience

During 2025, following the forum at the V&A, a group of curators, representatives from the art and design media, and craft charities from China visited Farnham. They were shown the Farnham Pottery in Wrecclesham, the Crafts Study Centre, the New Ashgate Gallery and Farnham Maltings, as well as the delights of Lion and Lamb Yard and St Andrew's Church.

We look forward to future collaborations in the effort to bring global attention to the development of local craft cultures.



Image courtesy of GyreCraft, the International Craft Innovation Institute.



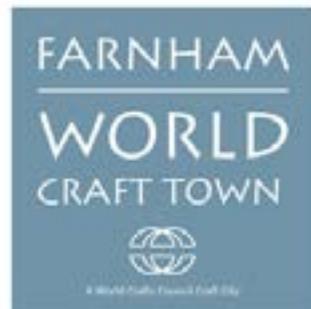
Sharing experience

During October Craft Month we invited Rebecca Skeels from Birmingham to give a talk comparing our two World Craft Towns. It was very well attended and forged stronger links between our two very different craft communities.

A Tale of Two Craft Towns

Birmingham Jewellery Quarter and Farnham

A discussion between Rebecca Skeels, Course Director at Birmingham City University's School of Jewellery and Dr Stephen Knott Director of the Crafts Study Centre



Making connections

The Farnham Creatives' Network has been bringing together local artists, makers, designers, educators, gallerists and like-minded creatives since 2019.

FCN hosts regular free, informal Network Nights to connect and share ideas over a drink in a friendly and collaborative environment. Alongside the network nights, FCN actively supports the creative community by sharing opportunities through their social channels.

During Farnham Craft Month they curated a series of pop-up exhibitions in large retail space in town, primarily for makers who are not able to host Open Studios on their own premises.

The group is run by three local volunteers and is supported by Farnham Maltings Craft Team.



Professional development



Surrey Artist of the Year



Creative Business Programme



Rising Stars

Rising Stars

Each year the New Ashgate Gallery offers early career makers an opportunity to exhibit in the gallery and take part in national craft events throughout the year.

Many of the applicants are local artists, trained at UCA in Farnham, but they are competing on a national basis, demonstrating the high quality of local craft.

The New Ashgate works in collaboration with the Crafts Study Centre (CSC), another key partner, to offer a variety of other opportunities to Rising Stars. This year the group were able to work with the CSC archive and create new pieces, which were then displayed alongside the piece they were responding to.



Jess Skelton Rising Stars winner 2024

Creative Business Programme

In April 2023, Farnham Maltings was granted funding of £50,000 through Waverley Borough Council under UKSPF to deliver a business incubator programme for small creative businesses.

30 local creative businesses receiving high-quality, industry specific support.

- Expert talks and workshops: 30 sessions
- Individual mentoring opportunities: 6 hours for each member
- Networking socials: 3
- Co-working/quiet working space at FM: 7 days a week
- Exhibition space made available by FM/UCA: 3 events
- Surrey Artists Open Studies: June 2024
- CBP Collective exhibition: Oct 2024
- End of CBP exhibition: March 2025
- Professional photoshoots to support CBP events: 4



Surrey Artist of the Year

This competition is a long-standing partnership between the New Ashgate and the Surrey Artists Open Studios to celebrate the wealth of creative talent in Surrey.

This aspirational exhibition offers a collective of local quality arts and craft as voted for by the public during open studio visits. The top scoring artists come together for a programme of events each autumn. There is a wide variety of artworks on show, including different materials and techniques such as painting, drawing, textiles, ceramics and paper art.

It gives local artists and crafts people an opportunity to exhibit in a professional environment at a renowned craft gallery in Farnham.



Hilary Peat Surrey Artist of the Year winner 2025



newashgate Meet the Surrey Artist of the Year 2025 Finalist: Hilary Peat

Hilary Peat's ceramics explore nature's colours, light, and reflections through hand-built earthenware forms that blur the line between design and craft. She uses techniques such as sgraffito, wax resist, and layered underglazes to create intricate geometric patterns with subtle tonal shifts.

Her teaching background informs her creative practice. The resulting work combines structure and spontaneity, producing tactile, richly patterned surfaces that play with light and movement.

🗳️ Voting is open until Friday, 17 October at 12 noon.
See the finalists' work at New Ashgate Gallery until 1 November.

Surrey Artist of the Year 2025 is organised by New Ashgate Gallery in partnership with Surrey Artists Open Studios, supported by the Patricia Baines Trust. Guildford, Farnham, Woking & Surrey Downs Magazines are our media partner. DAISY helps diversify the project, and The Bulb Shed is our flower partner.



FARNHAM
WORLD
CRAFT TOWN



A World Crafts Council Craft City



Farnham
Town Council

farnham **maltings**



New Ashgate
Gallery



CRAFTS
STUDY
CENTRE

[Video: Farnham World Craft Town Ambassador -
Dame Magdalene Odundo DBE](#)