

Focus on Farnworth Board Meeting
The Well, Trafford Street, Farnworth, BL4 7PQ
9:30 am Friday 3 October 2025

MINUTES

1. Welcome and apologies

John welcomed Letitia Gil from MHCLG to the meeting.

Present: John Bradbury, Carrie Riley, Carlene Kirton, Helen Clayton, Janet Pollard, Paul Sanders, Nadeem Ayub, Yasmin Qureshi

In attendance: Helen Bradbury, Karen Ingham, Clive Gibbon, Cathy Palmer, Leticia Gil.

Apologies: Chris Reddy, Vanessa Barlow, Nicola Robinson, Stephen Malone, Wendy Greenwood.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 15 September 2025

Accepted as a true record

3. Matters arising

- a. Still require photo and bios from most people on the board. **Action: to be emailed to helenbradbury@farnworthbaptist.org.uk by 17 October 2025**
- b. Still need a brief summary of procurement processes and limits. **Action: Janet Pollard to provide before next board meeting**
- c. Will bring our proposals on the comments from the Zencity survey to a future board meeting **Action: Board Secretariat**
- d. Plan for board development in the New Year once we have recruited more people **Action: Secretariat to get date in the diary ASAP**
- e. Future meetings were circulated at the bottom of today's agenda **Action: Secretariat to send out meeting invites for these.**
- f. Helen Clayton commented on an outstanding discussion about outcomes and outputs. MHCLG have not yet published their criteria. We need to match our intended outcomes to those that will be being measured by MHCLG. Detailed outcomes are not required at this stage and can be developed as we firm up the projects. MHCLG outputs and outcomes have not yet been determined or published.

4. Updates from MHCLG

- a. 15092025 Q&A webinar note
- b. 22092025 Regen Plan Assessment Tips webinar notes
- c. PfN Regen Plan Webinar copy
- d. PfN_intro_pres
- e. Regeneration plan questions 1

The board notes these papers.

Subsidy control, which monitors whether an organisation receiving funding gains an unfair advantage, is the responsibility of the local Council. Whilst there may be advantages of some collective guidance for the whole programme, the Council will still need to implement its own controls.

MOUs – difficult to plan multiyear projects if only have a one year MOU. Tish advised that MHCLG are looking towards multi-year MOUs but it has not yet been determined whether these would match the funding windows or for the whole length of the project. This will be important because the procurement process can take three to six months.

5. 10 Year Vision

Cathy presented the document. Branding has been added, and other changes are highlighted in yellow.

Helen Clayton suggested the following minor amendments:

Page 24 – simplify the wording of the last paragraph. Remove the quantification of support for VCSE sector as one day is incorrect.

Page 28 – change Participatory Budgeting as this is not what is proposed

Discussion took place regarding the section on Match Funding. It is part of Karen's role to work on identifying grants and other funding streams. We have an aspiration to encourage corporates to top up investment. Our strategy for this needs to be developed.

The ninth project of community engagement will meet the ongoing requirement of the programme. We have set aside a small amount in the budget so that we can respond flexibly to input from the community, although it will be Karen's role within the council to encourage council departments to align their work schedules with the board/public requirements. We will plan to engage the VCSE sector in this process and have set aside a budget to support smaller VCSE organisations.

Action: Cathy to make the amendments and circulate.

6. 4 Year Plan

Cathy presented the amended plan. In relation to the play spaces project, Carlene Kirton asked if accessibility would be considered in at least one. There is a good example of this in Farnham in Surrey. It was agreed that this would be discussed in a project workshop.

Helen Clayton asked if the Farnworth Fund outcomes could be revisited. **Action HC to discuss with CP and KI.**

KI to review the primary interventions for all projects listed to align with the MHCLG published approved interventions guidance and provide updated details to Cathy.

7. 4 year budget

Amended following comments at the last board.

Budget for ongoing community engagement – not enough for a specific post but we would plan to use the voluntary sector and reward them accordingly as this would bring better value for money and give back control to local community groups.

The costs for VCSE sector development and capacity building have been reduced. The funding for the costs for managing the Farnworth Fund will remain in place throughout the life of the project with a reduction on the development and capacity building. Helen Clayton expressed concern that this would reduce the amount of support available to the VCSE sector. Carlene Kirton asked if GMCA and the Council might have funding which could be used for this purpose. John Bradbury suggested that the Community Alliance might be developed as a source of peer support to VCSE groups.

Nadeem Ayub asked about the Rock Hall project. The figure included is what has been put into the Lottery Funding application as match funding.

Paul Sanders expressed that the public want to see things and whilst developing the VCSE sector is important the outcomes of this are not immediately apparent to the public. Managing public perception will be vital to the success of the programme and some quick wins will be needed.

The budget was agreed

8. Farnworth Neighbourhood Board Terms of Reference 2025

Terms of Reference have now been approved by the legal team at the Council.

Helen Clayton asked about the board make up and had a few minor amendments to suggest. This will be addressed at agenda item 11. **Action: HC to discuss with KI**

9. Focus on Farnworth Board Code of Conduct

Code of Conduct has been approved by legal. This was agreed.

10. Focus on Farnworth Board Member Role Description

Role description has been updated following feedback to make it easy to read and understand. It was suggested that this is amended to reflect we are currently having meetings monthly and on a Friday morning. **Action: KI to amend and recirculate for approval,**

11. Board recruitment process

We recognise that the current board needs to be broadened. Some members have not attended for some time so may not want to continue. Now we have the agreed code of conduct, terms of reference (any comments to be shared to KI for review) and role description we need actively to recruit for additional board members.

We have the website and social media ready to go, so our first communication should be about what the programme is, the role of the board and to invite expressions of interest to be part of the board.

We currently have vacancies for VCSE representation, residents and businesses. The board will review expressions of interest and further selection processes may be needed.

12. Any other business

Paul Sanders raised the issue of the impact of Purdah on the work of Focus on Farnworth in the period up to the local elections in May. **Action: JP/KI to investigate**

Dates of future meetings: Friday 7 November; Friday 5 December; Friday 9 January; Friday 6 February; Friday 6 March

All meetings to take place at The Well from 9:30 until 11:30