Focus on Farnworth Board

The Well, Trafford Street, Farnworth, BL4 7PQ

Friday 17 April 2026

Minutes

Present: Rev John Bradbury (Chair), Janet Pollard (Bolton Council), Paul Sanders (Councillor), Nadeem Ayub (Councillor), Liz McNabb (Bolton CVS), Carrie Riley (Be One Homes), Emily Fogg (GMP), Carlene Kirton (Local Resident), Peter Flitcroft (Local Resident), Chantelle Nice (Local Resident), Grace Daniel-Sam (Local Resident), John Hynes (Copy Print Services), Martyn Loynd (Farnworth and Kearsley Foodbank), Caroline Grainey (Seddons),

Apologies: Vanessa Barlow (Seddons), Yasmin Qureshi (MP), Champak Mistry (Minerva Print), Ben Lawton (BWITC)

In attendance: Rev Helen Bradbury (Minutes), Karen Ingham (Principal Project Officer), Justin Clough (Bolton Council), Emma Robinson (Bolton Council)

1. Welcome and apologies

JB welcomed everyone to the meeting

2. Declarations of Interest (for items on today's agenda)

No declarations of interest were noted.

3. Agree minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2026 were agreed.

4. Matters arising

a. Memorandum of Understanding

The 4 year plan was accepted and approved with no conditions applied by MHCLG. MOU for 4 years has been signed by Bolton Council and JB and returned to MHCLG ahead of the 16 April deadline. Confirmation of this has been received.

b. Zencity Survey and Farnworth Specific Feedback

KI presented the details which had been previously circulated. This survey was carried out across the 95 local authority areas in phase 1 of Pride in Place. They engaged with 108 people from our community. They have identified similar issues to our community consultation, albeit in a relatively small sample. The core issues are safety and security, people feeling they can't make a difference and some people being unaware of the funding. The results are similar to the initial survey.

ML questioned the value of these surveys given the limited response and the general nature of the findings which are likely to be similar in many towns. KI also expressed concerns that they are trying to engage digitally in a community where digital exclusion is a real issue. JB commented that the awareness has increased slightly in Farnworth and we are ahead of the average across the 95 areas, so this demonstrates that our engagement activities are bearing some fruit.

Some of the team from MHCLG are attending the next board meeting. We will ask that they come prepared to answer our concerns about the Zencity surveying at that meeting.

c. Youth Provision

KI reported that an additional Friday evening session by the Youth Outreach Team has been approved and delivery of session commenced 10th April at Family Hub on King Street. This had been approved by email by board members. It is too early to say how effective this has been as only one session has currently taken place.

5. *Finance update including budget review and signoff*

JP presented the finance update

ML queried the funding allocation for Rock Hall should their application to the Lottery be unsuccessful. JP explained that they would have to look at other funding sources.

The funding we receive each year is predetermined by Government and the cash flow has already been forecasted accordingly. We will need to communicate any programme changes carefully to the public to avoid disappointment. Community engagement is key to the programme success.

The budget is rigid and can be adjusted if necessary.

Action: Clear communication via social media/website how much money is available each year. Once the first Farnworth Fund money has been spent it will give some good news stories.

The board agreed the finance update.

6. *Monitoring Report*

KI presented the details of monitoring report submission to MHCLG. This will be published on our website. It also has to be signed off by the council, as the accountable body, next week prior to submission.

The details of new board members has been included including why they wanted to serve in this way. Karen has used the details from the board applications for this purpose.

The content of the report was agreed by the Board.

JB gave thanks to KI for all the work she has done on that report.

7. Project Updates

a. Farnworth Fund

LMc reported that the Farnworth Fund had gone live from 13 April 2026. Three applications have been submitted and two in draft so far. She anticipates around 30 applications by 31 May. The fund is therefore going to be over subscribed. Update can be provided at the next board meeting.

There is a 6 month monitoring form and a final monitoring report at the 12 month stage which will be completed by successful applicants. Grants can be up to £10k or a maximum of 50% of annual income, whichever is the least.

The Bolton CVS website includes a FAQs. If board members think of other questions they can be added.

Action: Board members to circulate information about the fund to their wider networks.

b. Harper Green Playing Fields

JC gave a brief update. Work is currently taking place with Sport England in relation impact on healthy lifestyles and engagement with existing local sports clubs. The Council are preparing everything ready to invite expressions of interest for groups who may want to use and invest in the playing fields.

Further community engagement will be needed before the plans are finalised. Time scale for expressions of interest will be after the local elections in May

CN asked that impact on grass roots small organisations be considered as not all small sports groups are known to Sport England. What we already have needs complimenting.

GD-S suggested that the pupils of the High School also need to be consulted. She also asked about whether the grass going to be cut by the council whilst these projects are being worked on? CK also commented that the drainage issues on the site need to be looked at, as there can be flooding to neighbouring properties in heavy rain. **Action:** JC to investigate what work can be done to make the site presentable whilst we await a final project plan.

c. Play Parks

KI gave a brief update on the engagement that has taken place around the Moses Gate Play Park. GD-S and KI had the opportunity to chat with the community at a local event, in Moses Gate Country Park and to gather some feedback on the plans. All Saints School have been asked to engage the children in consultation, and we expect the results of this after the Easter holidays.

d. CCTV Update

KI and EF will be meeting with the CCTV provider to discuss requirements for Farnworth town centre on Tuesday 21 April. They will report back to the board on this.

EF raised the issue of Live Link whereby key businesses have direct access by radio to the Police. This allows for a rapid response and saves businesses the time of reporting via 999, 101 or online. EF is to investigate the costs of the scheme and report back to the board.

EF reported the following improvements in the last three months:

- Jan – 21 reports of ASB. In Mar this has increased to 34 because of better community engagement.
- ASB Pathway referrals has increased from none in Jan to 28 so far in April.
- Solved crime rates have increased from 28.9% in January to 47.7% in March
- Ebike seizures have increased

Action: These successes to be shared via social media.

e. Community Engagement

JB asked that Marketing material (Pull up banner and leaflets) to promote the Focus on Farnworth Board and projects/funding be developed. Some design work will be needed.

GD-S suggested investing in some tablets to enable us to gather feedback more systematically at events.

Comms and PR are essential for effective community engagement. We need to explore how this can be achieved. We may be able to get some support from the University to support our communication. CR suggested that the Be One Homes comms team may be able to offer some support. The amount of community engagement is directly impacted by the communication we make. The recent social media posts had generated a reach of 4900.

It was agreed to establish a subgroup to focus on community engagement, comms and PR. This will consist of GD-S, PF, PS, CN, CR. We may recruit people from outside the board onto the steering group to provide the necessary skills. **Action:** KI to arrange a meeting.

It was agreed that it would be beneficial to have a board member acting as project lead for each of the projects. **Action:** This will be discussed further at the next board meeting.

Date of Next Meeting: Friday 5 June 2026