



THE FAVERSHAM SOCIETY

FOUNDED 1962

FLEUR DE LIS HERITAGE CENTRE

ESTABLISHED 1977

Faversham Society Strategy

Published December 2023

Introduction

Since its creation in 1962, the Faversham Society has grown significantly, and now undertakes a wide range of activities that preserve the heritage and character of our town and protect it for future generations to enjoy. By running a fantastic museum and archive, offering town walks and talks, managing the Visitor Centre and Fleur bookshop, and campaigning to protect our built and natural heritage assets, the Society places itself at the very heart of our town's culture. Given the importance of our work, and what it means to our members, volunteers, and the residents of the town, we must ensure the Society remains sustainable for the future, and it fit to build on our past success.

This strategy outlines our intentions for securing the future of the Society. It was developed with reference to both internal and external factors that will impact the Society, and with the ambition of clearly setting out how the Society wants to grow and adapt so that it can continue to serve the town for years to come.

Strategic Objectives

We have developed a number of strategic objectives, which will inform our work and our focus. They are grouped by theme but will only be delivered by the Society collaborating both within its own organisation, and with external partners and stakeholders in the town. We also recognise that we will not achieve any of our objectives without our wonderful volunteers, and we remain thankful for their commitment to the Society.

Growing the Society

- **Increasing our membership** – Our membership gives the Society its strength. We will create a renewed focus on increasing the size of the membership. We will endeavour to make the Society attractive to all who live in Faversham, both young and old, whether lifelong residents or relative newcomers. As the town expands, we will ensure our work delivers for all those within its boundaries and surrounding parishes.
- **Making our membership and volunteer proposition clear** – While our members give us strength in numbers, our volunteers are the lifeblood of the Society. In order to increase both our membership and volunteer numbers, we must be able to answer the question 'why join or volunteer for the Society?'. We will undertake work to more clearly define the benefits of these activities, not just in terms of what we offer in return, but how membership and volunteer contribution to the Society enables and sustains all of our efforts to the protect and preserve Faversham.



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- **Reaching out to our community:** Serving the local community is central to what we do. We will review and improve how we engage with the wider Faversham community. We will explore ideas such as new talks and events programmes, partnerships in community events, and better use of social and traditional media to engage the local community in our work.
- **Enhancing our partnerships** – At the Society, we know we are stronger when we work with others. We will explore new partnerships with local and national organisations that share or can support our mission and values. We will also continue to build on our existing local partnerships to strengthen our campaigns, enhance our events programmes, support our own volunteers, and contribute effectively to cultural life in the town.

Achieving excellence in our services

- **Evolving and future-proofing our museum** – Our accredited Fleur De Lis Museum plays a very important role in celebrating and displaying the town's unique heritage. It is a rich community heritage asset, popular with residents and visitors alike. To ensure it is sustainable for the future, we will conduct a review of the museum, supported by an independent expert, to confirm its purpose and benefits, create security within its resources and volunteer-base, and explore its potential for greater partnership working with the town's other museums to elevate its offer. The review will also consider the case for greater inclusion and support of the Society's archaeology group.
- **Creating a 'Faversham Archive' Plan** - The Society holds the most extensive historic archives within in the town. Now is the time to fully realise the potential of these considerable heritage assets. The Society will create a 'Faversham Archive Plan' which develops and defines our ambitions in this area and explores whether new partnerships will be necessary to deliver it.
- **Professionalising our campaigning** – The Society has a long history of being a campaigning organisation. We recognise that the range and scale of issues threatening the historical, architectural and cultural heritage of the town requires a stronger campaigning function. We will explore how to professionalise our campaigning activity to allow our volunteers, members, and Faversham residents to directly engage in our campaigns in-person and online, via new tools and communications methods, with the aim of increasing our impact.
- **Preserving our natural environment** - The natural environment of our town is a vital part of its heritage and beauty. It is also clear it is of increasing importance to people in the town, and particularly young people. The Society will make this activity central to our purpose by strengthening our capacity to protect, develop and improve this by developing, via a new natural environment plan.



Governance and Management

The ambitious objectives set out in this strategy can only be achieved if the Society's working practices and governance oversight are stable and effective. Good governance and management are the foundation for building a successful, sustainable and impactful charity. While the Society has now put in place a management structure which we believe has the capability to achieve this, we are committed to continuous improvement and will undertake the following activities:

- **Cherish our volunteers** – We will ensure our dedicated volunteers feel their contribution is recognised and valued. We commit to ensuring they feel supported by the lead of each of the Society's management groups as they in turn support the Society to deliver on this strategy. We will promote existing and new ways to volunteer so that we ensure there are enough people that no one volunteer feels overburdened, and that continue to bring new expertise into the Society that can help us to deliver on our aims.
- **Improve our strategic planning** – To effectively deliver our new strategy, the Society will develop a number of supporting strategic plans, setting out the detail of what must be done, the associated costs, and realistic timeframes.
- **Prioritise our goals** – We will approach the strategic objectives in a systematic way. They will be prioritised in terms of when supporting strategic plans will be initiated in the five-year period, ensuring that our volunteers do not feel over-burdened and our resources are earmarked responsibly.
- **Strengthen our budgeting system** – To ensure we are able to deliver the strategy in a fiscally responsible way, the Society will overhaul its budgeting processes to allow management groups within the Society's structure the capacity to make changes and the Board of Trustees to robustly scrutinise progress against budgets.
- **Create financial sustainability** – We will develop a more systematic approach to fundraising, fee-earning, attracting legacies and pursuing grants to create sustainable income streams.