



Proposal to Faversham Town Council

The Watering

A Civic Celebration of Water, Community and Place

Prepared for: Faversham Town Council

Prepared by: Richard Andrews

Introduction

This document proposes the creation of a new annual civic event for the town of Faversham entitled *The Watering*.

The event is envisioned as a bold, celebratory and uniquely Faversham tradition which honours the town's historic relationship with water, the Creek, trade, movement and community identity. It seeks to establish a contemporary civic ritual rooted in the town's geography, heritage and collective spirit, while also creating a visually striking and highly participatory public event capable of becoming a recognised fixture in the annual calendar.

The Watering is intended to combine elements of civic ceremony, street theatre, carnival, procession and communal celebration. It is both playful and symbolic: a modern public ritual celebrating the fact that Faversham exists because of water.

Vision Statement

Faversham was built on water.

Its Creek, waterways and maritime history shaped the growth of the town, its industries, its trade, its communities and its identity. Water carried goods, created livelihoods, powered industry and connected the town to the wider world. Even today, the Creek remains one of the defining visual and historical features of Faversham.

The Watering seeks to celebrate this relationship through a joyful civic event which symbolically returns water to the heart of the town.

The proposed event aims to:

- Celebrate Faversham's identity and heritage.



- Encourage large-scale community participation.
- Create a distinctive annual tradition unique to the town.
- Attract visitors and positive publicity.
- Encourage civic pride and intergenerational involvement.
- Support local businesses and hospitality.
- Reinforce Faversham's cultural distinctiveness within Kent.

Event Concept

At the heart of *The Watering* is a ceremonial water procession moving through the town toward the Creek.

The event begins near the Railway Tavern at the top of the town, where a selected ceremonial group of local young people — known as *The Water Bearers* — gather to commence proceedings.

These participants symbolically represent the spirit of the Creek, the Well and the waterways that shaped the town. Armed with decorated water vessels, buckets, super soakers and ceremonial water containers, they begin a slow descent through the town toward the Creek itself.

As the procession moves through Faversham, the public is encouraged to participate in controlled and playful water interaction. Spectators may join in with their own water devices, creating a communal celebration that gradually grows as it progresses through the streets.

The atmosphere should feel energetic, theatrical, spontaneous and joyous, while remaining carefully stewarded and professionally managed throughout.

The event culminates at the Creek in a final gathering and symbolic “returning of water” ceremony.

Proposed Structure of the Event

1. Opening Ceremony

The event would commence with:

- A civic welcome.
- Potential address by the Mayor or Town Crier.
- Music, drumming or live performance.
- Introduction of *The Water Bearers*.
- Formal declaration opening *The Watering*.

This section could incorporate:



- Historical references to the Creek.
- Celebration of Faversham's maritime history.
- Community choirs or musicians.
- Youth participation.

2. The Procession

The Water Bearers then lead the procession through the town toward the Creek.

The route would be carefully agreed in consultation with:

- Faversham Town Council.
- Kent Police.
- Highways authorities.
- Event safety advisors.
- Local businesses and residents.

The movement through the town becomes both procession and public celebration.

Possible elements include:

- Drumming groups.
- Live music.
- Banners and flags.
- Water-themed costumes.
- Community groups.
- Schools and youth organisations.
- Decorated refill stations.

3. The Splash Zones

To ensure safe management of the event, designated "Splash Zones" would be established where water interaction is actively encouraged.

Within these areas:

- Participants may spray or throw water playfully.
- Only soft water balloons or approved water devices may be used.
- Excessive force or aggressive behaviour would not be permitted.
- Stewards and marshals would oversee activity.

Clear signage and stewarding would ensure:

- Public awareness.



- Safe participation.
- Respect for vulnerable individuals.
- Accessibility considerations.

Spectators who prefer not to participate would be able to avoid splash areas where practical.

4. The Creek Finale

The event concludes at the Creek itself.

This final section may include:

- Music and celebration.
- Speeches.
- Symbolic pouring of water into the Creek.
- Temporary water fountain installation.
- Lighting effects.
- Community gathering space.
- Food and drink vendors.
- Performance and dance.

The finale represents the symbolic return of water to the place from which the town historically emerged.

Civic and Cultural Benefits

Community Identity

The Watering offers Faversham the opportunity to establish a truly unique annual civic tradition capable of becoming synonymous with the town itself.

Unlike generic festivals, this event emerges directly from Faversham's geography and history.

Youth Engagement

The central role of young people as Water Bearers creates:

- Responsibility.



- Ownership.
- Visibility for younger generations.
- Positive community involvement.

The event creates a ceremonial role for youth within civic life.

Economic Benefits

The event has strong potential to:

- Increase footfall.
- Encourage tourism.
- Support local traders.
- Benefit hospitality venues.
- Generate media attention.
- Encourage overnight stays and repeat visits.

Cultural Distinction

Faversham already possesses strong independent cultural identity.

The Watering has the potential to become:

- A defining visual event.
- A recognisable annual tradition.
- A unique Kent celebration.
- A future tourism asset.

Health and Safety Principles

Although playful and energetic, the event would require robust planning and oversight.

The proposal assumes:

- Full event management planning.
- Professional risk assessments.
- Stewarding and marshalling.
- Emergency access management.
- Insurance cover.
- Liaison with emergency services.
- Water safety planning.
- Crowd management measures.



The event would operate under a clear behavioural code emphasising:

- Respect.
- Controlled participation.
- Community spirit.
- Safety-first principles.

Environmental Considerations

The event would seek to operate sustainably wherever possible.

Potential measures include:

- Use of mains refill stations.
- Avoidance of plastic waste.
- Biodegradable materials where possible.
- Recycling facilities.
- Partnership with local environmental groups.

Long-Term Potential

If successful, *The Watering* could evolve into:

- A major annual civic tradition.
- A recognised Kent cultural event.
- A regional tourism attraction.
- A platform for arts and community partnerships.
- An anchor event within Faversham's wider cultural calendar.

The event also presents opportunities for:

- Sponsorship.
- Partnership funding.
- Arts Council support.
- Cultural tourism initiatives.
- Educational engagement.



Conclusion

The Watering represents an opportunity to create something genuinely original for Faversham: a civic celebration rooted not in imitation, but in the town's own geography, memory and spirit.

It is an event that acknowledges the Creek not simply as scenery, but as the historical force that shaped the town itself.

At its core, *The Watering* is about belonging.

It is about recognising water as the lifeblood of Faversham's past, present and future — and celebrating that identity together, in public, as a community.

The proposal is respectfully submitted for consideration by Faversham Town Council.



THE WATERING

Supplementary Statement to Faversham Town Council

Richard Andrews

Founder and Artistic Director, Resonant Theatre Company

Councillors will already have received my original proposal for *The Watering*, so I have no wish to repeat here the detail of an idea you have already had an opportunity to consider.

What I would have liked to do this evening is clarify one important point, update you on how the wider idea has developed, and ask whether the Council feels *The Watering* has sufficient potential to move to the next stage.

The central idea remains unchanged: a joyful civic celebration of Faversham's extraordinary relationship with water, moving through the town towards the Creek and involving residents not simply as spectators, but as participants.

The Watering would combine procession, music, performance, history and community participation with the sheer fun of water itself. In designated areas, people could join in with water pistols, sprays, buckets and other harmless means of delivering a soaking. It could be exuberant, playful and just a little anarchic — **Faversham watering Faversham** — while remaining properly planned, stewarded and accessible to those who prefer to remain dry.

There is, however, one distinction I particularly wished to make clear.

I am not proposing that Resonant Theatre Company should organise or manage *The Watering*.

For this to become a genuine civic event — something belonging to Faversham rather than to one theatre company or organisation — I believe it needs to be **led by Faversham Town Council**, working with the town's organisations, businesses, schools, artists, heritage groups and residents.

I am offering the original concept and would be delighted to contribute creative and theatrical support. The wider civic ownership, however, should belong to the town.

There has also been a significant development since my original proposal.

I had intended to present *The Well*, Resonant Theatre Company's theatrical exploration of Faversham and the extraordinary history of the water beneath our feet, in January. I have now postponed that production until next summer.



That creates an interesting opportunity.

I am also developing *The Licence*, a shorter play about Faversham-born Jack Ward and his extraordinary journey from these local waters into the wider maritime world.

Potentially, therefore, next summer could bring together three complementary but distinct elements: *The Watering* as a Council-led civic celebration; *The Well* as a theatrical exploration of the water beneath Faversham; and *The Licence* as a theatrical exploration of the town's relationship with the Creek, the sea and one of its most extraordinary sons.

They do not need to depend upon one another. But together they offer the possibility of a **summer in which Faversham celebrates its water, its Creek, its history and its people — on stage and in the streets.**

So my question to the Council this evening would have been a simple one:

Does the Council see sufficient potential in *The Watering* to take the idea to the next stage?

If so, perhaps that next step is simply the creation of a small Council-led working group to explore feasibility, partners, routes, permissions, funding and practical requirements. I would be very pleased to contribute to that group in a creative capacity.

My original proposal began with the thought that before Faversham had streets, buildings, industries or even a name, there was water.

That remains at the heart of the idea.

The town itself becomes the stage. The people become the participants. And the water that made Faversham possible, becomes the reason we come together.

