



In Touch

with our community

PARK GATE & PRIORY PARK – WINTER 2009

Council's vision for top quality community facilities

COMMUNITY centres are in line for top quality improvements under a new Fareham Council initiative.

The Executive approved a broad vision for providing high quality community facilities across the Borough and asked interested parties to give their views via a consultation through the Community Action Team process.

The broad vision and proposal to adopt a phased approach, by reviewing the Council-owned community facilities in each of the CAT areas in turn, was well received at the October round of CAT meetings.

The Executive formally adopted the proposed vision and set aside £500,000 capital budget for pump-priming to assist in delivering the vision.

Work has started on Phase 1 to develop a master plan based on providing new community facilities to replace the ramshackle Portchester Community Centre, where a public consultation was held to establish what local people wanted.

Executive Member for Community Councillor Mrs Connie Hockley thanked those who attended the event.

"The views expressed by residents will be reported to the Executive," she said.

Tory 'magic' beats all the odds for a recession busting budget

A RECESSION-busting budget. That's the rabbit Conservative 'magicians' have conjured out of the hat.

Against all the odds – and that includes what Executive Leader Seán Woodward lambasted as "one of the most derisory Government grants in the country" – a below inflation rise of just 2.7% has been achieved.

So the Borough share of council tax will rise by just 1p a day, less than any other Hampshire district council and lower than almost every council in the country.

Delivering his 10th budget speech, Councillor Woodward said: "In a recession it is more important than ever to achieve a below inflation council tax rise of just 2.7%.

"Services remain essentially intact and charges rise only a modest amount in line with the requirements of Fareham's residents.

"Fareham's proportion of the council tax for a band D property will be just £140 per year. Compare this with Gosport at over £200 and you can under-

stand the value for money provided by Fareham Borough Council."

Other improvements to services in response to residents' concerns included removal of the £20 charge for pest control officers to deal with domestic rat infestations.

Sunday and Bank Holiday car parking charges would be changed to allow free parking up to 10.30am in the short-stay car parks with free Sunday and Bank Holiday parking in the long-stay car parks.

Charges on these days in short-stay car parks from 10.30am – 4pm will be just £1.50 for as long as shoppers wish to park.

While other centres outside Fareham are losing shops, June will see a Debenhams department store and new multi-storey car park open in the town centre.

Councillor Woodward added: "With the country in a deep recession and many of our older residents seeing their fixed incomes eroded by decreasing interest rates, it is more important than ever that we continue to set the lowest possible council tax to give the best possible value for money

"I am proud that we have for the 10th year been able to achieve this by constantly looking for more innovative and cost effective ways of both reducing expenditure and increasing income."



'ello, 'ello, 'ello...did you know, Sarge, that Fareham council taxpayers now contribute more towards us than they pay for their own Borough Council services?

Costs soar to keep the blue lamp alight



How it's made up for Band D taxpayers
 Fareham Borough Council £140.22 (+£3.69)
 Hampshire County Council £1,017.99 (+£18.99)
 Hampshire Police Authority £142.11 (+£6.57)
 Hampshire Fire & Rescue £60.30 (+£2.07)
 Total: Band D taxpayers £1,360.62 (+£31.32) = +2..36%

Fareham capital budget improvements include
 Footpath improvements: £50,000
 Holly Hill lakes de-silting: £15,000
 Cliff Road, Hill Head replacing public toilets: £170,000

Fareham revenue budget improvements include
 Replacing green waste sacks: estimated cost £100,000
 Residents' parking Phase 1 in town centre: £100,000
 Capital Programme Fund: £500,000 towards new and improved community buildings

Extra green waste charges down to health and safety

CHANGES to the garden waste service will start in April 2009.

The Health and Safety Executive advised they were necessary to avoid problems of repetitive strain injury and worse.

So extra staff had to be employed, adding to the cost.

Handling one or two sacks is not a problem, but in some months crews are being asked to lift up to 20 tons per crew per day.

When the service was introduced in September 2005 it was on the basis that it would be cost neutral; however, in the current economic climate the Council had no option but to review discretionary services.

It was decided to retain this popular service and that it should be free for most residents.

There will be no charge for the collection of one garden waste

sack. Most councils charge for this service and those which charge for extra sacks charge more than Fareham proposes.

Fewer than 50% of residents use the service at any one time and most put out only one sack.

People can order extra disposable bags similar to the existing sacks at £20 for 25 sacks, which will be collected regardless of how many or when they are put out.

WARD NEWS BRIEFS

Closed for the crunch
The eastern part of Locks Heath Shopping Centre car park is still fenced off.

Councillor Marian Ellerton said: "Since the site received planning permission for restoration – in tandem with that for the new shopping parade – we have been pressing for it to be brought back into use.

"In view of the present crunch, it seems likely that neither of these projects will come to fruition until the financial climate improves."

Inconvenience

The Shopping Centre toilets have reopened after two weeks' closure in January for refurbishment.

Councillor Marian Ellerton said: "This was an unavoidable inconvenience to all the visitors, but they do get a high usage.

"While the cleaning contractors strive to keep them clean, a high usage means a lot of wear on the fittings.

"Our thanks to the shopkeepers who helped out during the closure period."

CAT meeting

The next CAT meeting in the Western Wards will be held at Sarisbury Social Club on Wednesday, March 25, when Council officers will make a presentation on 'Householders' Planning Permission'.

Ward councillors and local police will attend to answer questions.

Tell us if you have a local project in mind which may be achievable with a modest outlay,

Old railway on track to create fast bus route between Fareham and Gosport



End of the line: The old overgrown track will be removed to clear the way for the new bus route to by-pass the congested A32 initially as far as Tichborne Way, Rowner and possibly later to Military Road.

WORK has started to clear the overgrown former Fareham-Gosport railway line to make way for Phase 1 of the £175m Rapid Bus Transit scheme.

Engineering, ecological and environmental surveys have been carried out and a planning application will be submitted in March.

If successful, work should start on Phase 1 in early summer and last until March 2011.

It is part of a wider plan to link Gosport, Fareham (including the proposed 10,000 homes due to be built north of the town), Queen Alexandra Hospital in Cosham and Portsmouth.

It replaces the LRT tram scheme and harbour tunnel, as extra dredging needed for the new super aircraft carriers would have added £100m to the cost.

Vegetation has to be removed from the track sides and along the route from Redlands Lane bridge to create access. Bridge structures and ground conditions are being examined and surveys also include wildlife.

Councillor Marian Ellerton said: "A faster, cleaner bus service would be provided, pollution levels would be lessened by using the disused railway line, resulting in taking many of the older higher

'emissions' buses off of the road and easing congestion."

Priority will be given to a £50m section of the bus route, linking Fareham train station to Rowner. Buses will initially join the rail track in Redlands Lane near the arch, where the road will be widened around Cams Alders.

Later, the Redlands Lane access will be shut and the route will lead directly to Fareham Station.

About £20m for Phase 1 will come from the Community Infrastructure Fund.

Marian Ellerton said many residents living near the old track were concerned about security of property, noise levels, pollution etc, all of which were addressed at the exhibitions held in the Bridgemary Sports College.

FACT FILE

- Fareham-Gosport railway opened in 1841 and cost £404,271. Declining traffic reduced it to single track in 1934.
- It was a vital supply link during World War 2.
- It closed to passengers in 1953 and freight trains ceased in 1969.
- The bus/tram link isn't new. In 1937, experiments were carried out with a rubber-tyred petrol driven rail bus, but came to nothing.

It's sod's law as blizzards delay hospital turf cutting

IT'S BEEN 25 years on the waiting list – longer than Casualty or Holby City have been running.

But Fareham's long overdue Community Hospital has suffered yet another delay.

This time, it was down to the weather.

Blizzards at the beginning of the month caused the traditional 'first sod digging' ceremony, due to have taken place at the Coldeast site on February 4, to be postponed.

"Many feel this ceremony should have taken place when winter



snow was the norm," remarked Councillor David Swanbrow.

Instead of attending the ceremony to lend a hand with the turf cutting, he went out with his camera

to record the conditions (left) which led to its postponement to a new date.

The spadework was to have been performed by Fareham Mayor Councillor Ernest Crouch, with Council Leader Seán Woodward, Councillor Swanbrow and ward Councillors Brian Bayford and Marian Ellerton in attendance.

Councillor Bayford said: "I've been campaigning for this hospital for 33 years, but will now have to wait just a little longer until a new date can be arranged."

You could say it was sod's law...

- Initially, it will not be a hospital in the true sense because there are no beds in Phase 1, but there will be space for a two-storey extension with beds.
- The building will be of single-storey design in the

- shape of a gentle curve.
- It will focus on the needs of the local community and improve patients' access to high quality health care near their homes.

Major police operation to crack down on burglars

POLICE must protect the sanctity of people's homes against burglary.

Hampshire Chief Constable Alex Marshall admitted burglary had shot up by 30% and 4 out of 5 burglaries were unsolved.

He launched Operation Nemesis, which involves police forces across Hampshire concentrating on catching burglars, touring areas of high risk and increasing stop and search tactics.

Police will also contact known offenders, target the hard-core repeat offenders and opportunists.

Mr Marshall warned: "If you are a burglar, we will use all modern policing tools to catch you."

Tiny tots entertain at Priory Park Pre-school

THE PRE-SCHOOL group held at Priory Park Community Centre enjoyed giving their Christmas entertainment to their parents and relatives again.

Park Gate Councillor Marian Ellerton, who enjoyed the show, congratulated the staff on their well-run and happy pre-school groups and thanked them for their contribution to the community.

Anyone wishing to



Jolly good show: Councillor Marian Ellerton (right) was delighted with the children's performance.

enrol their child should contact Julia Coates, Head of Pre-school on 07884 273211.

The pre-school runs

two sessions on all weekdays, except Wednesdays from 9.15 to 11.45 and 12.15 to 2.45.

Road narrowing plan to improve safety

CARRIAGEWAY width may be reduced along part of Brook Lane to improve road safety.

The County Council is focusing on the section between Brookfield Gardens and Holland Park.

Narrowing the road will allow extra space

for the footpath on the western side and calm traffic.

But it will not be enough to provide a path on the eastern side without sparking a battle with residents.

County Councillor Seán Woodward said: "The only way such a footway could be pro-

vided would be by residents offering part of their front gardens to be dedicated highway.

"This is likely to be costly and time consuming, and if contested by a resident there is no guarantee that the land could be obtained by compulsory purchase."

Coldeast may provide new swim pool site

A POSSIBLE alternative site for the Western Wards swimming pool is being investigated.

It could be built on land which may come into Fareham Council ownership at Coldeast.

Councillor Brian Bayford said: "Planning consent for the swimming pool has expired.

"Ownership of Locks Heath Shopping Centre recently changed hands, just as the Council was reaching agreement with the previous owners."

The new owners failed to agree with the Council to lift the covenant to allow the scheme to progress.

PARK GATE & PRIORY PARK CONSERVATIVES

We are very active with social and political events and membership drives. If you would like further details, to join us, or to help in any way such as distribution of *In Touch* newsletters in your road, please contact your ward councillors.

ANY PROBLEMS? WE'RE HERE TO HELP

Please write the details here and give the exact location

.....

Your name

Address

..... Postcode.....

Tel Email

Please cut this out and post it or email or phone your councillors who are listed here.

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Your man in Westminster



By **Mark Hoban**
MP for Fareham

The recession brings its own pressures on different aspects of life. Whilst we often think about its effect on employment in the private sector, we don't take into account the effect on Government finances.

The money the Government receives from taxes falls as fewer people work and company profits are slashed. At the same time, there are additional pressures to increase spending.

We see this affecting the police. The deteriorating economic position will have an impact on crime levels. There has already been an increase in burglaries, which is borne out by figures in Fareham. It's a Hampshire wide issue and the police are cracking down on it with Operation Nemesis.

But the police are faced with squaring the circle of increasing pressures on costs, a lower increase in their income from Government and a limit on how much they can increase council tax, while meeting the expectations of the public that there will be no cuts in the number of front line officers.

We need to lift some of the burdens which get in the way of putting police on the beat.

When I've been out on the beat, the police have complained about form filling and paperwork. When an arrest is made it is not just the alleged criminal who is detained at the station. Cut the form filling and we can put more police on the beat.

In these difficult times when there will be more demands on public services, we need to look at the changes we can make in our schools, hospitals, councils and police service to get the best value for money.

More bang for the buck.

You may contact Mark via his office
14 East Street, Fareham PO16 0BN.
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email: mail@markhoban.com

Fareham's 'Get well soon' message to 'sick' councils

FAREHAM Council staff are happy to be firmly at the foot of one league table.

They are currently bottom of the sick list, so they are the healthiest of all town hall workers among Hampshire's 12 councils.

With an average of 7.2 working days lost per employee, they have just recorded their lowest sickness absence figures.

The 'sick man' of the county is Rushmoor Council with nearly twice as many absences

as Fareham, with Hart and Portsmouth close behind and also needing to 'get well soon'.

Executive Leader Seán Woodward said: "Low levels of sickness absence mean our staff are at work, providing residents with the high quality services they deserve.

"We work hard to ensure we manage the levels of sickness. Employee well-being and health is an important part of keeping a fit and healthy workforce."

WASTE NOT, WANT NOT...



IT WAS one of the World War 2 slogans which inspired people to save even their potato peelings.

Rationing ended over 50 years ago, but did you know that today on average 30% of all food bought in the UK is wasted?

Of all the rubbish dumped 20% is food leftovers.

In an effort to publicise this waste a campaign organised

by the Council was held in October in Fareham. It included stands in the Shopping Centre, Lockwood Centre and Stubbington.

The highlight was a visit by the catering team from 3rd Field Ambulance, recently returned from Afghanistan, to Sainsbury's at Wallington to demonstrate and produce a selection of meals from food that would usually be binned.

The team, based at Haslar Hospital, served up an excellent pumpkin soup, a vegetarian quiche



Delicious: Sgt Mark Holbrook (right) and Cpl Martin Pollard serve the scraps to Brian Bayford and waste advisors Wendy, Jane and Karima.

and a Thai curry for visitors to the store.

The menus were produced by students and staff at Fareham College.

These were available to visitors to the exhibitions, who were advised that the reason for food wastage included

several factors, among them 'Buy One, Get One Free', misunderstanding of 'sell-by date' and 'best before'.

"Too much choice and wastage," said Councillor Brian Bayford, Executive Member for Streetscene.

Positive response to future planning strategy

FAREHAM Council has passed another milestone towards the production of a Local Development Framework (LDF) to replace the existing Local Plan Review, by publishing its preferred options for the core strategy.

The current Local Plan Review dates from June 2000, and the core strategy sets the framework for the LDF which will replace it.

It must largely conform with the South East Plan which is expected to get final Government approval imminently.

The process has been held up by the Government continually changing its rules.

If a council does not follow these rules the plan is likely to be found unsound at the inspection stage, so wasting a lot of council taxpayers' money.

Currently, the Council does not have to publish its preferred options for consultation before submitting its core strategy for inspection, but by doing so it gave all interested parties a chance to comment in time to make changes before finalising the plan.

Responses have been gen-

erally positive with many useful comments and suggestions, including input from a well-attended seminar held for members of Networkfareham, Fareham's Local Strategic Partnership.

County Councillor Ray Ellis commented:

"It was good to see a lot of response to the draft strategy, which is aimed at ensuring Fareham continues to be an attractive, safe and pleasant place to live, work and visit."

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