



In Touch

with our community

SARISBURY & WHITELEY – SPRING 2008

Tories hit the Government with a 'bunch of fives' over council tax

What you pay

Band D Properties will now pay £136.53 pa to Fareham Borough Council, with the total bill, including the County Council and the emergency services' share, rising to £1,329.30 pa.

Band C (the average property in the Borough), will respectively pay £121.36 and £1,181.60.

What you get

Improvements include:

- Play ranger and events programme (3 year commitment)
- Community safety initiatives
- New mechanical road sweeper
- Two more litter clearing operatives
- Improved free green waste collection service
- Free national bus pass scheme for older residents starting at 9am
- Every street and footpath will be swept and litter picked at least once every 10 weeks.
- Grant to enable Titchfield Carnival to take place in 2008

The aims

- To maintain a spending reserve equal to 5% of total gross expenditure
- Continue to minimise the increase in the overall revenue budget, aiming for a council tax increase within inflation (currently 4.1%) to meet expectations as expressed in the residents' survey.

FAREHAM'S Conservatives have given the Labour Government a 'bunch of fives' after setting Hampshire's lowest council tax and a below inflation rise for the fifth year running.

Councillors of all parties voted in favour of a 2.98% rise in the Borough Council's share of the bill.

And that was again achieved after getting the usual pittance in the grant from the Labour Government, which allocated most of the spoils 'oop North'.

Delivering his ninth budget speech, Council Executive Leader Councillor Seán Woodward said they had achieved this despite the government's lack of funding for the Borough.

"I have pledged certainty and stability to our taxpayers, and I have demonstrated how next year's settlement from Government was one of the meanest we have seen for some time.

"To be fair, the Government has delivered certainty and stability with the support they will grant Fareham until 2011.

All is not rosy

"John Healey MP has promised a settlement which provides 'sustained real terms increases for local government', one which is equitable and fair. It all sounds very rosy for years to come.

"But Mr Healey's idea of 'fair' for Fareham is a 0.5% increase despite inflation running at 4.1%.

"So his promise of a real terms increase doesn't seem to stretch as far as Fareham.

"It's a real terms cut which effectively doubles the savings and efficiencies this Council must deliver to fulfil its council tax pledge, which residents feel so strongly about."

So where is the extra £3 billion



Simply the best: The Royal Marines Band and Fareham's Tories have plenty to celebrate.



Seán Woodward: His 9th budget speech

earmarked for local government going?

"I can tell you that 93% of shire districts receive more Government support per

head than Fareham and the 20 most favoured district councils will all receive two to three times as much support per head as we do.

"You won't be surprised to hear that those lucky authorities are not on the south coast.

"The money has, of course, gone to those in the North – places like Lancashire (Burnley), Durham (Easington), Cumbria (Barrow-in-Furness and Wear Valley)."

Worst in Hampshire

Fareham receives just £56.09 per person in Government support – the worst settlement in Hampshire – and a long way behind neighbouring Gosport which receives £92.43 per resident.

He added: "For the fifth year in a row, the council tax increase will be below the rate of inflation, so we

can safely say that 2008 is another year when the Conservatives have dealt a bunch of fives to tax hikes."

Councillor Woodward recognised the important role the Council plays in South Hampshire by running the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) which he chairs.

Positive spin-off

This is a joint committee of 11 local authorities who are demanding adequate support to replace infrastructure in South Hampshire and to plan for the housing which the Government wants built over the next 20 years.

A positive spin-off was the £1m funding received by the Council to renovate the western end of West Street in the town centre.

Fareham leads the country with a 45% recycling rate and has also achieved its target to provide over 100 affordable homes per year which are available for low cost home ownership or for rent.

In contrast to most surrounding boroughs, no cuts have been made to Fareham's services, while £800,000 of worthwhile improvements have been introduced.

We keep *In Touch* throughout the year - not just at election time



WARD NEWS

Still on top

Fareham stays top of Hampshire's recycling league with the most recent figure at 46.2%.

Contamination of recycling has reduced from 19.9% to 7.4% due to a major advisory campaign.

Fareham collects only material for which there is an acceptable recycling market in the UK.

Fareham is the only council in Hampshire providing free green waste sacks and a non-chargeable service.

People wanting replacement sacks delivered to their homes will be charged £5. Proof of identity is required for collection.

Recycling clinics will be held at the Lockwood Community Centre on April 10 3pm - 6pm and at the Civic Offices on April 16 3.30pm - 6.30pm.

CATs can help

Got an issue you want to get off your chest?

Why not come along to one of the Community Action Team (CAT) meetings which are held regularly in the Western Wards?

Their purpose is to enable the public to raise issues of concern.

Council officers and Police representatives will be there to deal with matters requested at the previous meeting.

The team tries to answer questions and if necessary forward an answer or give it at the next meeting.

Dates of the next meetings will be announced.

Hall bookings

If you want to book the new Burridge Village Hall, call Pat Johnson on 01489 576045.

Marina decision taken out of Fareham's hands



Swanwick marina: It was all plain sailing until the Government put its oar in. Now a local planning decision that people support will be taken in London.

A DECISION to call in the multi-million plan to redevelop the marina at Swanwick has been condemned as another example of Government interference in local planning matters.

Premier Marinas applied to Fareham Borough Council to re-develop its marina site at Lower Swanwick, changing the layout of the pontoons to meet the changes in boat sizes since the marina was originally built.

Unsightly grey sheds and other buildings would be demolished and replaced by environmentally friendly building near the waterfront.

This was intended to house the usual marina facilities including a restaurant.

The development was to be funded by building new homes, including 19 affordable homes which would help the Council to meet its affordable homes target.

Concerns from the Environment

Agency and Natural England were overcome and the application addressed all the issues that Fareham planners thought should be considered, so it was approved.

Councillor David Swanbrow said: "The owners of the marina went to great lengths to seek the views of residents from a wide area around the marina and the proposal was very well supported.

"Now the Government has called in the application so that the Secretary of State can make the decision.

"No explanation has been given, but one wonders why the decision made in Fareham with overwhelming support from local people must now be decided in London.

"Those of you who remember the statement some 10 years ago by former Prime Minister Tony Blair that local decisions should be taken locally, must wonder just what decisions he meant."

Demand to 'sort out' Coldeast access

ACCESS to the Coldeast site still has not been resolved.

In 2003 Inventions, who were then the Government's agent for the site, and Sarisbury Ward Councillors Seán Woodward and David Swanbrow and Park Gate Ward Councillors Marian Ellerton and Brian Bayford agreed to re-position the Brook Lane access to the roundabout at the junction with Lockwood Road.

They agreed the existing entrance on to Brook Lane could be dangerous.

Another Government agent, English Partnerships, took over knowing nothing of the agreement, but after discussions with ward councillors agreed to move the access.

Part of the site, including the existing access and the road leading to it, was



Checking: David Swanbrow and Marian Ellerton assess the access.

sold to Miller Homes to start building.

The entrance on Bridge Road (A27) is being upgraded and when this work is completed, it will once again become the main entrance to the site and councillors will continue to push for relocation of the Brook Lane entrance.



A nice des roost with solar heating ...how batty can you get?

THEY'VE been on the housing waiting list for four years.

But it's not a homeless family that will be moving into a brand new house on the Coldeast estate.

It's a colony of BATS!

Believe it or not, Fareham Council had to sanction one extra house for bats to hang out in when it gave consent for the 234 homes on the site.

The house is now being built – well away from other properties – just for the bats which are protected by law and were displaced by refurbishment to old buildings.

Councillor David Swanbrow said ecologists insisted a condition to build a bat house was imposed at the planning stage four years ago... and thousands of furry flyers had been waiting to move in ever since.

He said: "It's a full-size brick-built residence, matching other houses on the estate.

"But it won't have any doors, windows, cavity walls or interior fittings, just vents at first floor level, a door grill and ladders for ecologists to reach the rafters.

"But it may have solar heating to keep the bats warm in winter.

"The developer will be responsible for looking after it until the estate is handed over."

Then, councillors must decide whether to add it to the list of Council properties.

Whitehall delaying tactics spark fears of major SE building hike

THE LABOUR Government may be delaying changes to the South East Plan to try to force much more development on to areas such as Fareham.

Councils in the SE Region produced a plan to set parameters up to 2026; it was examined by a panel of inspectors who published a favourable report complimenting the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) and suggesting no significant changes.

The Government was due to consider the inspectors' report and come back with any changes before Christmas.

Councillor David Swanbrow said: "This date has now been delayed until July. As any changes the Government decides to make are mandatory, this delay does not bode well and suggests the Government is re-doing thousands of hours of work done by the SE authorities to force much more development into the region.

"Hopefully, the PUSH sub region will not suffer too much but be warned – the thou-

sands of hours of diligent work that led to a sensible and generally accepted submission may well be overturned by bureaucrats who live nowhere near you."

PUSH is led by Councillor Seán Woodward and Councillor Swanbrow is chairman of the PUSH Planning and Sustainability Panel.

Government interference in planning issues can be blamed for the Council allowing unpopular applications as the Planning Committee is often up against rules it cannot ignore.

For example, loss of a view is not a material consideration and must be ignored, so must potential loss of value that may occur to your property. And there are many more.

If the Committee refuses an application for reasons an appeal inspector decides are not material, the appeal will succeed and the Council not only loses the chance to impose conditions, but may have to pay applicants' costs.

Oh deer! Developers forced to climb down over fence

PROBLEMS getting trees planted on the strip separating development north of Dickens Drive, Whiteley from BurrIDGE should be over by the time you read this.



Councillor David

Swanbrow and planning officers eventually persuaded the developer, Persimmon, to complete planting that should have been done two years ago.

One requirement was the erection of a fence to stop deer eating the young plants, which had been put in the wrong place.

Councillor Swanbrow visited the site with Fareham's arborist and agreed the fence looked an eyesore, was badly installed and likely to fall down.

Persimmon agreed to replace the fence in its correct position making it less intrusive. Hopefully, this will be the end of the on-going problems.

These problems should be eliminated at the David Wilson Homes site further to the north as Councillor Swanbrow persuaded the committee to agree that a condition of the permission for this site is that the planting strip should be in place before development begins.

£4,000 cheque boost for new BurrIDGE Village Hall



COUNTY Councillor Seán Woodward has awarded a £4,000 grant to the newly-formed BurrIDGE Community Association so they can buy equipment for the refurbished BurrIDGE Village Hall.

Pictured are (l to r) association chairman Ken Pothecary, bookings secretary Pat Johnson and Seán Woodward.

SARISBURY & WHITELEY 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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Our man in Westminster



By **Mark Hoban**
MP for Fareham

IF YOU LISTEN to the forecasters, it would appear we are entering uncertain economic times. The credit crunch, which kicked off in the US, is having its impact here with many homeowners facing higher interest rates.

This compounded with higher energy prices and increasing taxes means that many people face a reduction in living standards.

Sadly, this means for many people real challenges in paying bills and meeting mortgage repayments. We started to see evidence of this last year with repossessions increasing by 21% compared to 2006. Nationally, the Citizens' Advice Bureau is receiving more and more queries about debt and seeing 6,600 new debt problems a day.

The Government is compounding the problem through higher taxes. Because of a shortfall in Government funding and despite the best efforts of councils like Fareham, we will see council tax bills rise faster than inflation. More tax changes in April such as the doubling of the 10 pence rate to 20 pence will hit young people and those in their early 60s hard. The Government can do little to help those finding it hard to make ends meet because it borrowed so much in the good times that it has to keep a tight grip on spending and taxes in the more uncertain times we are in now. Prudent management of the nation's finances would have given us much more room for manoeuvre. The Government has let hardworking families down.

If you need help to manage finances, you should contact the CAB or the Consumer Credit Counselling Service or approach your bank and building society.

Mismanagement of the economy by Gordon Brown and Alistair Darling has a knock-on effect on our own finances. Their failure to prepare for a rainy day means that the heavens could open on us.

**•You may contact Mark via his office
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email: mail@markhoban.com**

Higher police profile leads to 13% Fareham crime fall



CRIME figures for Fareham have fallen dramatically, thanks to higher profile policing and a crackdown on blackspots.

"We have invested heavily in more bike and foot patrols and hope you have seen a difference," said Borough Commander Chief Inspector Steve Wallace.

Figures show a 13% decrease for 2007-08 and surveys showed 89% of residents perceive low crime as making Fareham a good place to live.

"It is safe after dark in Fareham - most violent offences occur between parties who are known to each other.

"Criminal damage and graffiti are down 23% and are a top priority. There are very few drug related problems in Fareham and a zero tolerance approach," said Chief Inspector Wallace.

"The Borough alcohol ban is very effective and we can show it has reduced rowdy and drunken behaviour. Supply to juveniles is also a top priority. Unfortunately, parents often provide the alcohol and some licensed premises sell to juveniles.

"We also carry out regular truancy patrols calling on regular absentees at home.

"We want to know what your neighbourhood priorities are. Parking, speeding and littering are the main issues raised. We target speeding hotspots you raise and 27 tickets were



issued on one day alone.

"Accidents are down and any speeding enforcement is based on accidents and speeding data," he said.

He appealed for more community intelligence and asked people to use the Crimestoppers 0800 555111 number.

Fareham Police and the Community Safety Partnership are committed to make Fareham even safer, with the Safer Neighbourhood Teams offering a local presence.

"One final plea... too many crimes read 'Bike left unlocked', 'Satnav stolen from unlocked car', 'Entry via unlocked rear door'...

"We need your help to prevent offences as most crime in Fareham is opportunist.

"We do catch and charge a lot of criminals, but it is no secret that imprisonment is often a last resort for the courts and many are released early. My advice is to avoid becoming a victim if at all possible."

Council wins extended bus pass times

OVER 60s and those with qualifying disabilities will benefit from an extension to the hours of the new national bus concession.

Free travel will apply from 9am until 12.59am Monday to Friday for journeys which start within the borough of Fareham.

This is an extra two and a half hours' free travel each day as well as the statutory minimum (which is from 9.30am until 11pm Monday to Friday and all times at weekends and bank holidays).

Executive Leader of Fareham Borough Council, Councillor Seán Woodward, said:

"We have successfully negotiated this extension with bus operators to allow bus pass holders to travel

free from 9am, which is important for those who have doctors' and hospital appointments."

From April 1, people who qualify will be able to enjoy free off-peak local bus travel on buses anywhere in England.

Existing pass holders do not need to reapply; their new pass will be sent to them by March 31.

The new national passes will be valid for five years. There will be two types:

Passes with a blue stripe down the right-hand side are for the over 60s.

Those with the orange strip are for disabled residents.

In addition to the national standard scheme, Fareham will continue to provide £35 worth of tokens for an administration fee of £5.

This concession is available to eligible disabled residents and those currently in receipt of travel tokens.

It is offered as an alternative to the bus pass and is renewable annually.

Companion passes are available for disabled persons who cannot travel alone. They allow holders and one companion to travel free within and directly to and from the borough of Fareham.

As this concession is provided solely by Fareham Council, it cannot be used in other areas of England. Those eligible will receive two passes – a national standard pass and a Fareham Council pass.