

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 Fareham's 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.



'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

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."

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

Landmark tree felled



The lonesome pine protected by a tree preservation order on the corner of Bridge Road and Allotment Road, opposite the Bold Forester pub, had to be felled.

Although appearing healthy, County Council arborists concluded its internal condition was deteriorating and it had recently become dangerous.

It is hoped nearby trees will soon fill the space.

New board

The interpretation board indicating features around Sarisbury Green is to be replaced.

The board, which was located at the corner of The Green opposite Sarisbury Parish Rooms, was destroyed by vandals.

Thanks to a CAT bid by Sarisbury Residents' Association it will be restored, with the Borough Council footing the bill.

Café move

Café Lulworth will be moving across the yard in the spring.

The building where it is currently located will revert to its former use as the Universal Marina office.

The café will be located in what is known as Building 21 at the south-west corner of the site.

Biodiversity grant aids lichen, mosses and liverworts study

BRYOPHYTES will be subject of an important biodiversity survey at Holly Hill Woodland Park.

Several surveys of the park's flora and fauna have been undertaken, but so far the bryophytes (mosses and liverworts) and lichens which abound there have not been studied.

The park management plan 2008-17 identified the need for the survey, which an expert is undertaking between January and March. Fareham Council will pay for it.

Councillor David Swanbrow, who is responsible for biodiversity funding and is a member of the Friends of Holly Hill, said: "I am delighted to be able to support this survey which will add to the value of the park as an educational resource."

The park is a part of the Winnards and Cawtes Copses Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) and includes 21 hectares (50 acres) of ancient semi natural woodland

The Council is in the process of having it designated as a local nature reserve.

Data gathered will increase knowl-



Setting the standard: David Swanbrow raises the Green Flag at Holly Hill Woodland Park.

edge of habitats and species within the SINC as well as understanding of management of ancient woodland and parkland habitats for mosses and bryophytes.

The project meets the aims of the Hampshire and Fareham Local Biodiversity Action Plans.

A well-managed and well-used recreational facility, the park is also valuable for its nature conservation and heritage value and as a recreational and educational resource.

It achieved Green Flag status last year at its first attempt thanks to the work of the Friends of Holly Hill Woodland Park – a volunteer group who perform most of the management under the supervision of the Council's ranger, Mark Trigwell.

Gardeners call for Western Wards deer cull

DEER are causing havoc in gardens and allotments in the Western Wards and may have to be culled.

Allotment holders in Allotment Road, Sarisbury say they have been plagued for some time with deer eating their crops despite the Council erecting stock fencing.

Councillor David Swanbrow, who opposes a cull, said deer were increasing across the South, perhaps being displaced from their natural habitat by development.

"Gardeners find that deer will eat almost anything – even roses with long thorns – and many have called for a cull."

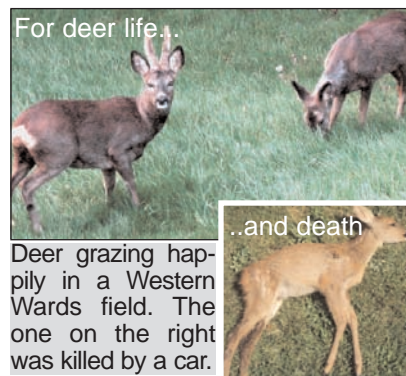
They can also be a hazard to motorists as they tend to leap out suddenly from scrub or woodland beside the road.

They often do this in pairs so that

a motorist may miss a deer only to run into a second one following.

A deer hit even at low speed can do a lot of damage to a car and it is also very distressing for the driver to realise that they have killed such a lovely creature.

Councillor Swanbrow reported three dead deer



Deer grazing happily in a Western Wards field. The one on the right was killed by a car.

Narrower road, wider footpath bid

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

Narrowing the road between Brookfield Gardens and Holland Park will allow extra space for the footpath on the western side and calm traffic.

But there will not be enough room for a path on the eastern side without sparking a battle with residents.

County Councillor Seán Woodward said: "The only way it could be provided 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."

Developers' contributions from Phase 1 of the Coldeast residential site will pay for the scheme.

Coldeast pool site alternative

AN 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 David Swanbrow said: "Planning consent for the 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 to lift a covenant to allow the scheme to progress.

Not so glorious mud makes park ranger's blood boil



*Mud, mud, glorious mud
Nothing quite like it for cooling the blood
So follow me follow, down to the hollow
And there let me wallow in glorious mud."*

BUT THE famous hippopotamus song by music hall act Flanders and Swann had the opposite effect on Holly Hill Woodland Park ranger Mark Trigwell.

When he followed alarms raised by walkers in the park he found the picturesque lakes had turned a muddy orange.

He and one of the Holly Hill volunteers, Keith Ancsell, investigated and discovered silt was being washed into

a stream feeding the lakes.

They traced the source to the Miller Homes development at Coldeast which had been caused by excavating equipment operating in very muddy conditions.

Sarisbury Councillor David Swanbrow said: "The impact if this continued could be disastrous as thousands of pounds was spent a few years ago de-silting the lakes (pictured) and excessive silt could also damage a site of special scientific interest downstream of the lakes."

Fareham Council ecologist Tina Cuss and Mark Trigwell later met a Miller Homes representative who apologised and took immediate steps to avoid a recurrence.

Mark said: "We are happy with the measures they have put in place to prevent a repeat. They have been very helpful and regretful of the incident and are keen to make amends.

"I feel we should work alongside them in terms of communications. This way, we can remain informed of pending works and monitor accordingly."

David Swanbrow added: "Hopefully, this will prevent any further ecological damage to the park's lakes."

And deter any escaped hippos looking for a good wallow...

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.

Blizzards caused the traditional 'first sod digging' ceremony, scheduled for February 4 at the Coldeast site, 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, took his camera to record the conditions (above) which led to its postponement.

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

Councillor Woodward 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."

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.

WARD COUNCILLORS

Sarisbury

Seán Woodward
8 Persian Drive
Whiteley PO15 7BJ
Tel: 01489 881030
email:swoodward@fareham.gov.uk



David Swanbrow

7 Mulberry Lane
Sarisbury SO31 7LJ
Tel: 01489 572723
email:dswanbrow@fareham.gov.uk



COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Fareham Sarisbury

Seán Woodward
8 Persian Drive
Whiteley PO15 7BJ
Tel: 01489 881030
email:sean.woodward@hants.gov.uk

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.
Telephone: 01329 233573
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."

In Touch is published by Sarisbury & Park Gate Conservatives, 7 Mulberry Lane, Sarisbury SO31 7LJ and printed by Bishops Printers Limited, Fitzherbert Road, Farlington, Portsmouth PO6 1RU.