



# In Touch

with our community

SARISBURY & PARK GATE – SPRING 2006

## Tory 'hat-trick' puts Fareham at top of lowest tax league...

**CONSERVATIVES** have scored a hat-trick of successes by keeping Fareham's council tax at another national record low level – despite receiving one of the meanest grants from the Government.

It comes at a time when every neighbouring council is announcing cuts in services, redundancies and increases in charges along with record council tax rises.

And they managed to do it despite a big shortfall in the Government's grant towards concessionary bus fares.

"We have been able to do all this whilst still keeping the council tax rate at the lowest in Hampshire, which is good news for everyone," said Council Executive Leader Councillor Seán Woodward.

Fareham's Band D property owners will have to pay only £2.43 more a year – a rise of less than 5p a week – and for Band C taxpayers it will be even lower.

Councillor Woodward commented: "As most Fareham properties are in Band C, the council tax rate for two adults will be £114.40 – an increase of just 4p a week.

"I am delighted we have been able to keep the increase to a minimum and that for the third year in a row we have kept the council tax increase below the rate of inflation - an impressive hat-trick!"

As an extra bonus the Council has also

frozen pay and display and pay on foot parking charges, having raised the prices only once in the last 5 years.

Announcing overall net expenditure for 2006-07 of £11,106,350, Councillor Woodward said the most significant issue the council had to face was the Government's free travel scheme for over 60s..

Costs for implementing electoral reforms, mainly to prevent recurrences of last year's Labour postal vote factories scandal, had to be added.

Although the Government made extra money available for the concessionary fares, the council's fears that the extra costs would not be covered by the annual Local Government Finance Settlement proved well founded.

"At first glance it appeared to be a generous settlement. But only at first glance!" he said.

The Government changed the method of distribution which made it impossible to identify how much extra grant had been received to cover the new responsibilities –



**Top billing:** Ferneham Hall has been selected as one of the top five entertainment venues from 189 British towns – thanks to hard-working staff and good management of council taxpayers' money.

a fact freely admitted by John Prescott's office.

Fareham will receive an extra £624,000 in what appeared to be a generous 12% increase.

When the figures were broken down and the shortfall in funding the concessionary fares plus the electoral administration costs taken into account, Fareham received only £57,000 (1%) in extra Government support for ALL other services.

"A paltry sum by any standards," added Councillor Woodward.

## Midwife crisis may be solved, but will Blackbrook be re-born?



**BLACKBROOK** birthing centre was closed last year because of 'staffing' difficulties caused by sickness and maternity leave among the staff .

Although the Blackbrook and Grange (Petersfield) units were not directly affected, it was decided to maintain

staffing levels at Blake (Gosport) and the Mary Rose unit (Portsmouth).

A public meeting at Ferneham Hall recently heard the Head of Midwifery confirm that staffing levels should be adequate by the

autumn.

However, the Chief Executive of the Fareham and Gosport Primary Care Trust gave a strong indication that the £700,000 cost of upgrading Blackbrook might make this impossible.

Also, a plan for future midwifery services is being prepared that might concentrate all services at Queen Alexandra Hospital or at best, provide 2 or 3 peripheral, low technology units. This plan is being prepared and with a consultation in the late 2006 early 2007.

Executive Member for Health Councillor Brian Bayford stated: "If Fareham's long awaited Community Hospital was being now being built as promised in 2004, the problem of funding improvements to Blackbrook would not now be a consideration,"

Since St Christopher's Hospital and Blackbrook closed, Fareham (population 108,000) has no major health facilities.

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



# WARD NEWS BRIEFS

## Meet the police

Sarisbury residents can meet local police to discuss matters of concern at a Police and Community Consultation meeting on Tuesday, April 11 at 7.30pm.

It is being organised by Sarisbury Residents' Association in alliance with Councillor Seán Woodward, the local member of Hampshire Police Authority

He said: "It is very important that the police have an opportunity to explain their methods of policing and to answer residents' questions."

## Skittles

Sarisbury & Park Gate Conservatives' next social event is a Skittles Evening on Friday, May 12.

Details about this, how to join the branch or to help in any way, such as distributing *In Touch* newsletters in your road, can be obtained from Susan Bayford on 01489 880740.

## Better pavements

The following schemes costing £220,000 to replace pavements are under way or planned over the next year:

- Bridge Road, Sarisbury (£80,000),
- Botley Road, Burrige (£50,000),
- Lower Swanwick Road, Swanwick (£16,500),
- Swanwick Lane, Swanwick (£20,000),
- Bye Road, Lower Swanwick (£34,000)
- and Duncan Road, Park Gate (£14,000).

Street lights will be replaced in Norwich Close and Vine Close, Sarisbury as part of a £2m programme for Fareham Borough.

# Mindless parents on the verge of vandalism



**Gotcha!** Number's up for the owner of this car who can expect notice of prosecution. Tyre marks in what was grass show he or she is not the only culprit.

## MINDLESS parents who have wrecked grass verges and spring bulbs near a school will be prosecuted by Fareham Borough Council.

Residents in Barnes Lane are furious about the indiscriminate parking by parents taking and collecting their children at Sarisbury Infants' School.

Sarisbury Councillor David Swanbrow said: "Over the last few months they have taken to parking all over the grass verge on the approach to the cemetery where Fareham

Borough Council had planted a large number of bulbs.

"Thanks to the parents' thoughtlessness, these will now never see the light of day.

"Some are even parking in the cemetery itself."

Photographs will now be taken and the culprits prosecuted for the cost of reinstatement.

The Council has also been forced to pay to install bollards to protect the area which is being used even when spaces are available in the car park.

# Council's services go on-line

VISITORS to Fareham Council's website can see a presentation about the council's services.

The new 'Building on Success' presentation is informative, interesting, easy to follow and offers an excellent opportunity to learn more about how the Council performs.

Councillor Marian Ellerton, Chairman of the Best Value Panel, commented: "Each of the council's seven corporate objectives is highlighted to show how the council is performing."

The presentation is based on evidence from performance assessments results, annual residents' survey, best value indicators and the Government Inspectorate, which together give a good indication of how well the council is achieving its objectives.

## River users to have their say



## USERS' concerns about lack of consultation over the imposition of harbour dues on the River Hamble will be discussed by a working group.

It has been set up to look into all the issues around harbour dues, including supervision charges.

All users will have the opportunity to give evidence to the working group on Tuesday, April 18.

It will be chaired by Councillor Seán Woodward (pictured above), who is the Vice Chairman of the River Hamble Harbour Management Committee.

He said: "This is a valuable opportunity for anyone with concerns about the new charging regime to come and make their views known.

"The working group will consider carefully everything raised and will make recommendations to the Harbour Board in July."

# Builders forced to revise Park Gate key workers flats scheme

## UNOCCUPIED key worker flats for sale in Middleton Mews, Park Gate have been causing concern since completion over a year ago.

However, Atlantic Housing stated that after discussions with ward councillors, the Council's Housing Department and a representative from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, they have revised their policy and released them for renting.

As a result, 24 have now been rented to key workers with 3 remaining unoccupied.

The key worker scheme considers employees of the NHS, police, teachers, fire fighters, prison officers and social workers. Large numbers of key worker flats have been built in the area, with little interest in buying them.

Councillor Marian Ellerton said: "It is evident this policy should be revised to attract more likely first-time buyers."

## Come and see what's on offer

### WESTERN Wards Campus at Brookfield School is planning a 'Picnic in the Park' on July 15 at Locks Heath Centre.

It is hoped it will encourage young people and their parents to come and see what the area has to offer in the way of sports, clubs and activities. Fareham Council's Executive has given £500 to help with the cost.

# Salisbury buildings in line for design awards



**Top care:** Hawthorne Court nursing home

**HAMPSHIRE County Council's Architects' team has been shortlisted for its work on two new buildings in the Fareham Society Design Awards 2006.**

The shortlist of 11 includes The Mark Roe Centre for Performing Arts at Brookfield Community School and Language College

and Hawthorne Court, both in Salisbury.

The Mark Roe Centre for Performing Arts was completed in September 2004 and includes drama classrooms which combine into a large performing space, music classrooms, a control and recording room, and practice rooms with acoustic hoods for over 1600 children at Brookfield.

Hawthorne Court is a nursing care home for 80 elderly people and is the first of ten homes being built as a part of a £60 million partnership project by the County Council and the NHS to provide 500 nursing home beds across the county. It was opened in March last year.

The Fareham Society Design Awards aim to promote high standards of architecture and design in the borough.

Judges will consider how the building design complements its surroundings, innovation in concept and execution and to what extent it uses sustainable technology.

The judges visited the shortlisted buildings

in March and the winners of the awards will be announced in April. The winning building will receive a commemorative plaque.

Hampshire County Councillor Seán Woodward said: "I am delighted that two of Fareham's new buildings short-listed for the Society Design Awards have been designed by the County Council's architects.

"We are fortunate to have a very experienced and talented team of architects and designers, who are consistently innovative and imaginative and I hope the judges like what they see when they make their decisions."



**Top performance:** The Mark Roe Centre for Performing Arts

## SARISBURY & PARK GATE 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

#### Salisbury

**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



#### Park Gate

**Brian Bayford**  
 1 Camargue Close  
 Whiteley PO15 7DT  
 Tel: 01489 880740  
 email: bbayford@fareham.gov.uk



#### Marian Ellerton

230 Botley Road  
 Burridge SO31 1BL  
 Tel: 01489 570774  
 email: mellerton@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**

I am a great believer in local people having a strong voice in matters that affect them and their community. It underpins my political beliefs.

That's why I want local people to have much more influence over housing and development. It was one of my reasons for opposing the merger of Hampshire Police with a neighbouring force.

Local organisations listen closely to the views of communities they serve. Unlike larger, more distant organisations, they set priorities to meet our needs. One reason why our Borough councillors set the lowest council tax increases in Hampshire is that, as well as running the Council, they know that you want good services at low cost and respond to that.

John Prescott's suggestions that councils should merge puts this at risk. Do we really want to merge Fareham with high spending councils? Do we want a council that does not reflect the needs of Fareham, but is dominated by the views of people from Portsmouth or Eastleigh? It is part of a trend by this Government to take more and more matters out of the hands of local people and give them to larger organisations. For example, our local Primary Care Trust, which decides on our behalf what health care should be available to Fareham residents, will probably be scrapped in favour of either one body for the whole of Hampshire or become part of a Primary Care Trust covering the east of the county.

Decisions about our health will no longer be made by people living or working in Fareham, but by people from Alton or Petersfield. We must stand firm against this growing trend to take power out of our hands and start to turn the tide so we decide local issues in Fareham and not allow them to be taken elsewhere by people who are interested in our money but not our views.

**•You may contact Mark via his office  
14 East Street, Fareham PO16 0BN.  
Telephone: 01329 233573  
email: mail@markhoban.com**

**Councils can't get their act together, so ...**

# It's chaos on the buses

**BUS PASS schemes across England are in utter chaos.**

Unlike councils in Wales and Scotland, councils have opted to do their own thing, often to the confusion of the over 60s and disabled they should be helping.

Hampshire is no exception and standards vary from district to district, depending on how much they receive from the Government.

Then Chancellor Gordon Brown came into the equation by promising free off-peak travel nationwide by 2008 in his Budget speech.

Fareham was put in an impossible position when the Government short-changed its grant, leaving the Council to find more than double the amount from its budget.

Had Fareham opted for free passes throughout Hampshire, it would have meant either increasing council tax by 10% or charging £60 for a bus pass.

"These options were unacceptable to the Council or to users we spoke to, so the difficult decision was taken to adopt a concession that far exceeds the statutory minimum, but regrettably does not offer free travel across the county," said Executive Leader Councillor Woodward.

People qualifying for concessionary bus passes will be able to travel free anytime (not just off-peak), anywhere in the Borough from April 1.

They will also be entitled to a half fare reduction when they cross the Fareham boundary into Hampshire.

"We are offering more than the government's requirement for free off-



**Free ticket to ride:** Provided you're over 60 or disabled you won't have to pay anytime, anywhere in the Borough.

peak local bus travel inside Fareham," said Councillor Woodward.

Those eligible can buy a 'First day' ticket which gives unlimited travel on 'First' bus services in Hampshire at any time on the date of purchase. A 'First day' ticket costs £4.40 which equates to £2.20 for pass holders.

The Council is spending £1.1m on travel concessions in 2006/7 and was granted £351,000 by the Government, leaving £745,000 to be met from its budget.

Almost two thirds of the 750,000 concessionary journeys funded by the Council are within the borough. Each bus pass costs the Council £107 (£214 for couples), which is more than any couple pays to Fareham in annual council tax.

Despite this, Fareham kept its council tax to a record low.

Current holders have been told when and where they can renew their travel passes.

Newcomers can collect their pass from the Civic Offices, Fareham from Monday, April 3.

Contact the Council's Customer Service Centre 01329 236100 for more information.

### IT'S NOT ALL FARES FAIR

**Portsmouth:** Off-peak travel in Hampshire. Travel tokens also offered.

**Southampton:** Off-peak travel in city only. No alternative concessions.

**Winchester:** Off-peak travel in Hampshire. No other concessions.

**Gosport:** Free all day travel in Hampshire. Tokens also offered.

**Havant:** Free off-peak travel in Hampshire. No alternative concessions.

## This Mosquito won't sting, but it will 'do your head in'

**PIERCED noses, pierced navels, piercing sounds from iPods ... they are all part of young persons' culture these days.**

But they won't want their eardrums pierced by high-pitched acoustics generated by a new weapon Fareham Council is trialing in the war against anti-social behaviour.

The Mosquito, costing £500 and the size of a garden pet scarer, can be mounted wherever potential hooligans congregate.

Coupled in some cases with CCTV, it can be switched on at random or immediately the first

spray can appears and vandals are spotted loitering with intent.

The high-pitched assault on their eardrums is harmless, but so unbearable that they flee.

Fortunately, it can be heard only by the 10-24 age group and older people are unaffected.

Councillor Brian Bayford said it was secretly tried in a room at the Civic Offices and the younger workers there quickly left their desks.

*In Touch* is published by Sarisbury & Park Gate Conservatives, 8 Persian Drive, Whiteley PO15 7BJ and printed by Tollwood, Unit 2, Lysses Court, High Street, Fareham PO16 7BE