

In Touch

WHITELEY MATTERS



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PICTURE**

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WHITELEY SCHOOLING

The number of first preferences for Whiteley Primary School's year R in September 2004 is 93 (90 places available), similar to 2003. These figures represent a very significant drop on the 2002 figures (124) which left 34 children rejected at that time. The number expressing a first preference for Sarisbury Infant School's September 2004 year R is 72 (90 places available) which is similar to last year and a significant increase on the 2002 number of 50 showing that many Whiteley parents are now opting for education outside Whiteley as the number of children in Whiteley is not falling.

Leader of Fareham Borough Council, Councillor Seán Woodward recently invited his opposite number from Winchester City Council to join him to meet Hampshire's Education Member to press the case again for a new primary school in Whiteley. Readers will recall that Councillor Woodward proposed over a year ago that a Church-Aided school could be built in conjunction with the Church at Whiteley Village. The landowners agreed to make the land available but there remains doubt whether funding for the school would be forthcoming from Government. He has now asked the County Council to consider a one form of entry (90 place) infant school as a standalone school on the now-available land to at least give parents the option to keep their infants in Whiteley. This will be investigated and a decision made in March. We hope that at least improved school transport could be made available to parents helping the County by choosing out-of-Whiteley schooling. *The battle for a secondary school continues!*

SWEETHILLS CRESCENT

PLAYGROUND IMPROVEMENTS

In the last edition we asked for suggestions for improvements to this playground. Suggestions include a roundabout, see-saw and removal of the gravel and its replacement with tarmac. These works will now be recommended to Fareham Borough Council's Executive for approval at a cost of £13,000 which includes extending the fenced area of the playground to accommodate the new equipment. The works could then be completed in May.

GREEN WASTE COLLECTION TRIAL FOR WHITELEY

It is proposed to implement a scheme in Whiteley to have a separate fortnightly collection of garden waste which should not officially be placed in the green-topped wheelie bins in any event.

The free six-month trial could start by June with residents being issued with large hessian sacks for grass cuttings, prunings, etc which would then be collected and taken for composting to a purpose built facility.

If successfully the scheme would be rolled out across the whole Borough as an at-cost chargeable service leading to a further improvement in Fareham's already high level of recycling which needs to move from the present 22% to 40% in 2006.

Before anyone asks there are NO PLANS to reduce the weekly collection of other domestic waste!

WHITELEY WAY— what progress?

A meeting was recently held between Councillors Seán Woodward and Caroline Watts (representing the Fareham and Winchester areas of Whiteley respectively) with Hampshire County Council's Executive Member for roads, Councillor Keith Estlin to discuss transportation issues within Whiteley.

The completion of Whiteley Way to the A3051 North of Curbridge is now linked to the Botley By-pass capital scheme which it is hoped will be in the Local Transport Plan for 2007/2008. In other words a long way off! Hampshire County Council is, however, continuing to acquire land on the route by negotiation and recently purchased another property. If and when compulsory purchase legislation is clarified by the Government to allow land for the scheme to be purchased without a possible ransom being paid then the scheme could go ahead subject to extra funding being made available as the original money collected will no longer cover the envisaged building cost.

Yew Tree Drive and Rookery Avenue are still planned to be connected to Botley Road for buses and emergencies prior to Whiteley Way's completion. Yew Tree Drive will join Botley Road at a new roundabout to be jointly funded by Hampshire County Council and the builders of 280 houses off Dickens Drive prior to the occupation of the 50th dwelling. (Detailed planning consent not yet applied for as land owners are arguing over land values). Rookery Avenue remains in the same state as Whiteley Way with a number of landowners determined to secure an advantage for releasing their land.

WHITELEY BROADBAND

We reported in the last edition that a wireless/satellite Broadband solution was to be trialled in Whiteley for those who wish to have broadband (ADSL) in their home but are either not on cable or cannot receive broadband via their BT telephone line due to having a fibre connection (ADSL requires copper cables).

The system which relies on a satellite (EutelSat) worked well with very high download and upload speeds but the French operators of the satellite then decided to cease the service which left us going back to look for another provider! We are not giving up and if you would be interested and have not yet given us your details then please let us have them by e-mail to swoodward@fareham.gov.uk

SKATEPARK DESIGN CONSULTATION

Now that it has been agreed that a skatepark will be sited adjacent to the Meadows Leisure Centre, paid for by Fareham Borough Council (£46,000) and maintained by Winchester City Council a meeting has been held with young boarders, bladers and BMX bikers to start to design the facility with a view to a Spring installation.

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR THESE SITES?

The lease on the land presently occupied by One Stop and the Doctors' Surgery has been extended for a further year expiring in January 2005.

The County Council is about to issue a lease to a developer who will be constructing a convenience store, 2 or 3 other shops and flats and a commercial pre-school at Gull Coppice near the Community



Centre. A physiotherapy practice will be constructed also and for the duration of the building the "OUT" from Gull coppice onto Yew Tree Drive will become two-way and the "IN" will be for the construction traffic only. Once this development is complete the temporary buildings will be removed and the land sold by Fareham Borough Council for housing. It is hoped that by then the doctors, who changed their minds about moving to Gull Coppice, will have found alternative accommodation within Whiteley. Gull Coppice.

This land North of Dickens Drive is in the control of Pelham Homes who secured an outline planning consent after a court battle two years ago and are now locked in a battle with potential purchasers over the value of their land. The likely timescale of the development is therefore uncertain but we retain a commitment to a public meeting with affected residents at the detailed planning application stage to attempt to negotiate the most acceptable form of development with the least impact on existing homes.

