

CONSERVATIVES – Over two decades of outstanding civic service



# InTouch

PARK GATE & PRIORY PARK – Spring 2021

## Wise Tories had cash jab ready to ward off Covid tax hike

SIDE EFFECTS from Covid-19 played havoc with Fareham's finances, leading to the worst budgetary situation in two decades and threat of a council tax hike.

But the wise **Conservative** administration had an antidote ready for rainy days – and pandemics.

Prudent investments and careful handling of the coffers had built up a 'vaccine' of reserves, so £2m was available to inject into the budget to relieve the pain in taxpayers' pockets.

Fareham Borough Council's tax increase for Fareham's 44,000 homes is just 1p per day and the result for the average home stays at less than £3 per week for all Council services.

"This remains almost the lowest in the country," said Council Leader Seán Woodward, recalling that in 1999 **Conservatives** inherited a huge deficit from the previous administration.

### 'Toughest by far'

"Now we are in a similar situation. This is the 22nd budget that I have presented to the Council and it was the toughest by far.

"The economy of this country has been decimated by the Covid-19 pandemic and Fareham Borough Council, like every family and business, has not been immune to the turbulence.

"Thankfully, due to **Conservatives'** financial prudence that we have practised over two decades, we have been able to weather the financial hurricane.

"The Council has paid over £45m to businesses in the Borough for Covid hardship by way of grants and business rate reliefs."

### Share of Council Tax for 2021/22



To Fareham's precept will be added the much larger Hampshire County Council precept and that from the Police & Crime Commissioner and Fire & Rescue Service.

Overall income from council tax of £7.5m represents just 15% of the budget to deliver all services costing over £48m. Other income is realised from fees and charges such as rents arising from the Council's £64m commercial property portfolio, car parking charges, hire of sports pitches etc.

There is also a capital programme over the next 5 years of £86m. Subject to necessary viability studies, we plan to invest:

- £10m for building new council houses
- £15m for improving existing council houses
- £6.5m for acquiring new council houses
- £12m for a new arts and entertainment facility – Fareham Live
- £7m investment in improving Fareham's two leisure centres
- £0.5m for playground improvements
- £2.5m for disabled adaptation grants
- £10m for investment in Solent Airport @ Daedalus including new buildings for businesses and jobs
- £6m for car parking improvements across the Borough

Councillor Woodward added: "I am grateful to our residents for stepping up during these tough times to help friends, neighbours and strangers. Our Borough is one amazing community."

## Fareham planning nightmare: 'Events out of our control'

PLANNERS are tearing their hair out after another Whitehall U-turn sent the housing element of the current Fareham Draft Local Plan to the shredder.

Executive Member for Planning and Development Simon Martin said: "We are being penalised by events out of our control."

The Plan went out for consultation just before Christmas after the Council approved an earlier Government change-around allowing a lower number of houses.

Two days before the consultation closed, the Government moved the goal posts

again, reverting from 2018 to 2014 figures for estimating housing growth.

Councillor Martin said: "Consequently, Fareham's annual housing need has been confirmed as 508 homes per year, as opposed to 403 homes per year that the Publication Local Plan was based upon.

"We must now revisit the housing requirement, amendments will need to be put forward and also to consider the responses received from the consultation.

"Additional sites required to deliver the higher number of houses will be included in an amended version of the Local Plan."

Fareham has to submit annual figures on

housing completions over the last 3 years, but fewer houses have been completed against the Government's requirements.

Government added 20% to the 5-year housing targets and required preparation of a Housing Delivery Action Plan.

The Council couldn't meet the target due to being unable to issue planning consents for 2 years due to the impact of nitrates on the Solent. Simon Martin added:

"We are lobbying Government hard to ensure they support us. Despite our best efforts to issue planning permissions and proceed with the Local Plan, we are being penalised by events out of our control."

**Almost England's lowest district council tax – thanks to CONSERVATIVES**





### Clock chimes again

Locals missed the clock chiming from the tower at St Paul's Church in Sarisbury Green.

Now, thanks to a £2,000 grant from County Councillor Seán Woodward's community budget and a matching sum from the Borough Council, it's going like clockwork again after refurbishment.



Seán Woodward, pictured with the Rev Sandy Matheson, said the Council and church had worked together for an important listed building in the conservation area.

### Hall flood measures

Urgent work will be carried out to prevent Burridge Village Hall from flooding.

It's been happening for the past two years due to poor drainage and the layout of the entrances.

The Borough Council has approved a proposal to use curbing to deflect surface water run-off from the car park.

Councillor Seán Woodward said: "We are confident that this work will prevent flooding from the water that seeps under the doors during heavy rain."

### Warning of traveller sightings

Travellers have been spotted reconnoitring areas around Segensworth.

Residents should contact local councillors if they suspect incursions.

Warsash Councillor Trevor Cartwright is on a committee working with the Council and police to try to prevent invasions.

Last year, travellers threatened residents when they invaded a site in Hunts Pond Road, leaving piles of filth and dangerous asbestos, for which taxpayers had to pay to clean up.

## Ian misses the councillor's personal touch

LOCKDOWN has radically changed the way councillors go about their business.

All council meetings are now held 'virtually' online and contact with residents is very limited.

Park Gate Councillor Ian Bastable said: "Face-to-face meetings with residents that are such an important part of the role have been severely curbed, which is disappointing as it's so much

easier to listen and see first-hand the problems folk are seeking help with.

"I have had to adapt, as I still receive many calls and emails, but we now need to garner as much background to the problem as possible."

Sticking to lockdown regulations, he visits sites in question and, if appropriate, takes photos to help explain issues to Council officers.

He says more matters of

concern than usual have been reported to him, largely because more residents are out cycling and walking and observing situations that need addressing.

"Social media is also a way in which we identify matters of local concern which we may need to investigate.

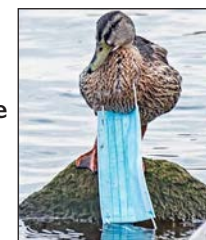
"However, I am looking forward to being able to meet residents personally once again."

## Scourge of the throw-away masks

THIS poor duck was lucky to be spotted with a mask wrapped round its neck that some thoughtless person had tossed into its habitat.

Throw-away Covid masks are a new litter scourge spreading across the environment.

Executive Member for Planning and Development Councillor Simon Martin said: "Masks are too frequently discarded and left on the



roads or in streams and lakes with no consideration for the impact on the environment or on wildlife.

"Animal rescue organisations are pleading for users to snip the straps of the masks to prevent them getting entangled in them,

"A better solution is to take the masks home and put them in the bin so that we are protecting our environment and community. Please do your bit."

## Seán tastes victory after 30-year battle for link route

YEARS of frustration and delays ended with the full opening of Bluebell Way to Curbridge, providing a northerly access to Whiteley.

County Councillor Seán Woodward campaigned for additional northerly exits from Whiteley for 30 years and is delighted.

He said: "Bluebell Way is helpful in providing northerly access and egress for

Whiteley. Of even more help will be the completion of Whiteley Way to Curbridge which should help reduce traffic flows through Burridge, Swanwick and Park Gate.

"Work is under way to link Whiteley Way to the



Mission nearly accomplished: Seán Woodward views the new link.

school built in Whiteley."

Pupil numbers driving the need for a Whiteley Secondary School show that it will be needed by September 2026.

A3051 north of Curbridge by 2022.

"When this happens, I will be pressing the County Council to downgrade and traffic calm Botley Road through Park Gate and Burridge and to designate Whiteley Way as the A3051.

"Next we need to see Whiteley Way completed and a secondary

The link route was brought forward early in the development after a grant of public money from the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership, strongly supported by Councillor Woodward.

It provides the access to Cornerstone Church of England (Voluntary Aided) School which will open in its new home in September.

There is still work to do on the road which remains private until it is adopted by HCC and that won't happen until it's completed.

Following sales of the first homes in North of Whiteley and opening of Bluebell Way, there will be several bus service improvements.

Services between Whiteley, Botley and Swanwick Stations, Segensworth and Fareham will operate hourly and later half-hourly Monday to Saturday. It is intended that the service will extend to Hedge End and Sundays will be added.

## Grant aid for charities

STRUGGLING charity and community organisations can apply to Fareham Council for a Covid-19 special grant.

The application process is quick and easy and groups who have had to close or stop operating due to lockdown restrictions are welcome to apply.

Those successful will receive a one-off payment of £250, provided they can provide evidence to meet the criteria.

The grant is not available to profit making organisations, those with large reserves, or any that have received funding from the Council during the pandemic.

## The French connection goes live

ELECTRICITY is flowing between France and England as the massive sub-Channel project powers up.

Interconnexion France-Angleterre 2 (IFA2) was tested successfully in December and has now moved to a 90-day operational phase, said Councillor Simon Martin.

"In this Phase they can transfer low carbon electricity between the UK and France using IFA2's full capacity of 1000-megawatts – enough energy to power 1 million British homes.

"By importing low carbon electricity from France they estimate that within one year, the project will prevent 1.2 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> from entering the atmosphere

which is equivalent to planting 50 million trees."

The connection runs for 127 miles from Tourbe in Normandy and surfaces at Monks Hill Beach just south of Solent Airport at Daedalus and goes on to a large converter station north east of the airfield.

From there, 1 1/2 miles of underground cables link it to the National Grid at Chilling, near Warsash.



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**WE SERVE YOU ALL**

Whether you voted for us or not, your Conservative councillors promise the highest standards of service to everyone in the community. Contact us any time and we'll respond personally within 48 hours.

## Council launches top quality solar panels purchase scheme

A NEW scheme to provide cleaner, greener and more sustainable power for Fareham residents is being launched.

The Borough Council is joining forces with iChoosr, independent experts in group-buying schemes, to offer households high quality solar panels and battery storage at the best competitive prices.

Residents can register for free, without obligation, by providing details about their roof, such as its size and orientation.

An 'auction' was being held on March 23, where pre-vetted solar installers should submit bids for the work. The more people that register, the better the deal for each household and the installer with the most competitive package will win the auction.

Residents who have registered will be provided with a recommendation to best suit their roof specifications and associated costs. There is no obligation to continue and residents will have until May 21 to decide.

An installer will only contact those who accept the offer to then survey the property and set an installation date.

Executive Member for Planning and Development Councillor Simon Martin commented:

"Reducing our environmental impact has rightly become a key focus for many Fareham residents.

"That is why Fareham Borough Council has teamed up with iChoosr to deliver this scheme to provide solar energy options to households for the best possible price.

"It is a step in the right direction for ensuring Fareham has a greener and more sustainable future."

## Leisure centres revamp starts

Work has started on the £6.8m scheme to improve the Borough's leisure centres.

Most of the cash will be spent updating the 40-year-old Fareham Leisure Centre in Park Lane.

Contractors managed to complete internal work while the centre remained closed.

In the Western Wards, Holly Hill Leisure Centre users can look forward to a steam room and sauna towards the end of 2021.

## COME AND JOIN US

If you support Conservative principles and would like to vote to select your Council and Parliamentary candidates, to attend social and political events or help us by delivering InTouch in your street, then why not join Park Gate Branch of Fareham Conservative Association? Contact Simon Woodhams 07971 288993 or simon@sjwuk.com





## Looking forward to a year of success and recovery

I know that many people are struggling with covid restrictions.

However, I sincerely believe that 2021 will be a year of recovery and success for us.

With Brexit finally done, this **Conservative** Government fulfilled its major promise to the British people, securing a historic deal with the EU which takes back control of our borders, laws, money and trade restoring our political and economic independence.

We have also delivered one of the most comprehensive economic responses in the world to support jobs and businesses during the pandemic, providing over £280bn in jobs support-including protecting 12 million jobs through the furlough and self-employed schemes.

Together, we are beating Covid.

Please note that I am on maternity leave until September following the birth of my daughter. My office remains fully functional and I continue to serve Fareham residents through my ProxyVote in Parliament and representation to Ministers in the usual manner.

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# Suella

## BRAVERMAN MP for Fareham



BUILDING on my recent visit to the Royal South Hants Hospital in Southampton to meet the team behind the Hampshire Research Hub, I am delighted that we as a nation have now passed the 15 million vaccinations milestone.

At the time of writing, the UK was the first country in the world to approve the Pfizer/Biontec vaccine and is one of the global leaders in its roll-out of the vaccine.

I know I speak for many people in Fareham in paying tribute to the front-line NHS staff and volunteers who have helped to vaccinate thousands of local people at sites like Fareham Community Hospital, Brook Lane Surgery, Portchester Practice and Village Pharmacy. Hampshire and the Isle of Wight is



Suella at the Hampshire Vaccination Research Hub with Team Leader Professor Saul Faust and East Hampshire MP Damian Hinds.

also one of the leading Partnerships in the South East and the country, issuing over 100,000 doses in one week alone.

Community First are providing a safe, accessible and Covid-secure transport option for people in need.

For more information see [www.cfirst.org.uk/transport/community-transport-to-vaccinations](http://www.cfirst.org.uk/transport/community-transport-to-vaccinations).

## Win up to £25,000 on Fareham's Community Lottery

**WANT TO** to help good causes and be in with a chance of winning up to £25,000?

Then buy a ticket for Fareham's new Community Lottery which is now live online with draws taking place every Saturday, having started on March 13.

Tickets are on sale at £1 each, of which 40p will go to one of 55 local charities that have registered to take part.

When you buy a ticket, you can choose which charity you want to support.

Funding was awarded to set it up to One Community, whose Chief Executive, Jean Roberts-Jones, said it had been made possible through hard work by volunteers.



"This scheme will help provide vital support to good causes which have been hard hit by the pandemic and it's lovely to be able to offer a positive, simple way for them to increase their income and continue to support people in every generation from our local area."

Fareham Council's Executive Member

for Leisure and Community Councillor Sue Bell said: "I am pleased our Community Lottery tickets are now available to buy and would like to thank One Community for their efforts in setting it up."

"With 55 good causes registered to benefit from the scheme, every ticket purchased will contribute to the fantastic work they do across our Borough."

"I sincerely hope that Fareham residents will show their support now that tickets are on sale."

Tickets can only be bought online, either at [www.farehamlottery.co.uk](http://www.farehamlottery.co.uk) or by visiting Fareham Community Lottery facebook page.

## Council's urgent action to prevent spread of deadly ash tree disease

**ASH DIEBACK** disease is spreading through Western Wards woodlands.

Holly Hill Woodland Park and Whiteley have been affected, so has Wicor Copse, Portchester where 65 trees have to be felled.

Fareham Council started taking urgent measures in February to halt the spread.

It's caused by a fungus whose symptoms range from leaf and branch dieback to the

death of the tree.

Councillor Simon Martin said a high proportion of ash trees would die once infected, although a few might survive due to genetic factors giving them resistance.

Infected trees lose water content, so younger trees die more quickly.

He said: "Works to remove affected ash trees identified in the summer began last month when the trees were dormant and

the environmental impact would be limited.

"In many areas such as woodlands and semi-natural greenways natural regeneration will be encouraged, but in parks and open spaces trees will be replaced next winter."

Embrittled wood has implications for arborists who cannot use conventional rope techniques, so work on ash trees involves use of mobile elevated work platforms.