



# In Touch

with our community

FAREHAM EAST – AUTUMN 2008



**Golden Mile of smiles:** The Mayor and Mayoress, Councillor Ernest Crouch and Enid Crouch, arrive in a vintage Rolls Royce (left) and are met by Council Leader Seán Woodward. Then they join the Batala Samba Band (centre) having led a parade of classic cars (right).

## Congratulations and celebrations set Fareham's new 'West End' buzzing...

**FAREHAM'S West Street was centre stage for two outdoor spectaculars that delighted thousands of shoppers.**

First, on August 24 came celebrations to mark London taking over from Beijing to host the 2012 Olympics.

Then, the town centre came alive again a month later with a day of events signifying completion of the £1.3m revamp of the western section of its main thoroughfare.

Sports representatives from across the borough attended, including high-achievers from various Olympic sports.

Celebrations started with local band Spinnaker Brass entertaining spectators in the precinct and there was an acrobatic display from gymnastics club Kartwheels before the official hoisting of the Olympic flag.

Executive Leader Councillor Seán Woodward was delighted so many people turned out and that young Fareham Olympic hopefuls had joined in.

It was an even bigger street party on September 20 when the sparkling new 'West End' was thronged by people joining in a day

of fun and entertainment.

"Let's Celebrate Fareham Past and Present" was aimed at bringing together the two halves of West Street, which had for so many years been divided by an imbalance of visual appeal.

pendent traders, who have welcomed the new look, helped to host the day.

Fareham's Mayor and Mayoress, Councillor Ernest Crouch and Enid Crouch, set the style by heading a parade of classic cars in a vintage Rolls Royce, with Batala Portsmouth Samba Band getting the entertainment off to a swinging start.

There were performances by Fareham Musical Society, Second 2 None, Mozy Dare, Stomping Mad Band and Miss Hayley Fisher & Guests. Titchfield Players staged performances from The Three Musketeers outside the Tourist Information Centre.

And there were free vintage bus trips along West Street, courtesy of First Hampshire and Dorset.

Councillor Woodward, who thanked traders for their support, said: "We are determined to get the Western end of West Street as much 'on the map' as a shopping destination as the highly successful eastern end.

"The £1.3m investment we have made will do just that and the huge crowds present on the day will now know what this end of town has to offer."



**Flying high:** The Olympic flag is hoisted in the precinct by (right to left) Council Leader Seán Woodward, Mayor Ernest Crouch, Ian Pike (Badminton) and Rebecca Gough (Athletics).

The refurbished end of the Golden Mile now boasts speciality shopping in a continental atmosphere and most of the inde-

## ...then it shares in town's honours at floral display awards ceremony



**FAREHAM'S spruced-up West Street won the Best New Commercial Landscape award in the South and South East in Bloom competition.**

It capped a day when the borough scooped the overall winners prize for the fifth year running and a gold medal in the Large Town/Small City category at the regional awards ceremony at Crawley.

The sensory garden in Osborn Road won the

Best Small Park category and a gold medal.

And the Fareham in Bloom team won the Community Involvement Award for their outstanding work over the past 13 years.

•Pictured (left to right) volunteers Heather Othen and Jean Kingdom, TV gardener Chris Collins (presented all awards), volunteers Bridget and Geoff Thickett, Matt Wakefield (Horticultural Development Officer) Councillor Connie Hockley and Heather Scott (Volunteer).

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



# WARD NEWS BRIEFS

## Outstanding

The Ofsted inspection of foster care in Hampshire has rated the service as "outstanding" and consistently good across the County.

It praises the good working arrangements with school nurses, mental health and other health specialists. The fostering service was good in taking into account the religious and cultural needs of young people and in the training of carers.

If you are interested in becoming a carer call 0845 6011895 or visit [www.fostering.hampshire.gov.uk](http://www.fostering.hampshire.gov.uk)

## Helpers needed

We wish to keep you all informed on what is happening in your community.

This is achieved through the *In Touch* publication, which means that at least four times a year we have to distribute nearly 3,000 publications. to you.

Branch chairman Keith Barton said it was a mammoth task and more people were needed to help with the distribution.

"Even if you can just do your own road it would be a tremendous help," said Keith, who can be contacted on 0781841 8882 or by email: [chairman@fareham-east-cons.org.uk](mailto:chairman@fareham-east-cons.org.uk)

## Public to have a say

The public will be allowed to address meetings of Hampshire Police Authority, but not the sub-committees.

It brings the authority into line with councils who allow deputations to their main meetings.

# Young mums and volunteers praise new children's centre



**Making merry:** Staff and volunteers are all smiles on the opening day.

## AS PART of the Sure Start Initiative, Hampshire County Council has constructed a purpose built Children's Centre at Neville Lovett School.

The Merryfields Centre was officially opened on September 13 by the Mayor of Fareham, Ernest Crouch, and many centre activities including story telling were enjoyed by the civic dignitaries, children and adults.

The activities were very varied, with young children using building bricks and doing physical exercise, while parents were nursing young babies.

County Councillor Ray Ellis attended as a Partnership Board Member and remarked on what an excellent facility it was for the parents of the area and for giving the children a good start in life.

Although the centre is located in the Fareham South Ward (one of the most deprived wards in Fareham), it also

provides services for parents and children living in Fareham East Ward and a significant number come from areas as far away as Wallington.

A special feature of the centre is the number of volunteer parents who are providing care for the young children.

"This feature is very important as many of the volunteer parents told me that they had had problems with bringing up their children and had learnt a lot from their own experiences which they can now pass on to other parents.

"This is particularly significant, as many of the parents are very young mothers without, in some cases, any experience of what to do with young children and lacking any other community support," said Councillor Ellis.

He added: "These volunteer parents are to be congratulated on the contribution they are making to the centre, which would not be able to function so well without them."

## How to send that excess packaging packing

### A PROJECT run by Hampshire Trading Standards officers has involved tests on 1,000 products to determine whether they contained excess packaging.

Companies with excess were given advice on how to minimise use of packaging

material. As a result, many companies made changes to their operations.

These included a snack bar manufacturer and a fudge producer who reduced packaging by 300%.

Another project reduced packaging of Easter eggs by 30%.

Councillor Ray Ellis said: "The best way of reducing rubbish going to landfill is to use minimum packaging."

You may report any product which you feel is using excess packaging to the Trading Standard officers at the County Council offices in Winchester.

## Queen's Award nominations

THE County Council is asking for nominations of volunteers of all types for the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service. Forms may be obtained from [www.queensawardvoluntary.gov.uk](http://www.queensawardvoluntary.gov.uk) or phone 020 7781 2397

## Schools' key stage success

HAMPSHIRE schools did well in Key Stage 2 results. There was a 82% success in English (national average 81%); maths 79% (78%); science 90% (88%). Maths and science figures were the same as 2007, English fell by 1%.

## Inquiry will determine best way to care for the elderly

### A COMMISSION of Inquiry has been set up at county level to gather expert evidence on the best way to provide care for the people of Hampshire.

It will focus on the needs of the elderly and how they can be supported in their own homes to avoid a move into residential accommodation. The results will be available soon.

It is intended to personalise allowances for care so individuals can use the aid most efficiently.

Councillor Ray Ellis said: "It is a move away from the traditional approach of 'one size fits all'."

Community Innovation Teams have been set up to support older people, reducing the need for emergency and other services.

Teams comprise a nurse and either a social worker or occupational therapist, with input from a CVS worker, to advise on medication, falls prevention, minor environmental modifications and simple aid equipment.

Iris, a 77-year-old, said: "I am fit and well. I just need company and someone to help me get out and about."

"Before CIT came along I was depressed, but now everything has brightened up."

"Arrangements have been made to give my son respite and I will be looked after when he is away."

Referrals may be made by GPs, family, friends, neighbours or anyone concerned about their well being. CIT then draws up a support plan and links with support volunteers.



## Extra £1m to repair the potholes in Hampshire's highways

### GOOD NEWS for motorists.

The County Council has added an extra £1m to the £56m budgeted for road improvements this year.

The number of work gangs tackling road maintenance in Hampshire has doubled from 20 to 40.

Extra work on filling potholes, which are a nuisance and potentially dangerous, started in September and will continue until the end of the year.

The money is being spent on nearly 6,000 miles of road in the county.

Councillor Ray Ellis said: "Keeping our roads in good condition is a top priority for our residents, but the bad weather conditions and ever increasing volumes of traffic have resulted in potholes forming faster than usual."

Each year HCC conducts a systematic highways inspection and surveys of road conditions, which helps to decide priorities for repair. Residents may report road pothole conditions directly to 0845 6035633 or on line at [www.hants.gov.uk/highways](http://www.hants.gov.uk/highways).

## County's £2.8m investment leads to big bus travel rise

**MORE PEOPLE** in Hampshire are leaving their cars on the drive and travelling by bus.

Government figures show a rise of 4.5% in the past year, due to investment by Hampshire County Council and improvement of services by the bus operators.

In the last year, 29.8 million passengers travelled by bus compared with 28.5 million in the previous year.

During the last three years, the County Council has invested £2.8 million improving the bus network infrastructure including new bus and shelters, junction improvements and a new bus station.

In addition, bus priority measures and real time information systems have been introduced.

Bus operators have invested in new and more modern buses, more and better training for bus drivers and wider promotion of services available.

Thirty bus operators provide 310 bus services in Hampshire, of which 200 are subsidised by the County Council at a cost of £6.4m a year because they are not commercially viable.



**On the buses:** Fareham bus interchange has shown a rise in travellers.

Councillor Ray Ellis said: "The more people use the bus service the less is the need for subsidy, but operating costs are rising steeply.

"The County Council has a process of area reviews (working with bus operators) to ensure that the bus services best match the needs of the local population and changing needs within the limitations of budget.

"To improve our carbon footprint and to avoid ever rising fuel costs it is essential that more people use the bus.

"The County Council continues to make a considerable investment by improving facilities to encourage more people to use public transport and reduce the need for subsidy."

## New-look county libraries buck the trend

**NATIONAL figures show that visits to libraries have fallen by 34% in the last decade to about 288 million, but Hampshire is bucking the trend.**

County visits are up by 400,000, giving a total of 7.1m during 2008/9, thanks to improvements introduced in the last few years to encourage more people to use libraries.

The new generation of libraries, such as the Gosport discovery centre, has

provided free internet access, exhibition and gallery space, performance areas for music, theatre and dance etc.

Other measures include increasing the book purchase fund by £350,000 and providing an on-line facility so borrowers can browse the entire catalogue from home.

Opening hours have been increased and many libraries (including Fareham) have been refurbished.

## Bid to cut volunteer drivers tax threshold

**HAMPSHIRE County Council has asked the Government to scrap the 10,000 miles per tax year threshold for volunteer drivers reclaiming mileage expenditure.**

The Council is asking for volunteer drivers to be allowed to claim all mileage incurred providing volunteer services, without fear of tax penalties.

Councillor Ray Ellis said the council was particularly concerned about the adverse impact the increase in fuel prices has had on the withdrawal of volunteer driver services.

The 10,000 miles threshold has not changed since 2002.

## Barking glad at walkies rule

**DOG owners have praised the County Council for its policy on beach access.**

The acclaim came at a recent Barking Dog Bonanza at Lepe beach for dog owners from all over Hampshire

The policy differs from many other local authorities in allowing dogs on certain areas and not having a blanket 'no dogs admitted to beach' rule.

## FAREHAM EAST 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 councillors.

### COUNTY COUNCILLORS – Hampshire Fareham Town Division

#### John Bryant

14 Highlands Road  
Fareham PO16 7XL  
Tel: 01329 281427  
email: [john.bryant@hants.gov.uk](mailto:john.bryant@hants.gov.uk)



#### Raymond Ellis

20 Cams Hill  
Fareham PO16 8RB  
Tel: 01329 236127  
email: [raymond.ellis@btinternet.com](mailto:raymond.ellis@btinternet.com)



**Your man in Westminster**



By **Mark Hoban**  
MP for Fareham

As part of the Conservative Treasury team, I spent much time over the summer thinking about how the Government got us in a mess.

During the good times rather than save for a rainy day, Gordon Brown continued to borrow to the point that he has, according to statisticians, breached his own borrowing rules, which were meant to control government finances and are now in tatters. Now we are in more difficult times, he can't help families and businesses to weather the storm.

How do we put our public finances back into good order and ensure governments stick to the rules? We will set up an Office for Budget Responsibility to keep politicians on the straight and narrow when it comes to tax and spending. It will be like the old fashioned bank managers, the ones who would let you know that you were overdrawn and rather than offering more credit, suggested you might like to reduce your overdraft and live within your means. That's what the office will do. When Gordon Brown was overdrawn, like Oliver Twist he asked for more credit.

Once we have the public finances back in order, we will be able to do what government is meant to do, which is to be on your side. So when the economy is not going so smoothly, the Government has the money to help businesses and families, rather than doing what has happened this year, raising taxes on families with big hikes on car tax or asking small companies to cough up more.

Government is not about flashy gimmicks and wheezes; it is about doing the dull, sensible things that make real differences to families when it matters. It is about reassuring people that you have got a firm grip on what is happening. Our Office for Budget Responsibility shows that we are serious about putting our economy right.

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

# Free swims for over 60s

## But who pays for 10 Drowning Street's latest brainwave?

**THEY ALWAYS** look wonderful on paper...free bus travel nationwide for over 60s and now a new Government plan for free swimming for old and young.

But Labour's grandiose freebie schemes have one flaw. Who splashes the cash in the long run?

Concessionary bus passes are already forcing Fareham Council to swim against

a rising financial tide and Conservative councillors fear free swimming sessions for under 16s and over 60s will plunge finances into deep water.

Nationwide bus passes started in April, but the scheme was not funded properly, leaving several councils with huge problems.

"In most authorities, the gap will have to be met by the council taxpayer and the additional costs could be significant," said Councillor David Swanbrow, Executive Member for Planning and Transportation.

And that is the worry following the Government's approach to councils asking them if they are interested in a grant towards the introduction of free swimming sessions.

Funding has been promised for only the first two years for the over 60s; no details have been given for the under 16s group and nothing beyond.

Councillor Connie Hockley, Executive Member for Community, said: "On the surface, this seems a wonderful idea provided it is **fully funded** and applies only to local residents, BUT – and there is always a catch in many schemes proposed by this Government – what happens after the first two years?"

"Is the initial funding sufficient or will the local taxpayers end up by subsidising another Government initiative?"

It's the question that's already been answered in respect of the concessionary fares debacle, for the Government pays only 43% of the cost in Fareham.



**At a stroke:** Free-style may take on a new meaning for over 60s at Fareham swimming pool.

"The cost over the first four months suggests that by the end of the financial year the Council is likely to spend at least £280,000 on top of the £1.5m it budgeted for concessionary travel, with the possibility it could rise much further.

"This equates to a council tax rise for Fareham of 5%-6% on its own," said Councillor Swanbrow.

Councils have to pay for any pass holder's journey starting within their boundaries. For example, a Gosport resident travelling to Winchester will have to change at Fareham and it's Fareham Council which then pays for the rest of that traveller's journey.

"The Gosport resident gets the benefit of free travel, Winchester shops may well benefit, but all Fareham gets is the biggest slice of the cost – and the Fareham council taxpayer pays," said Councillor Swanbrow, who said the Council was asking the Government to re-assess a wholly unfair situation.

The Council has expressed interest to get funding for free swimming for over 60s, provided it is restricted to local residents.

Councillor Hockley said the Council was also interested in operating a scheme for free swimming sessions for under 16s which could be run during school holidays, but only for Borough residents and provided it was fully funded.

The Council also asked the Government for cash towards the cost of building a new swimming pool in the Western Wards.

She added: "We await the Government's decision with bated breath."

## Borough crackdown on untaxed vehicles

**THIRTY** untaxed vehicles were clamped and impounded in a two-day crackdown across the Borough by Fareham Council, the Driving and Vehicle Licensing Agency and the police.

A further joint operation was planned for October.

The DVLA used a vehicle equipped with Automatic Number Plate Recognition equipment which identified

any untaxed and uninsured vehicle.

The vehicle was then clamped and a notice attached stating that it had been seized and would not be released until a valid tax disc was obtained.

If a valid tax disc could not be provided, the vehicle was towed away to a storage pound until the owner provided a valid tax disc

If no tax disc was provided,

the vehicle was crushed or, if of value, was sent to a further vehicle pound in the Midlands to be sold

Each day a vehicle is in the pound charges are incurred by the owner.

Vehicles shown by the ANPR camera to be uninsured were also removed.

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