



Conservatives

In Touch

with our community

FAREHAM EAST – SPRING 2008

Tories hit the Government with a 'bunch of fives' over council tax

What you pay

Band D Properties will now pay £136.53 pa to Fareham Borough Council, with the total bill, including the County Council and the emergency services' share, rising to £1,329.30 pa. **Band C** (the average property in the Borough), will respectively pay £121.36 and £1,181.60.

What you get

- Improvements include:
- Play ranger and events programme (3 year commitment)
 - Community safety initiatives
 - New mechanical road sweeper
 - Two more litter clearing operatives
 - Improved free green waste collection service
 - Free national bus pass scheme for older residents starting at 9am
 - Every street and footpath will be swept and litter picked at least once every 10 weeks.
 - Grant to enable Titchfield Carnival to take place in 2008

The aims

- To maintain a spending reserve equal to 5% of total gross expenditure
- Continue to minimise the increase in the overall revenue budget, aiming for a council tax increase within inflation (currently 4.1%) to meet expectations as expressed in the residents' survey.

FAREHAM'S Conservatives have given the Labour Government a 'bunch of fives' after setting Hampshire's lowest council tax and a below inflation rise for the fifth year running.

Councillors of all parties voted in favour of a 2.98% rise in the Borough Council's share of the bill. And that was again achieved after getting the usual pittance in the grant from the Labour Government, which allocated most of the spoils 'oop North'.

Delivering his ninth budget speech, Council Executive Leader Councillor Seán Woodward said they had achieved this despite the government's lack of funding for the Borough.

"I have pledged certainty and stability to our taxpayers, and I have demonstrated how next year's settlement from Government was one of the meanest we have seen for some time.

"To be fair, the Government has delivered certainty and stability with the support they will grant Fareham until 2011.

All is not rosy

"John Healey MP has promised a settlement which provides 'sustained real terms increases for local government', one which is equitable and fair. It all sounds very rosy for years to come.

"But Mr Healey's idea of 'fair' for Fareham is a 0.5% increase despite inflation running at 4.1%.

"So his promise of a real terms increase doesn't seem to stretch as far as Fareham.

"It's a real terms cut which effectively doubles the savings and efficiencies this Council must deliver to fulfil its council tax pledge, which residents feel so strongly about."

So where is the extra £3 billion



Simply the best: The Royal Marines Band and Fareham's Tories have plenty to celebrate.



Seán Woodward: His 9th budget speech

earmarked for local government going?

"I can tell you that 93% of shire districts receive more Government support per

head than Fareham and the 20 most favoured district councils will all receive two to three times as much support per head as we do.

"You won't be surprised to hear that those lucky authorities are not on the south coast.

"The money has, of course, gone to those in the North – places like Lancashire (Burnley), Durham (Easington), Cumbria (Barrow-in-Furness and Wear Valley)."

Worst in Hampshire

Fareham receives just £56.09 per person in Government support – the worst settlement in Hampshire – and a long way behind neighbouring Gosport which receives £92.43 per resident.

He added: "For the fifth year in a row, the council tax increase will be below the rate of inflation, so we

can safely say that 2008 is another year when the Conservatives have dealt a bunch of fives to tax hikes."

Councillor Woodward recognised the important role the Council plays in South Hampshire by running the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) which he chairs.

Positive spin-off

This is a joint committee of 11 local authorities who are demanding adequate support to replace infrastructure in South Hampshire and to plan for the housing which the Government wants built over the next 20 years.

A positive spin-off was the £1m funding received by the Council to renovate the western end of West Street in the town centre.

Fareham leads the country with a 45% recycling rate and has also achieved its target to provide over 100 affordable homes per year which are available for low cost home ownership or for rent.

In contrast to most surrounding boroughs, no cuts have been made to Fareham's services, while £800,000 of worthwhile improvements have been introduced.

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

WARD NEWS BRIEFS

CATs success

Fareham Community Action Team (CAT) has met three times under the chairmanship of Councillor John Bryant.

The main items for discussion have been community safety and on-street parking.

Meetings have been well supported by the public.

Lively debate of issues occurred and officers and borough councillors have promised to take all the views expressed into consideration before final proposals are made later in the year.

Village forum

The annual Wallington village forum was well attended with many residents putting questions to the panel comprising borough and county councillors, police, firefighters and members of the WVA committee.

It was the chance for residents to raise matters of concern with those responsible for determining policy on issues such as highways and footpaths, on-street parking, rubbish disposal and crime.

The panel can be contacted all the year round on any issues of concern.

Signing off

Unnecessary road signs on the A32 between Wickham and West Meon are to be removed.

There are 283 road signs at present on this stretch of road and county road managers have agreed that these are very distracting for motorists.

Young lords of the ring share cash bonanza



It's a knock-out! For youngsters and their trainers from Fareham Boxing Club, but fortunately not for Ray Ellis (third from left) as they celebrate a grant from the County Councillor's £10,000 good causes kitty.

ALL AGE GROUPS have benefited from the £10,000 allocation each county councillor receives to dish out to deserving community causes.

County Councillor Ray Ellis (Fareham Town) has used his grant to help several local organisations, with Fareham Boxing Club and Fareham Scouts top of the list.

He said: "The boxing club grant has been used to buy a portable boxing ring; until now the club did not have a ring in which to practise.

"A club that has well over 100 teenage members deserves support, as it provides activities on two nights a week for young persons who would otherwise have little to occupy them.

"Similarly, the grants to the scout movement has improved facilities at scout huts and has funded recruitment publicity, which is another way to provide important physical activity for our teenagers in this age of

increasing obesity."

Fareham Easy Access Group was given money to encourage walking and access, while a grant to fund literature and banners to encourage buying Fair Trade goods and farm local produce has supported the Fareham Fair Trade Group.

The Parents' Association of Cams Hill School has also been supported to provide challenge facilities for pupils and to encourage team working.

Fareham and Gosport Home Start received a grant to support Christmas activities for deprived people.

In Touch editor Keith Barton welcomed the introduction of these local county councillor grants.

"I feel that local knowledge is essential for the cost effective use of HCC finance. I wish to see money spent on proper provision for our teenagers as this provides alternative activity to 'hanging around in the street'."

New arrangements for public health forums

CURRENT arrangements for patient and public involvement forums will be abolished by the Government from April 1, 2008

Public involvement will be established via a LINK network involving all stakeholders.

The new responsibilities will be wider with power to examine

social service as well as health provision.

The LINKs will be set up through the County Council via an independent 'host' who will be responsible for proper participation of the stakeholders throughout the County.

Financial accountability will be the responsibility of HCC.

The new arrange-

ments are being developed and it is anticipated that the new structure will be in place by September 2008.

It is essential that whatever mechanism be finally agreed that the expertise of existing forum members is not lost and that the local community maintain a voice in any local decision making.

County is prepared to sacrifice 4-star rating

HAMPSHIRE has been rated a 4-star County Council by the Audit Commission.

But it is prepared to lose that status to make sure people's needs come before Government performance targets.

Hampshire manages to perform well, despite a Government grant for 2008/9 of only 2% when the cost of providing services rose at least 5%. It is in the top quartile for performance and almost bottom for funding, receiving less per head of population than the rest of the country.

For example, the grant is £112 in Hampshire compared with £328 in Durham.

County Councillor Ray Ellis said: "Despite this greater grant funding the council tax in Durham is over £50 higher.

"Hampshire's tax had to be raised by 4.5% to maintain and improve the current services."

Hampshire is also affected by a Government decision not to provide revenue grant to service interest on capital allocated as 'supported borrowing' for local transport plans, so many road improvement schemes being cancelled or curtailed.

The County is assessed on its performance targets which may suit the Government's criteria, but often do not meet people's needs.

Future policy will be to provide what is necessary for our population, even if it means not doing as well in the Performance Assessment and risk losing our current four-star rating.



Hants action team's work comes under scrutiny

AFTER a year of operation the work and value of the Hampshire Action Team is being reviewed.

During the year the team has scrutinised and commented on proposals for reorganisation of art centres and as result of which the Ashcroft Art Centre was granted an extended period in which to adjust its operating programme to avoid a radical change in function. Other proposals:

- Reorganisation of the youth service to provide a better service for young people in Fareham and Gosport.
- Improvements to the A32 corridor and access to Gosport
- Improvements to the Quay Roundabout
- Provision of a new pontoon for the Gosport Ferry
- Public health provision
- Local transport plan
- Road and path maintenance
- Future of Haslar hospital site
- Revenue and capital budgets expenditure

Some of these proposals have yet to be finalised. If you wish to comment contact HAT chairman County Councillor Ray Ellis.

Bid to redress Fareham schools funding imbalance

DUE TO shifting population trends and demographic factors there is now a mismatch between school provision in east and west Fareham.

This results in many children from Whiteley having to be bussed to schools outside their area.

Hampshire County Council expenditure on school capital programmes (2005-2008) shows that for

Fareham it is £221.21 per head, whereas for Basingstoke and Deane it is £503.58.

The provision of schools per 1000 population in Fareham is 0.33 whereas for Basingstoke and Deane, East Hampshire and Test Valley it is 0.45.

Your representatives on the County Council are working hard to obtain more funding for Fareham.

Leave your engine running and face a pollution fine

DON'T leave your engine running. It builds up pollution, causes unnecessary noise, wastes fuel and...in Fareham it could cost you a £20 fine.

It's one of the ways Fareham Council is trying to improve air quality by reducing nitrous oxide levels, particularly on the A32 and in Portland Street.

Drivers who leave engines running in those areas will get a fixed penalty fine.

Attempts are also being made to improve the journey times and air quality on the A32 corridor by reducing delays and exhaust fumes caused by traffic lights and unsuitable roundabouts.

County Councillor Ray Ellis said: "At the moment the nitrous oxide levels are 27% above the acceptable level.

Now you can map out your pathway to health

The network of updated right-of-way paths in Hampshire has been incorporated into a new large scale definitive map.

There are 2,842 miles of pathways for walkers and 784 rights-of-way for horses and cyclists in Hampshire, equal to the distance from England to Canada.

The new map incorporates 2,340

Car sharing will be advised to decrease congestion and air pollution on the A32."

Old Gosport Road roundabout has been improved and after extensive test runs using different timings and the timing of the traffic lights on Salterns Lane, the lights have been increased to 180 seconds per cycle to reduce delay times for traffic on the A32 which will gain 17.33 minutes of 'green' time per hour.

"However, due to increasing number of vehicles on the A32 the improvement in traffic journey times may only be temporary.

"Possibilities for improving the layout of Quay Roundabout are also being examined, to increase traffic flow times. Your views on these issues will be welcomed," he said.

Chairman's

Corner



by Keith Barton

CAMS HILL School performed well to get the second best score for added value at Key Stage 3 in the 2007 Hampshire Schools SAT examination.

This is due to reduced class size (25) for English, maths and science, extra tuition for pupils with learning problems and revision classes during May.

Keith Barton said: "It is important for pupils to reach levels 5 & 6 in KS 3 as this sets the scene for good results at GCSE. We congratulate Cams Hill School on this excellent performance"

Valued service

The County Council had to provide £27,000 to keep the 101 non-emergency call centre service operational for the next year, after the Home Office withdrew funding.

This is a direct line for reporting anti-social behaviour, fly tipping, noise nuisance, vandalism and other non-emergencies.

Keith Barton said: "It is valued by our population who have made 350,000 calls in the year; it also frees up the 999 number for more urgent calls".

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.

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Your man in Westminster



By
Mark Hoban
MP for Fareham

IF YOU LISTEN to the forecasters, it would appear we are entering uncertain economic times. The credit crunch, which kicked off in the US, is having its impact here with many homeowners facing higher interest rates.

This compounded with higher energy prices and increasing taxes means that many people face a reduction in living standards.

Sadly, this means for many people real challenges in paying bills and meeting mortgage repayments. We started to see evidence of this last year with repossessions increasing by 21% compared to 2006. Nationally, the Citizens' Advice Bureau is receiving more and more queries about debt and seeing 6,600 new debt problems a day.

The Government is compounding the problem through higher taxes. Because of a shortfall in Government funding and despite the best efforts of councils like Fareham, we will see council tax bills rise faster than inflation. More tax changes in April such as the doubling of the 10 pence rate to 20 pence will hit young people and those in their early 60s hard. The Government can do little to help those finding it hard to make ends meet because it borrowed so much in the good times that it has to keep a tight grip on spending and taxes in the more uncertain times we are in now. Prudent management of the nation's finances would have given us much more room for manoeuvre. The Government has let hardworking families down.

If you need help to manage finances, you should contact the CAB or the Consumer Credit Counselling Service or approach your bank and building society.

Mismanagement of the economy by Gordon Brown and Alistair Darling has a knock-on effect on our own finances. Their failure to prepare for a rainy day means that the heavens could open on us.

**•You may contact Mark via his office
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Higher police profile leads to 13% Fareham crime fall



CRIME figures for Fareham have fallen dramatically, thanks to higher profile policing and a crackdown on blackspots.

"We have invested heavily in more bike and foot patrols and hope you have seen a difference," said Borough Commander Chief Inspector Steve Wallace.

Figures show a 13% decrease for 2007-08 and surveys showed 89% of residents perceive low crime as making Fareham a good place to live.

"It is safe after dark in Fareham - most violent offences occur between parties who are known to each other.

"Criminal damage and graffiti are down 23% and are a top priority. There are very few drug related problems in Fareham and a zero tolerance approach," said Chief Inspector Wallace.

"The Borough alcohol ban is very effective and we can show it has reduced rowdy and drunken behaviour. Supply to juveniles is also a top priority. Unfortunately, parents often provide the alcohol and some licensed premises sell to juveniles.

"We also carry out regular truancy patrols calling on regular absentees at home.

"We want to know what your neighbourhood priorities are. Parking, speeding and littering are the main issues raised. We target speeding hotspots you raise and 27 tickets were



issued on one day alone.

"Accidents are down and any speeding enforcement is based on accidents and speeding data," he said.

He appealed for more community intelligence and asked people to use the Crimestoppers 0800 555111 number.

Fareham Police and the Community Safety Partnership are committed to make Fareham even safer, with the Safer Neighbourhood Teams offering a local presence.

"One final plea... too many crimes read 'Bike left unlocked', 'Satnav stolen from unlocked car', 'Entry via unlocked rear door'...

"We need your help to prevent offences as most crime in Fareham is opportunist.

"We do catch and charge a lot of criminals, but it is no secret that imprisonment is often a last resort for the courts and many are released early. My advice is to avoid becoming a victim if at all possible."

Council wins extended bus pass times

OVER 60s and those with qualifying disabilities will benefit from an extension to the hours of the new national bus concession.

Free travel will apply from 9am until 12.59am Monday to Friday for journeys which start within the borough of Fareham.

This is an extra two and a half hours' free travel each day as well as the statutory minimum (which is from 9.30am until 11pm Monday to Friday and all times at weekends and bank holidays).

Executive Leader of Fareham Borough Council, Councillor Seán Woodward, said:

"We have successfully negotiated this extension with bus operators to allow bus pass holders to travel

free from 9am, which is important for those who have doctors' and hospital appointments."

From April 1, people who qualify will be able to enjoy free off-peak local bus travel on buses anywhere in England.

Existing pass holders do not need to reapply; their new pass will be sent to them by March 31.

The new national passes will be valid for five years. There will be two types:

Passes with a blue stripe down the right-hand side are for the over 60s.

Those with the orange strip are for disabled residents.

In addition to the national standard scheme, Fareham will continue to provide £35 worth of tokens for an administration fee of £5.

This concession is available to eligible disabled residents and those currently in receipt of travel tokens.

It is offered as an alternative to the bus pass and is renewable annually.

Companion passes are available for disabled persons who cannot travel alone. They allow holders and one companion to travel free within and directly to and from the borough of Fareham.

As this concession is provided solely by Fareham Council, it cannot be used in other areas of England. Those eligible will receive two passes – a national standard pass and a Fareham Council pass.

In Touch is published by Fareham East Conservatives, 2A Drift Road, Wallington, Fareham PO16 8SY and printed by Chameleon Print, Unit 3, Palmerston Business Park, Newgate Lane, Fareham PO14 1DJ.