

Council's vision for top quality community facilities

COMMUNITY centres are in line for top quality improvements under a new Fareham Council initiative.

The Executive approved a broad vision for providing high quality community facilities across the Borough and asked interested parties to give their views via a consultation through the Community Action Team process.

The broad vision and proposal to adopt a phased approach, by reviewing the Council-owned community facilities in each of the CAT areas in turn, was well received at the October round of CAT meetings.

The Executive formally adopted the proposed vision and set aside £500,000 capital budget for pump-priming to assist in delivering the vision.

Work has started on Phase 1 to develop a master plan based on providing new community facilities to replace the ramshackle Portchester Community Centre, where a public consultation was held to establish what local people wanted.

Executive Member for Community Councillor Mrs Connie Hockley thanked those who attended the event.

"The views expressed by residents will be reported to the Executive," she said.

Tory 'magic' beats all the odds for a recession busting budget

A RECESSION-busting budget. That's the rabbit Fareham's Conservative 'magicians' have conjured out of the hat.

Against all the odds – and that includes what Executive Leader Seán Woodward lambasted as "one of the most derisory Government grants in the country" – a below inflation rise of just 2.7% has been achieved.

So the Borough share of council tax will rise by just 1p a day, less than any other Hampshire district council and lower than almost every council in the country.

Delivering his 10th budget speech, Councillor Woodward said: "In a recession it is more important than ever to achieve a below inflation council tax rise of just 2.7%.

"Services remain essentially intact and charges rise only a modest amount in line with the requirements of Fareham's residents.

"Fareham's proportion of the council tax for a band D property will be just £140 per year. Compare this with Gosport at over £200 and you can under-

stand the value for money provided by Fareham Borough Council."

Other improvements to services in response to residents' concerns included removal of the £20 charge for pest control officers to deal with domestic rat infestations.

Sunday and Bank Holiday car parking charges would be changed to allow free parking up to 10.30am in the short-stay car parks with free Sunday and Bank Holiday parking in the long-stay car parks.

Charges on these days in short-stay car parks from 10.30am – 4pm will be just £1.50 for as long as shoppers wish to park.

While other centres outside Fareham are losing shops, June will see a Debenhams department store and new multi-storey car park open in the town centre.

Councillor Woodward added: "With the country in a deep recession and many of our older residents seeing their fixed incomes eroded by decreasing interest rates, it is more important than ever that we continue to set the lowest possible council tax to give the best possible value for money

"I am proud that we have for the 10th year been able to achieve this by constantly looking for more innovative and cost effective ways of both reducing expenditure and increasing income."



'ello, 'ello, 'ello...did you know, Sarge, that Fareham council taxpayers now contribute more towards us than they pay for their own Borough Council services?

Costs soar to keep the blue lamp alight



How it's made up for Band D taxpayers

Fareham Borough Council £140.22 (+£3.69)
 Hampshire County Council £1,017.99 (+£18.99)
 Hampshire Police Authority £142.11 (+£6.57)
 Hampshire Fire & Rescue £60.30 (+£2.07)
Total: Band D taxpayers £1,360.62 (+£31.32) = +2...36%

Fareham capital budget improvements include

Footpath improvements: £50,000
 Holly Hill lakes de-silting: £15,000
 Cliff Road, Hill Head replacing public toilets: £170,000

Fareham revenue budget improvements include

Replacing green waste sacks: estimated cost £100,000
 Residents' parking Phase 1 in town centre: £100,000
 Capital Programme Fund: £500,000 towards new and improved community buildings

Extra green waste charges down to health and safety

CHANGES to the garden waste service will start in April 2009.

The Health and Safety Executive advised they were necessary to avoid problems of repetitive strain injury and worse.

So extra staff had to be employed, adding to the cost.

Handling one or two sacks is not a problem, but in some months crews are being asked to lift up to 20 tons per crew per day.

When the service was introduced in September 2005 it was on the basis that it would be cost neutral; however, in the current economic climate the Council had no option but to review discretionary services.

It was decided to retain this popular service and that it should be free for most residents.

There will be no charge for the collection of one garden waste

sack. Most councils charge for this service and those which charge for extra sacks charge more than Fareham proposes.

Fewer than 50% of residents use the service at any one time and most put out only one sack.

People can order extra disposable bags similar to the existing sacks at £20 for 25 sacks, which will be collected regardless of how many or when they are put out.



WARD NEWS BRIEFS

Waste plan

A planning application is being processed for a recovery facility to handle a maximum through-put of 75,000 tonnes per annum of construction, demolition and skip waste with a weighbridge at Charity Farm, 127 Wickham Road, Fareham.

Country access

The countryside access plan is available at www.hants.gov.uk/ham_pshirecountryside or by phone 0845 6035636.

More than 500 people contributed to the document, including ramblers, cyclists, horse riders, carriage drivers and off-road vehicle drivers.

They gave their views on the 2,800 miles of footpaths, bridleways and byways maintained by the County.

Book it

Book readers will be pleased to learn that a reading group will start on February 5 at Fareham Library. Details available on 0845 6035631.

High Street crossing

Work on another much needed pedestrian crossing has started at the bottom of High Street.

It will include building a zebra crossing with tactile paving, bollards, Belisha beacons and anti skid surfacing, granite kerb and pavement works.

County Councillor Ray Ellis has been requesting some action at the junction for several years.

"I'm pleased to see that it is now being done," he commented.

Old railway on track to create fast bus route between Fareham and Gosport



End of the line: The old overgrown track will be removed to clear the way for the new bus route to by-pass the congested A32 initially as far as Tichborne Way, Rowner and possibly later to Military Road.

WORK has started to clear the overgrown former Fareham-Gosport railway line to make way for Phase 1 of the £175m Rapid Bus Transit scheme.

Engineering, ecological and environmental surveys have been carried out and a planning application will be submitted in March.

If successful, work should start on Phase 1 in early summer and last until March 2011.

It is part of a wider plan to link Gosport, Fareham (including the proposed 10,000 homes due to be built north of the town), Queen Alexandra Hospital in Cosham and Portsmouth.

It replaces the LRT tram scheme and harbour tunnel, as extra dredging for the new super aircraft carriers would have added £100m to the cost.

Vegetation has to be removed from the track sides and along the route from Redlands Lane bridge to create access. Bridge structures and ground conditions are being examined and surveys also include wildlife.

County Councillor Ray Ellis, who attended the consultation, said: "I welcome this initiative which will lead to reduced air pollution for residents near the A32.

It will provide a faster service with modern buses, which will be more

fuel efficient and more comfortable. It will also ease congestion on the A32."

Priority will be given to a £50m section of the bus route, linking Fareham train station to Rowner. Buses will initially join the rail track in Redlands Lane near the arch, where the road will be widened around Cams Alders.

Later, the Redlands Lane access will be shut and the route will lead directly to Fareham Station.

About £20m for Phase 1 will come from the Community Infrastructure Fund.

Councillor Ellis said many residents living near the old track were concerned about security of property, noise and pollution, which were addressed at the exhibitions held at Bridgemary Sports College.

FACT FILE

- Fareham-Gosport railway opened in 1841 and cost £404,271. Declining traffic reduced it to single track in 1934.
- It was a vital supply link during World War 2.
- It closed to passengers in 1953 and freight trains ceased in 1969.
- The bus/tram link isn't new. In 1937, experiments were carried out with a rubber-tyred petrol driven rail bus, but came to nothing.

Disabled access path will be dedicated to Lorraine's memory



Lorraine, Richard and a friend on one of the walks she enjoyed.

suddenly in December shortly after her efforts were rewarded with a £25,000 grant from Veolia Environmental Trust and cash from Fareham Council.

The money will go towards Phase 1.

County Councillor Ray Ellis said: "We wish to express our sympathy to her family and would like to see

the completed path named after her.

"It is characteristic of Lorraine and the family that donations to the project were requested instead of flowers for the funeral.

"Lorraine made an outstanding contribution to the cause of disabled access in southern Hampshire and it was due to her tireless

energy in pushing the project forward that we obtained the financial grant support.

"We are delighted her husband Richard is continuing her good work."

Her application to the National Lottery, Community Spaces Fund passed Stage 1 of the award process last month.

Ray Ellis added: "It is a great pity that Lorraine did not live to see this encouraging result.

"Richard is now pursuing the application to final award with the help of Hampshire County Council."

A NEW path around Fareham Creek with access for the disabled will be a lasting memorial to Lorraine Herrington who championed the project.

Sadly, Lorraine died

Phase 1 500m from start of trail at Cams Hall Estate access, through trees to a viewpoint overlooking Fareham Creek.

Phase 2 Extends trail to over 1300m from start to the point where the estuary opens into Portsmouth Harbour.

Phase 3 Would complete project by extending trail to over 2km to where current path widens and is most accessible to wheelchair users; a grant is not yet in the pipeline.

Better results

GCSE results for Fareham schools in 2008 were better than those in Portsmouth, Southampton and Gosport.

Passes in 5 subjects A to C Grades averaged 68.2% (62.5% in 2007). Cams Hill topped the list with 84% (76%).

A-Level results were also above the average for England.

Means-testing plan to make adult social care funding fairer

FUNDING for adult social care could be means-tested if proposals by the County Council get Government backing.

However, the maximum level of savings allowed for funded social care would be more than doubled.

Evidence gathered by Hampshire Commission on Adult Social Care has been submitted to the Government in the wake of a Green Paper.

County Councillor Ray Ellis said it proposed a shift from charging to

individual contributions determined by criteria set by councils.

The key recommendations are:

- Universal offer of information and assessment for adult social care, open to all regardless of the level of need or a resident's finances.

- Up to 8 weeks' free urgent care for all at risk of being hospitalised or waiting to be discharged.

- Maximum level of savings allowed for funded social care raised from £22,250 to £50,000.

- Creation of a National Resource Allocation System to assess needs, regardless of where people live. Councils could apply their own local variations and funding levels but the assessment would be the same for all.

- Investment in joint working between councils and primary care trusts to put more money into preventive services.

- Continued payment of carers' allowance to those who become eligible for the State Pension.

Royal Armouries Museum is going great guns with a £3.5m extension in the barrel

Other cheap days out for the family

AS THE recession bites, you don't have to spend a fortune to enjoy a family day out in Hampshire.

Here are some ideas:

- Royal Victoria Park at Netley by the Solent.

- Winchester Discovery Centre for fine art and historic exhibitions.

- Basing House, scene of one of the longest sieges of the Civil War.

- Queen Elizabeth Park, a beautiful section of the South Downs.

- Titchfield Haven is renowned for its wild life.

- Milestones living history museum, Basingstoke.

- Aldershot Military Museum army history.

- Traditional farming methods at Manor Farm by the River Hamble.

BUSINESS is booming at Fort Nelson where the Royal Armouries Museum has a state-of-the-art extension in its sights.

It has just been awarded £2m from the Lottery Fund towards the £3.5m extension to include a visitors' centre, new galleries and state-of-the-art classroom.

The visitors' centre will provide much needed facilities, including a café and a spectacular view over Portsmouth and the Solent.

The orienteur gallery will be glass-sided and the focal entry point for visitors to the fort. It will provide introductory information to the site and the artillery collection.

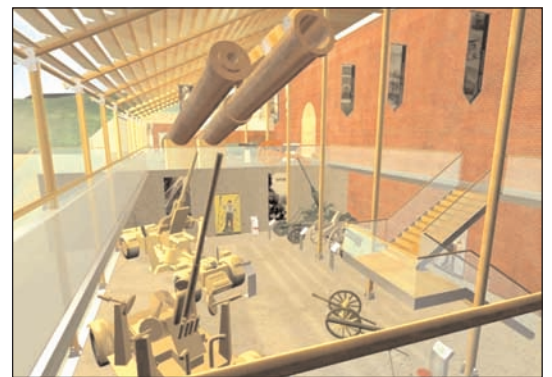
The classroom will be equipped

with the latest technology designed to help visitors and children to investigate the site independently, and will provide the highest quality teaching and learning environment.

County Councillor Ray Ellis, who is a member of the Development Committee of the Royal Armouries, said: "I welcome this development as it will maximise the use of Fort Nelson as a teaching environment for our young and not so young people."

Meanwhile, exhibitions at Fareham's Westbury Manor Museum are making a major financial contribution to tourism in Hampshire

The 7 million visits to Hampshire museums are estimated to have



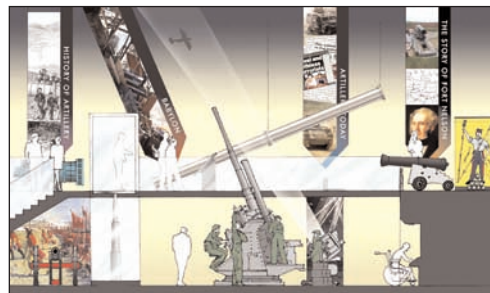
Orienteur: It will be like a big glass conservatory built against the brick walls of Fort Nelson.

contributed £8.7m to the county's visitor economy.

Tourism is particularly important in the south of the county with about 4.5 million people travelling to Hampshire and staying for one or more nights; of these about 500,000 are from overseas.

In addition, about 36 million day trips are made to and within the county.

The South East has the largest proportion of museums in the UK, making them a valuable component of the visitor economy and providing employment for more than 20,000 people.



Displays: Themed features in the orienteur.

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

The recession brings its own pressures on different aspects of life. Whilst we often think about its effect on employment in the private sector, we don't take into account the effect on Government finances.

The money the Government receives from taxes falls as fewer people work and company profits are slashed. At the same time, there are additional pressures to increase spending.

We see this affecting the police. The deteriorating economic position will have an impact on crime levels. There has already been an increase in burglaries, which is borne out by figures in Fareham. It's a Hampshire wide issue and the police are cracking down on it with Operation Nemesis.

But the police are faced with squaring the circle of increasing pressures on costs, a lower increase in their income from Government and a limit on how much they can increase council tax, while meeting the expectations of the public that there will be no cuts in the number of front line officers.

We need to lift some of the burdens which get in the way of putting police on the beat.

When I've been out on the beat, the police have complained about form filling and paperwork. When an arrest is made it is not just the alleged criminal who is detained at the station. Cut the form filling and we can put more police on the beat.

In these difficult times when there will be more demands on public services, we need to look at the changes we can make in our schools, hospitals, councils and police service to get the best value for money.

More bang for the buck.

You may contact Mark via his office
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Fareham's 'Get well soon' message to 'sick' councils

FAREHAM Council staff are happy to be firmly at the foot of one league table.

They are currently bottom of the sick list, so they are the healthiest of all town hall workers among Hampshire's 12 councils.

With an average of 7.2 working days lost per employee, they have just recorded their lowest sickness absence figures.

The 'sick man' of the county is Rushmoor Council with nearly twice as many absences

as Fareham, with Hart and Portsmouth close behind and also needing to 'get well soon'.

Executive Leader Seán Woodward said: "Low levels of sickness absence mean our staff are at work, providing residents with the high quality services they deserve.

"We work hard to ensure we manage the levels of sickness. Employee well-being and health is an important part of keeping a fit and healthy workforce."

WASTE NOT, WANT NOT...



IT WAS one of the World War 2 slogans which inspired people to save even their potato peelings.

Rationing ended over 50 years ago, but did you know that today on average 30% of all food bought in the UK is wasted?

Of all the rubbish dumped 20% is food leftovers.

In an effort to publicise this waste a campaign organised

by the Council was held in October in Fareham. It included stands in the Shopping Centre, Lockwood Centre and Stubbington.

The highlight was a visit by the catering team from 3rd Field Ambulance, recently returned from Afghanistan, to Sainsbury's at Wallington to demonstrate and produce a selection of meals from food that would usually be binned.

The team, based at Haslar Hospital, served up an excellent pumpkin soup, a vegetarian quiche



Delicious: Sgt Mark Holbrook (right) and Cpl Martin Pollard serve the scraps to Brian Bayford and waste advisors Wendy, Jane and Karima.

and a Thai curry for visitors to the store.

The menus were produced by students and staff at Fareham College.

These were available to visitors to the exhibitions, who were advised that the reason for food wastage included

several factors, among them 'Buy One, Get One Free', misunderstanding of 'sell-by date' and 'best before'.

"Too much choice and wastage," said Councillor Brian Bayford, Executive Member for Streetscene.

Positive response to future planning strategy

FAREHAM Council has passed another milestone towards the production of a Local Development Framework (LDF) to replace the existing Local Plan Review, by publishing its preferred options for the core strategy.

The current Local Plan Review dates from June 2000, and the core strategy sets the framework for the LDF which will replace it.

It must largely conform with the South East Plan which is expected to get final Government approval imminently.

The process has been held up by the Government continually changing its rules.

If a council does not follow these rules the plan is likely to be found unsound at the inspection stage, so wasting a lot of council taxpayers' money.

Currently, the Council does not have to publish its preferred options for consultation before submitting its core strategy for inspection, but by doing so it gave all interested parties a chance to comment in time to make changes before finalising the plan.

Responses have been gen-

erally positive with many useful comments and suggestions, including input from a well-attended seminar held for members of Networkfareham, Fareham's Local Strategic Partnership.

County Councillor Ray Ellis commented:

"It was good to see a lot of response to the draft strategy, which is aimed at ensuring Fareham continues to be an attractive, safe and pleasant place to live, work and visit."

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