



Conservatives

In Touch

with our community

FAREHAM NORTH & NORTH WEST – 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 foot-path 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

A class act

Children from the reception class at Uplands Primary School noticed during a road safety lesson that the signs warning drivers of the school entrance in Morshead Crescent had faded.

So they all signed a petition and presented it to Councillor John Bryant who persuaded the Highways Department to replace the signs with brighter ones carrying a highly visible yellow background.

Lotto grant

The Council has received lottery funding for a new play area to be sited at Fareham Park.

Leigh Road car park

Following requests from members of the Bowling Club, Councillors Pam and John Bryant have arranged for the maximum stay period for vehicles to be increased from three hours to four hours.

New call systems

The Housing Tenancy Board has received approval from the Council Executive to have the outdated warden call systems in all sheltered housing replaced during the financial year 2008/09.

Gudge Heath Lane

A detailed design of the proposed pedestrian crossing is being undertaken by a consultant working for the County Council.

Once the necessary checks and approvals are made, work should start around July.

Residents demand resurfacing to reduce M27 noise pollution



NOISE pollution has led to numerous complaints from residents living within earshot of the M27.

Councillor John Bryant has been gathering signatures from residents in the areas most affected in Fareham East and Fareham North and North West wards.

The petition says the road surface on the M27 between Junctions 9 and 11 creates excessive noise pollution and requests the Highways Agency to investigate and resurface the road.

Picture shows John Bryant with resident Mrs Sheila Tavendale collecting a signature in North West from Mrs Eileen Grigg.

Petition fails to stop Arundel Drive sub-post office closure

ANGRY protests and a 1,100-signature petition followed an announcement that Arundel Drive sub-post office was to close.

Councillors John and Pam Bryant organised the petition which was presented at Fareham Borough Council's meeting on October 18 and received unanimous support from fellow councillors.

Pam Bryant said: "This post office has provided a vital service to the community and closure will have a devastating effect to many people in the area.

"What is particularly alarming is that it has been used by elderly and infirm residents who form the core business for the Post Office, as many of them do not use other contact methods such as email."

Fareham MP Mark Hoban offered

to take a further petition to Westminster.

The number of signatures from local people proved the extent of concern of north Fareham residents.

John Bryant said: "Despite our efforts and the tremendous support given by residents, the Post Office gave notice to close Arundel Drive branch on February 13.

"We are extremely sorry that such a well-used local facility is no longer available for our community.

"However, we would like to thank everyone for supporting the campaign."

The Post Office appears to be rubbing salt into the wounds by increasing the price of stamps.

A first-class stamp rises by 2p to 36p; and for second class stamps the increase will to 3p to 27p.

Big rise in library user numbers

PEOPLE are loving their libraries more, with 93.2% of surveyed customers saying their local County Council run library is very good or good.

Over 500,000 people in Hampshire have a library card and visits to public libraries across the UK are increasing – 3.4m more than football matches, heritage sites, museums and theatres combined.

With 53 libraries, two discovery centres and 19 mobile libraries, residents are able to get their hands on a wealth of free information.

Almost 95% of users accessed a computer. In the last two years the library service has gained an extra 205 public computers, with a total of 580 now available across the county.

People are also finding books they actually want to borrow and in the last year over 248,500 items were added to stock.

After listening to customers' requests to extend opening hours, satisfaction rates are at a record 87.3% with some libraries opening on Sundays and extended hours during the day.

Litter louts warned: bin it or face a fine

LITTER louts are being targeted at Park Lane recreation ground.

The Council provides litter bins around the park, but there are people determined to drop litter. Most disturbing is the growing habit of smashing glass bottles onto the grass.

This makes it very dangerous for other users of the park.

Offenders seen leaving their litter in this way will be given an automatic on the spot fine.

Enforcement officers are patrolling the park and will be looking out for anyone seen in the area dropping litter.

Councillors John and Pam Bryant set an example by taking part in a litter picking day, while raising funds for the



Children in Need appeal.

With a team of local volunteers they did the sponsored litter pick at the recreation ground.

•Photo shows Peter Dove, Pam Robinson, Pam and John Bryant clearing up other people's mess.

Fareham centre in nation's top three

FAREHAM Leisure Centre has been hailed as one of the best of nearly 3,000 centres in the country.

The popular venue was narrowly pipped as Centre of the Year for 2007 in the FLAME Awards run by the Fitness Industry Association.

Councillor Pam Bryant said: "It is an excellent achievement to have been one of the three finalists in the national competition.

"Thanks must go to everyone involved in running such an excellent centre which has been achieved through support and investment from Fareham Council and the company SLM which runs the centre."

It was the first time the centre had entered the contest and was up against more than 50 other entrants.

Since £1.3m was invested in new facilities, the centre attracts 18,000 regular visitors annually, offering a wide range of activities.

New visitors' website for great days out

A ONE-STOP shop website for Hampshire tourist information has recently been launched by the County Council.

The new 'Visit Hampshire' site (www.visit-hampshire.co.uk) has been developed to provide a wide range of information for residents and visitors and links other official tourism websites throughout Hampshire and to the national database.

You can find ideas for great days out whatever the weather, special events and suggestions for the festive season. The site also promotes over 700 inspected hotels and guesthouses, campsites and B&Bs.

John plays instrumental role in the band



IT WAS music to the ears of Fareham Scout Band when they heard they had landed a £1,800 cheque from the County Council.

County Councillor John Bryant was delighted to hand over the cheque so the band can buy new instruments.

Their current instruments are over 30 years old and are the

relics of two old scout bands that were once in the area.

Bandmaster Phil Goddard thanked the County Council for the money which will assist budding young musicians.

John was able to award the grant from money allocated to each county councillor to be given to bona fide groups within the community.

Rainbow Centre goes wild over £7,000 grant

HAMPSHIRE County Council has awarded the Rainbow Centre in Fareham a £7,000 grant to create a wildlife area in its sensory garden.

The centre helps children with motor impairment learn to overcome their difficulties, the most common cause being cerebral palsy which affects one in 400 babies born in the UK.

The centre wishes to develop its garden by having an area which will give the opportunity to observe wildlife in a natural habitat.

It will also highlight environmental issues such as recycling and is hoped to encourage greater community involvement and volunteering.

The project will cost £20,000. Following fundraising and lottery funding of £10,000, the centre had a shortfall of £7,000, which the County Council's grant will cover.

The centre uses a system of learning called Conductive Education, which was developed in Hungary and was unavailable in the UK until 1990 when the Rainbow Centre was established.

It provides special education for children aged six months up to school age, and runs a Saturday club for school-aged children.

County Councillor John Bryant said he was delighted the County Council had given the grant, adding:

"I have seen the work that is done at the Rainbow Centre and how it helps many children with cerebral palsy."

FAREHAM NORTH & NORTH WEST 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 ward 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.

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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 crack-down 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 speed-



ing 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.