



In Touch

with our community

FAREHAM NORTH & NORTH WEST – SPRING 2005

Tories' sweet chariot carries home smallest ever council tax increases

Swing low, low, low

CONSERVATIVES are acclaiming a double first in Fareham and Hampshire by setting the lowest borough and county council tax rises.

Fareham's share of the council tax bill showed just a 2.41% rise. It was the lowest tax and lowest actual increase in cash terms in the county and was below the 2.8% inflation figure for the second year running.

Hampshire's tax rise of 3.5% was its lowest ever, despite receiving the fifth lowest Government grant among all the counties.

Fareham Council Executive Leader Seán Woodward hailed it as 'a major achievement in terms of finance strategy and budgetary control'.

He said: "Despite receiving the lowest Government grant of any district in Hampshire, we continue to set the lowest council tax."

County Council Chairman John Bryant said: "We know our residents do not want steep rises in council tax, but expect excellent services. We have achieved this by efficiency gains and savings."

Presenting his sixth budget since the Conservatives took control of Fareham Borough Council in 1999, Councillor

Woodward said his aims had always been to:

- Establish and maintain a reserve equivalent to 5% of total gross expenditure. Current figure is 4.9%

- Minimise council tax rises by keeping them in line with inflation. This has been achieved for 2005-06, thus meeting residents' requests



Seán Woodward: "A major achievement."



Apollo launch: Artist's impression of the state-of-the art cinema at Market Quay.

THE COUNCIL TAX BILL

BAND D	
Fareham	£126.27 + 2.41%
Hampshire County Council	£869.40 + 3.48%
Hampshire Fire and Rescue	£52.11 + 1.58%
Hampshire Police	£113.76 + 4.98%
TOTAL	£1,161.54 + 3.42%

Most Fareham properties are in Band C, where the council tax for 2 adults will be £112.24, an increase of just 5p a week.

in a recent survey.

A Liberal-Democrat move during the meeting to filch nearly £250,000 from the reserve was thrown out by the council.

Councillor Woodward continued: "At the same time, we have been able to absorb all unfunded government initiatives while freezing pay and display parking charges for the past three years."

An upbeat review by the independent Audit Commission showed Fareham to be "a good authority" - good enough to be within two points of excellent and to place the borough in the top 20% of all English district councils.

He outlined the Conservatives' high priority ambitions, which included providing a swimming pool in west Fareham, supporting building of the community hospi-

tal and development of shops, restaurants, cinemas and leisure facilities at Market Quay.

Fareham's capital programme embraced £42m of schemes over the next five years.

These included new skate parks, play areas, bus shelters, CCTV, pay-on-foot car parking, improvements to Fareham Leisure Centre, Ferneham Hall and other community buildings, a customer service centre in the Civic Offices and matched grants to external organisations.

•If you are having difficulty paying your council tax bills, you may be eligible for council tax benefit. Phone the County Council Information Centre on 0800 028 0888 for more details.

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



WARD NEWS BRIEFS

Pub demolition

The council has received a planning application for the demolition of the Redlands public house and the for the building of residential accommodation on the site.

Prague Junction

A plan to redevelop the Prague Junction night club site next to Fareham station has been rejected.

Planners say the land may be needed for the proposed Light Rapid Transit System linking Fareham, Portsmouth and Gosport, which is still awaiting approval after nine years.

Crime/Vandalism

A Vandalism Task Force has been set up by the Conservative-run council with £40,000 to spend on schemes such as covert CCTV.

There is also a reward scheme for information leading to successful prosecutions.

Coming shortly

Fareham's new 'state of the art' Apollo cinema is due to open shortly.

It is one of the key features of the Market Quay complex and a popular request from residents.

Foundry site

Tesco have submitted an application to Fareham planners to build a supermarket and 89 residential properties on the site of the former foundry in Quay Street.

Former Wickham Road board school to be sold



The building that housed the Adult Education Centre, formally the Board School, in Wickham Road will be put onto the market for sale from March 2 until April 22 by the County Council who are the trustees.

Developers will be asked to submit plans in keeping with the present construction. Money raised will be put into a trust and the proceeds used to help local schools.

This trust will be administrated like the William Price Trust and possibly by the same group of trustees.

Pictured outside are County Councillor Dr Ray Ellis (left) and County Council Chairman Councillor John Bryant.

Police to mount speed checks at Funtley after residents complain

POLICE will mount speed checks in Funtley after residents expressed their concerns to local councillors.

People were also worried about accidents at Funtley Hill and parking in the village.

Officers reported that a series of speed measurements were taken in Funtley Road and near Funtley Hill bend.

They showed that the speed of traffic did vary on the approach to the bend. Speeds were generally above 30mph, but below 40mph., although these were not considered excessively high.

However the matter was taken up with the police who have agreed carry out some enforcement in the village.

Officers checked the police records of personal injury accidents, which showed that there have been three injury accidents in the last three years.

None of the accidents was directly related to speed; one involved an animal out of control, one related to the road surface and the third was caused by an inexperienced driver who showed lack of judgement.

Other accidents that have occurred did not involve personal injury and would not be recorded by the police.

The police stressed they do not have the resources to enforce all parking regulations.

In 18 months' time, the council will take responsibility for on-street parking enforcement under the decriminalisation powers granted to local authorities.

At that time it is intended to undertake a major review of parking in the town.

Council tax tops list of public concern, Tory survey reveals

COUNCIL tax and traffic top the list of residents' concerns in the recent borough survey undertaken by the Conservatives.

"We were overwhelmed with the number of forms returned and we are very grateful to residents who completed and returned the survey, which was included with the last edition of *In Touch*," said Councillor Pam Bryant.

"The results have given your Councillors a good indication of your priorities and the importance of issues that affect our area."

To date, 24 % consider council tax the most important issue. This was followed by 18% and 17% regarding traffic, road maintenance and foot-paths as important.

12% saw planning as an issue, followed by public transport and street cleaning with 6% each.

National issues raised, particularly immigration/asylum, crime, pensions and Europe, seem to have touched a raw nerve.

"We will pass all these concerns on to our Fareham MP Mark Hoban, who has expressed much interest in the information this survey is providing."

Of the local issues, 90% supported more community police officers and 83% wanted to prevent people parking on grass verges. the following are the top items of importance which were raised.

Pam Bryant said several of these concerns, such as crime, vandalism and litter, were already being tackled by the Conservatives.



Pam Bryant: 'We'll pass concerns to your MP.'



Big shake-up in social services

THE BIGGEST reform of services for children and adults in years is being undertaken by Hampshire County Council in response to the Children Act 2004.

It aims to ensure all children have the chance to fulfil their potential by reducing abuse and neglect, improving educational attainment, and cutting crime and anti-social behaviour.

Councils must meet their educational and social care needs and lead work with other agencies. All local authorities must establish a post of Director of Children's Services by 2008.

The new Act follows proposals in the Green Paper 'Every Child Matters'. Lord Laming's inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié highlighted several areas where agencies needed effective ways to work together.

In Hampshire, the Education and Social Services departments will be replaced by two new departments - Children's Services and Adult Social Services - from 2006.

Hampshire has a population of 1.25 mil-

lion and over 500,000 households. The council looks after 539 schools and educates more than 170,000 children aged 3-18.

The Director of Children's Services will be responsible for 23,000 employees, including 20,000 school staff.

The Director of Adult Social Services will oversee 2,600 staff providing residential day care and home care services to older people and people with disabilities and mental health problems.

The council helps more than 78,000 adults and older people each year, including support for 3,500 living independently and those in its 26 residential care homes.

Ten new nursing homes providing care for 500 older people will be open by the end of 2005 thanks to a partnership between the council and the National Health Service. Nearly 1,000 people with mental health problems receive care.

County Council Chairman Councillor John Bryant said: "Preventative and better integrated services for children are paramount as is maintaining the independence of adults and older persons."

John gets to grips with a Thorni problem



Councillor John Bryant points out the poor state of the kerb in Thorni Avenue, which residents brought to his attention

HAMPSHIRE County Council is reconstructing Thorni Avenue and Cort Way footways in an on-going programme of path maintenance across Fareham.

Occupiers of adjoining properties have been offered a reduced rate and the opportunity to widen existing vehicle crossings or the provision of new crossing during the work, due to begin at the end of March and last four weeks.

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.

ANY PROBLEMS? WE'RE HERE TO HELP

Please write the details here and give the exact location

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Your name

Address

..... Postcode.....

Tel Email

Please cut this out and post it or email or phone your councillors who are listed here.

WARD COUNCILLORS

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Your man in Westminster



By
Mark Hoban
MP for Fareham

Under Mr Blair's Government, council tax bills have gone through the roof. Pensioners, on fixed incomes, have been hit the hardest by this stealth tax, with the hike in council tax snatching back over a third of the increase in the basic state pension for a typical pensioner. To make matters worse, if it keeps going up at the current rate, experts predict bills will hit £2,000 for the typical household if Mr Blair wins a third term in power.

I believe that increasing taxes for people who cannot afford to pay is unfair. It is unfair to people who have worked hard, always played by the rules and dutifully paid their taxes on time. Pensioners deserve to live with dignity and security when they retire.

That's why a Conservative Government will introduce an automatic discount on council tax bills for pensioners over 65 - in addition to the existing single person's discount. We will halve council tax bills both for single pensioners over the age of 65 and for pensioner couples where both people are over 65, up to a maximum £500 discount per bill. This will cut typical Band D bills in Fareham by £500.00 for a pensioner couple. We will fund this tax cut by cutting waste and bureaucracy across government, so your frontline local services will still receive the support they deserve.

This commitment is just one part of our Action Plan for pensioners. We are also committed to increasing the state pension in line with earnings, not prices, providing an extra £7 a week for single pensioners and £11 a week for couples over and above inflation by the end of our first term.

Our plans will lift the council tax burden from hard-pressed local people, helping those who have been hit hardest by Labour's tax increases.

•You may contact Mark via his office
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Telephone: 01329 233573
email: mail@markhoban.com

Prescott's message to travellers and gypsies...

Carry on camping

NEVER mind the filth and damage they leave behind, travellers will be able to defy local planners and set up permanent camps in the countryside if the Deputy Prime Minister gets his way.

In yet another move to undermine the powers of local councils, John Prescott proposes a series of modifications to planning laws to give itinerant advantageous approvals for developments.



Devastation: This is how travellers left the Lysses site.

The idea will outrage council taxpayers, who already have to foot hefty legal bills for eviction orders to get rid of travellers and clear up their mess.

Mr Prescott intends to impose a duty on councils to provide transit facilities.

If they do not, then they will have no legal right to move on those who park illegally.

Councillor Brian Bayford said: "Your councillors acknowledge that there is a great difference between the true 'Romany' gypsy, who has been a feature of our culture for centuries, and the 'drop out travellers' who cause significant damage wherever they stop.

"There are some permanent gypsy sites

in Fareham that cause no problems. However, residents will be aware of the council's constant vigilance against incursions by travellers and the cost to council tax payers of clearing the damage.

"Fareham Council has expressed its grave concern to the Deputy Prime Minister that the proposals define a system that discriminates against the majority of citizens who live settled lives in their communities and pay income and council taxes."

He added: "Any proposal that allows different beneficial rules to apply to minority groups at the expense of the majority is unacceptable."

Good on yer, Connie! Litter campaign from Oz should be tried in Britain

DON'T be a chucker!

"Australian, and probably one of the best captions promoting a responsible attitude to litter disposal that I have seen," says Councillor Mrs Connie Hockley.

Anybody visiting Australia will see these signs at road junctions and along the highways.

"The marvellous thing about them is that they have actually worked.

"While there are still idiots who throw anything out of the car window, the signs have reduced the overall incidence of litter loutish behaviour substantially.

"Why can't it work here?" asks Mrs Hockley.

There were 543 incidents of illegally dumped waste

recorded in Fareham between April 2004 and January 2005.

Disposing of fly-tipped rubbish could cost council tax payers over £19,000.

She said:

"Who hasn't despaired at the amount of discarded rubbish that accrues at motorway slip roads leading into our towns?"

"Who among us are socially irresponsible and continue to be a chucker? Take it home and dispose of it properly!"

Britain should follow the Aussies' example and place signs on highways and shop-



Connie Hockley: 'Don't be a chucker.'

ping areas reminding people to dispose of rubbish in a responsible way.

She added: "It's largely an education problem and one that must be made to work before we flounder under a

mountain of bottles, cartons, cigarette packets and other rubbish that blights our communities."

•If you see anyone fly-tipping, call the council's enforcement team on 01329 236100 or email waste@fareham.gov.uk