



In Touch

with our community

FAREHAM SOUTH – 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

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).

appeal.

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

...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

Shrub bed

Apologies to St John's Church on the junction of St Michael's Grove and Redlands Lane regarding an article in the summer edition concerning the shrub bed outside the church.

It gave the impression that the church authorities were unsure of the ownership and responsibility as to the upkeep of the shrub bed.

Ownership has now been established and the church was correct in insisting it was not theirs.

Meantime, Hampshire Highways are scheduling for the bed to be treated with a suitable weedkiller to allow the grass to grow. This will be monitored by your local councillors.

Planning changes

The Government has changed planning rules making it easier for people to make changes to their property by building extensions, erecting garages or sheds etc.

From October 1, many changes no longer require planning permission.

For example, you may now be able to build a two-storey extension on the back of your house without planning permission provided it meets certain guidelines.

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 from other wards.

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.

Murals will brighten Broadlaw Walk rebuild

YOUNG ARTISTS are being encouraged to brighten up hoardings during demolition and reconstruction of Broadlaw Walk, due to start in spring 2009.

A project known as the Broadlaw Walk Community Mural has been launched and Fareham Council is granting £6,053 from the Neighbourhood Initiative Fund towards it.

The idea is to help 'soften' the area around the site and to make it look more congenial and less of an eyesore.

The community, espe-

cially younger and older residents, will be involved to create a mural on the hoardings around the shopping centre, which will include a community facility.

Councillor Dennis Steadman hopes it will minimise graffiti and vandalism to the area and help create a sense of ownership and ensure the community facilities are well used.

Portsmouth Housing Association (PHA) and the Hampshire County Council Youth Team will work with the communi-

ty to paint 20 panels over eight days and an artist will be present to help. The PHA and Fareham Youth Team will fund workers and support the initial outreach work.

Councillor Steadman, who acknowledged Fareham Council's contribution, added: "This is really a brilliant idea.

"Portsmouth Housing Association has again shown a sense of sharing with residents' ideas that complement the survey that was organised by them and supported by local people."

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

GOOD NEWS for motorists. There will be less chance of breaking an axle on Hampshire's roads.

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.

Queen's Awards

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 or phone 020 7781 2397



Brian's plan to cut off hooligans' ammo supply

STONE-throwing jobs have been terrorising a Redlands Lane neighbourhood.

But a resident came up with a plan to cut their supply of ammo.

Residents petitioned ward Councillor Dennis Steadman to find a solution to stop the jobs picking up loose stones from the footpath leading into Cams Alders and throwing them at windows.

Mr Brian Didymus, whose home at 154 Redlands Lane was targeted, suggested the path should be cleared of loose stones and the surface tarmaced.

Not only would it make it easier for older residents to have better access to Cams, but also make the collecting of ammunition by the jobs very difficult, if not impossible.

Highways agreed to carry out the work within the next two months.

Councillor Steadman said: "Well done Brian!"

Big road and path repair scheme brings relief to South Ward streets

ROAD and footpath reconstruction and resurfacing was being carried out at various locations in South Fareham.

Requests from Councillors Dennis Steadman and Trevor Howard for improvements to be made have now come to fruition or will be completed within the next few weeks.

Roads in question are the footway resurfacing of Westley Grove and Longfield Avenue in the August/September period; Alexander Grove with the complete road being resurfaced shortly after the resurfacing of the inner footpath.

Long-suffering residents of Holmfield Avenue and Eastfield Avenue, who have experienced problems with the road surface, will have carriageway resurfacing and reconstitution work carried out during October.

The west side of Longfield Avenue was also due to have some footway resurfacing in September.

Councillor Dennis Steadman met the chief engineer of Hampshire Highways and our County Councillor, Ray Ellis, on October 3 to discuss the Mill

Road/Redlands Lane/St Michael's Grove area.

Residents have requested the installation of road signs directing the heavy goods away from the Redlands Lane/Mill Road bridge under which large vehicles are unable to pass.

They then have to reverse along Redlands Lane causing damage to grass verges and creating a nuisance by use of their reversing alarms, sometimes late into the evening.

The speed of some traffic using Mill Road (around 2,000 vehicles in a 24-hour period) as a through route, plus the problem of the Mill Road bridge was discussed and signage for a slow and a two-way traffic sign was requested by Councillor Steadman.

He said: "Sadly this cannot be implemented as the highway regulations say that as the road has street lighting and a broken centre line along its length, then it conforms with regulations indicating that it is a two-way road with a 30 mph limit."

In any case, the Government says less signage should be the order of the day rather than more.

Councillors' tour reveals few problems

WARD Councillors Trevor Howard and Dennis Steadman, with housing officers and representatives of the Tenants' Forum, toured Bishopsfield Road flats and surrounding areas to investigate residents' concerns.

The area was found to be clean, tidy and of a reasonable standard, recently improved by resurfacing of the footpath on the west side.

Councillor Howard said: "The woodland area behind the flats looked really nice and residents deserve to have such an area like that."

"The only fears one would have would be the spoiling of it by the job element."

Demand to scrap the volunteer driver 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.

County Councillor Ray Ellis was

particularly concerned about the 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.

FAREHAM SOUTH 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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Our 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.

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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.

"The cost over the first four months suggests



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

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 reassess 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.

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