



Conservatives

In Touch

with our community

FAREHAM SOUTH – 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

New kerbs

Dropped kerbs have been installed in Mill Road so persons in wheelchairs and pram pushing mums have a more comfortable journey along Mill Road onto the new widened footpath along Gosport Road to the flyover.

Councillor Dennis Steadman commented: "Should residents know of other areas where difficulty is being experienced please contact either Trevor Howard or myself and we will follow it up."

CATs can help

Got an issue you want to get off your chest?

Why not come along to the next Community Action Team (CAT) meeting?

Their purpose is to enable the public to raise issues of concern. Council officers and Police representatives will be there to deal with matters requested at the previous meeting.

The team tries to answer questions and if necessary forward an answer or give it at the next meeting.

Dates of the next meetings will be announced.

Still top

Fareham stays top of Hampshire's recycling league with the most recent figure at 46.2%.

Contamination of recycling has reduced from 19.9% to 7.4% due to a major advisory campaign.

Fareham collects only material for which there is an acceptable recycling market in the UK. All other waste goes to the Portsmouth incinerator.

Rugby club wins cash put-in for level playing fields at Cams Alders



Nice try: Dennis Steadman is pitching in to get a level playing field for Fareham Heathens RFC.

A BIG cash injection will give local rugby players better playing surfaces at their ground.

Fareham Council's Executive Committee was requested make a contribution to offset the cost of drainage improvements at Cams

Alders recreation ground.

The southern side of the ground contains a pavilion and includes two rugby pitches and a cricket wicket with a shared outfield and is leased by Fareham Heathens Rugby Club.

The rugby pitches suffer from poor drainage which results in them having to cancel many fixtures, thus reducing opportunities for younger people being able to participate in physical activity.

There would be an opportunity to install a drainage system on either one or both rugby pitches in conjunction with the rugby club and the Rugby Football Union.

The Council was asked for up to £30,000 from developers' contributions towards an estimated total cost of £100,000 to install drainage on two pitches, or £20,000 should the club receive sufficient funding for one pitch.

The project aims to increase the number of fixtures played and participation in rugby and provide a level playing surface to reduce the risk of injuries. Councillor Dennis Steadman commented:

"It makes a pleasant change for another sport to be recognised and assisted, other than football and the cricket fans will also benefit."

The Executive agreed subject to conditions.

This is what you get by crossing a pelican with a puffin...



THE PELICAN crossing on the A32 Gosport Road (opposite Earls Road) was converted into a Puffin crossing under a scheme funded by Hampshire County Council at a cost of about £15,500.

The works included the refurbishment of a traffic signal controlled crossing for pedestrians with guard rail, with new kerbing, footway, tactile paving and anti-skid surfacing.

The work was carried out at off-peak times and, although some inconvenience was caused to traffic,

However, the contractor tried very hard to keep it to a minimum and overall made an excellent showing.

Councillor Dennis Steadman stated: "As a member of the Fareham Road Safety Committee I really welcome this addition to the safety of pedestrians, particularly the young and elderly, and I am sure that it will be appreciated."

Meanwhile, a plea by Councillor Trevor Howard for a school crossing in Bishopsfield Road, between Longmynd Drive and St Jude's School, has been rejected by Hampshire Highways on the grounds there is no justification at present.

"However, we are lucky to have a good lollypop man in attendance between Berwyn Walk and the school," he said.

Tree nuisance, missing ramps – just a couple of local problems happily resolved by Trevor Howard

1 THERE has been an ongoing problem with trees overlooking houses in Highfield Avenue.

Councillor Trevor Howard looked into the matter and believed it had been dealt with after the trees were topped.

"We now have the same problem and as soon as it was reported to me I contacted the County Council arborist.

"He and I will be making a tour of the area to see what can be done.

"When we had this problem in 2004 it was at first thought the school on whose premises the trees stand should pay for the work, but they had a very limited budget."

It then went to County Council and some time elapsed before the work was done.

"This time I will do my utmost to ensure that the work will be carried out at an early date," he promised.

2 RAPID response to requests by Councillor Trevor Howard for access ramps on a West End estate has been welcomed.

Councillor Howard received a letter from a resident informing him there were no ramps on either side of Holmeville Avenue, making access for wheelchair users and others wanting to walk down Longfield Avenue difficult.

"I immediately contacted the Highways Department at Fareham Council and was delighted to receive a return call on the same day to the effect that the work would be carried out within a month or so," he said.

The Highways Department surveyed the site in record time and the work was completed in February. Had other works involving gas and electricity supplies not taken precedence, the ramps would have been in place much earlier.



County rules out call for Mill Road speed limit

MILL ROAD residents are concerned about speeding.

A survey and monitoring operation was carried out by the Highways Authority and the Police.

Residents would have noticed a speed data box on one of the lighting columns in Mill Road that had been strategically placed to monitor vehicle speeds.

Vehicles passing along Mill Road, measured between November 8-14 totalled an amazing 2,500 per day.

However, the County Council no longer assesses speed data by the 85%ile speed as they did in the past.

Councillor Dennis Steadman said: "It is now common practice to use the mean average speed and sadly the County feel that is little justification for introducing speed measures.

"I am disappointed at the results but I shall keep the situation monitored"

Young bowlers pin their hopes on council grant

FAREHAM Young Bowlers have asked for a grant of £250 towards coach hire so they can enter a national competition in Cheltenham.

Total cost is £440, the club funding the rest by sponsored events and raffles.

The 10 pin bowling club for the under 18s offers coaching and opportunities to compete in national competitions

Councillors Trevor Howard and Dennis Steadman are supporting the application, which was being discussed and hopefully approved by the Executive Committee on March 10.

Time to close gap between young and old, says Tom

THE STIGMA between young and old must be overcome to create a better society

Fareham South member of the Conservative Party Tom Fyfe told Fareham Youth Council's third annual conference: "Politicians emphasise the need for respect, with the main idea of 'respect your elders'; however, we should not forget respect is a two way process."

Theme of the conference was stereotyping of all age groups and at the end groups demonstrated their findings in different ways, ranging from drama to speeches.

The 20-year-old undergraduate was given the task to make an off-the-cuff speech, which focused on the gulf between young and old.

He said: "Often all young people are grouped together in the same negative category; because the actions of the minority affect the majority.

"One good example of this came from a working group that said 'a lot of shops only allow one student in at a

time because they think we will all steal'. This, of course, is sheer nonsense as most people in society are law abiding."

"For respect to work, maybe it should come from the older generation to the younger first. I know some readers will react with displeasure to this notion, but it is a lot easier than most people think.

"There is a common conception among the youth that we are ignored in decision making mainly because under 18s do not have the vote, therefore there is no need to consult them, even on issues directly affecting them.

"The older generation makes today's decisions, whilst the young make tomorrow's decisions; would it not be better to work together today, and make tomorrow better for us all?"

Councillor Dennis Steadman commented: "I find Tom's comments interesting but not surprising. Sadly, there is a deep chasm between the older and the younger generations that appears to be unsolvable."

Shutting the cage to stop falling balls hazard

YOUNGSTERS using the Crossfell Walk play area may be fully 'caged'.

Footballs have been booted over the sides of the present four-sided cage and councillors are worried a pedestrian might be injured.

The school suggested 'roofing' the cage with a net to keep the balls in the play area.

Some form of lighting could also be installed on a time control allowing the youngsters to use the cage safely but switching off at a reasonable time in the evening.

Ward Councillors Dennis Steadman and Trevor Howard agreed to play ball and will put the ideas to the Executive Member for Community, Councillor Mrs Connie Hockley, for committee consideration and, if successful, to the Council Executive for final approval.

The police have given it their backing.

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

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.

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