

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

Redlands Lane

Repairs and upgrading to the highway between Chamberlain Grove and the railway bridge in Redlands Lane have at last been carried out.

This part of the road has suffered from flooding and a faulty road surface, causing on-going problems.

Work was carried out in December 2008 with enhanced drainage, and a new road surface should eradicate future problems.

Fayre Road

Due to the poor quality of the road surface in Fayre Road, Councillor Dennis Steadman has asked Hampshire Highways to pay for it to be resurfaced.

An inspection was carried out by Highways who agreed to apply for resurfacing under a Special Maintenance Order.

Details will be published when available.

Cash awards

County Councillor John Bryant has allocated the following from the £10,000 local projects kitty:

Friends of Henry Cort School: £5,000 towards a project manager to enhance the community, extend service programmes and develop relationships with local organisations.

1st Fareham Scout Group: £3,500 towards the renovation of their scout hut.

Wallisdean Infants Friends' Association: £1,500 towards improving the ICT suite which will also be used by the After School Club and to help early year parents.

Renewed mast threat to Lady Hamilton's home

ANOTHER bid to erect a mobile phone mast has surfaced near the house where Lord Nelson's paramour Lady Hamilton was reputed to have lived.

Councillor Dennis Steadman warned residents that Waldon Telecom was proposing a G3 mast near historic Town Quay House at the Gosport Road-Mill Road junction, despite repeated refusals.

He said there had been 12 sites surveyed by O2, with eight being refused by owners or leasehold-

ers and four being rejected by the Council's planners. One went to appeal where it was also rejected.

"With O2's previous attempts to force this on the area, residents have in the past couple of years been subjected to genuine concerns about the health hazard and the environmental effect.

"We will resist all attempts to have



Threatened Listed Town Quay House

Fareham South used as a dumping ground as it has been in the past.

"We have had to suffer other incursions into our lives but this latest attempt must be dispatched into the rubbish bin where it belongs."

Cash bonanza aid to finance play area for deprived estate

A DEPRIVED area of South Ward is poised for a big share of government cash to provide a new play area.

Crossfell Walk, off Bishopsfield Road, has been chosen as one of two parts of the Borough to receive £50,000 towards the development under the Playbuilder Funding scheme.

It came about after the County Council was awarded £1,150,927 capital funding and £45,581 revenue funding from the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) to develop several play areas in Hampshire as part of a three-year programme up to 2011.

Each council has produced a play strategy in the last two years to meet requirements and make submissions to the Big Lottery Fund.

In July 2008, Fareham Council expressed interest for Playbuilder Funding to support the development of new and improved play areas, one being for Crossfell Walk.

Councillor Dennis Steadman hopes that half the total funding of £100,000 will go to Crossfell Walk in 2010/11, with the local community being consulted during development.

He said: "This is wonderful news. Fareham South is improving slowly and I will try to see that it continues."

Rest assured he'll get to the seat of the matter

A REQUEST to replace a shabby seat at the corner of Belvoir Close and Gosport Road is being pursued by Councillor Dennis Steadman.

A resident asked the Council in August 2008 to replace the bench seat which is popular with locals, particularly the elderly and infirm.

The seat has deteriorated over the years and has become very uninviting to use.

Councillor Steadman said: "Hopefully the replacement will be of the vandal resistant type that is used in West Street, but the cost of the seat and installation might well exceed £1,000.

"I feel that the money will be well spent; we do not have many luxuries in the Fareham South area but with projects such as this and others that have



already put into being we are steadily making progress in the enhancement of our ward."

•Pictured (left to right) local residents Miss Charlene Newton (left), Mrs Michaela Beton and Mr John Squibb are looking forward to sitting more comfortably when the new seat arrives.

Community involvement in Broadlaw Walk revamp

ASK any resident and they will tell you most of the problems in their community and they would probably be able to offer some solutions, too.

Portsmouth Housing Association (PHA), working with the Borough Council, did just that and put the community at the heart of regenerating run-down Broadlaw Walk.

Built in the 1960s, Broadlaw Walk provided the Fareham South community with a mixture of retail, office and residential units.

However, over recent years the centre declined and saw an increase in anti-social behaviour, crime and drugs abuse.

Councillor Trevor Howard said residents rose to the challenge when PHA gave them a chance to have a say on the future of the area.

Over 200 people turned out to give their views and help shape the design of the project, which now has full planning consent for 6 new retail units and a community facility with 56 two-bedroom flats.

A convenience store is moving into three of the new units and will continue to provide a post office, while the existing Chinese and Indian restaurants are each expected to take one of the new units and Lloyds Pharmacy is moving to its new premises in Mitre Court.

Although work is under way to prepare the site, details on the landscaping have not yet been finalised.

PHA will again consult the community about this and invite residents to have their say.

Government cuts put verge parking law on pause

COST cutting by the Government means a by-law to stop indiscriminate parking on grass verges in Fareham South Ward will not happen this financial year.

Councillor Dennis Steadman said the long awaited Traffic Regulation Order would be put on hold by Hampshire Highways due to lack of funding from the Government.

"I put in a request to have the Road Traffic Order in 2000 when I was first elected as my predecessor had not submitted any application for a RTO, putting us at the back of the queue.

"I am really dismayed as we have been waiting all these years and are then told we have to wait until next year.

"Many roads need the regulation to stop indiscriminate verge parking, but I will keep pressing," he said.

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 needed 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.

Councillor Dennis Steadman said: "A faster, cleaner bus service would be provided, pollution levels would be lessened by using the disused railway line, resulting in taking many of the older higher 'emissions' buses off of the road

and easing congestion."

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. A decision is due this month.

Councillor Steadman said many residents living near the old track were concerned about security of property, noise levels, pollution etc, all of which were addressed at the exhibitions held in the Bridgemarky 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.

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

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.

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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."

In Touch is published by Fareham South Conservatives, 77 Mill Road, Fareham PO16 0TP and printed by Bishops Printers Limited, Fitzherbert Road, Farlington, Portsmouth PO6 1RU.