



In Touch

with our community

FAREHAM SOUTH & EAST – 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 resi-



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.

dents' requests 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

Course cuts

Elderly people are finding it hard to continue studying non-vocational subjects by part-time classes due to the withdrawal of Government funding.

County Councillor Ray Ellis said the classes were important to maintain the mental and physical well being of the elderly. "We must campaign to reinstate them," he said.

Disabled access

The right of way around the Cams Hall site, which has been a problem in an application for lottery funding for improvement and disabled access along the creek to Portchester, should be resolved soon.

It will open up a long scenic rural route for wheelchair users and provide shorter circular routes.

Village stalwart dies

Betty Myers, secretary of the Wallington Village Association, has died.

Betty's enthusiasm and hard work over many years helped to keep the WVA as an active community association. She will be greatly missed and very hard to replace.

Wallington issues

Councillors promised villagers they would pursue several issues raised at the annual meeting.

These included parking, the river bridge and flooding, litter, lack of police, housing densities, recycling, refuse collection and health services.

It's Howard's way of dealing with your problems

TREVOR Howard has been busy knocking on doors in South Ward over the past few weeks, talking to residents about their concerns.

His tour of inspection revealed several problems which he has been trying to sort out, with some success.

Problems included car parking, street lighting, complaints about rubbish bins, water-logging at Cams Hall field, missing name plates and broken seat in Carron Walk, tree stumps in Chiltern Walk and green areas around paths.

Councillor Howard said: "I have been to see all the relative

departments and raised your concerns with the council officers.

"All the issues are being looked into and they will report back to me when they have the answers.

"Some of the problems lie with Hampshire County Council Highways Department, some with the police and other departments."

He assured residents he would do everything possible to help, adding:

"I will be in touch with those who have expressed concerns privately as soon as the replies come in."



Trevor Howard: "I'll do everything possible to help."

New hostel shows Fareham cares for single homeless

FAREHAM'S action plan to prevent families becoming homeless is an on-going success.

Last year, the council was able to report none was in bed and breakfast accommodation.

The situation has been maintained this year. In recent months, the number of applications has fallen, despite an increase in the total number of customers approaching the service for housing advice.

In the 12 months to December 2004, applications dropped from 450 to 269.

The plan aims to prevent families from becoming homeless.

Although the Government's target focuses very much on homeless families, Fareham has not lost sight of the needs of single homeless, for whom a 16-bed hostel, funded by Hampshire Social Services, has been running in Gosport Road since November.

Residents proudly showed guests around when

the hostel was officially launched on February 21 with the Atlantic Housing Group, Two Saints Housing, Fareham Housing Department, the executive member for housing with officers and members of associated housing bodies.

Councillor Dennis Steadman said: "The hostel is designed to give these people understanding and further education to allow them another chance to come back into society."

Hostel users have to sign an agreement to abide by the rules and are subject to restrictions.

The progress of the hostel is monitored by a local liaison committee and regular informal meetings are held between Councillor Steadman and the manager, Mr David Joyce.

The hostel is manned 24 hours a day and local residents can go there any time to discuss problems with the manager.

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 administered 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.

Watchdog reveals £70m health overspend

LOCALhealth economy is over-spent by £70 million and this is likely to increase because of new consultant and GP contracts, European working hour directives and different delivery of "out of hours service".

County Councillor Dr Ray Ellis said funding for the NHS was insufficient to maintain it at current levels.

Councillor Ellis, who chairs the Joint Health Scrutiny Committee (Hampshire, Portsmouth, Southampton and IOW), said he had made the strongest protest to the Strategic Health Authority about the latest proposals to delay Fareham's community hospital until 2010 and closures of facilities in other areas.

"We need to make sure that the money provided to the service is used wisely and to promote better front line services, not more bureaucracy," he said.

There was good news, too. Nursing home beds jointly paid for by the



Doctor's prescription: Eating and exercise have a major role to play in keeping people fit and County Councillor Dr Ray Ellis has helped to arouse interest in children by taking them on mountain walks. Photo shows a group of primary school children at the top of Pen y Fan in the Brecon Beacons.

County Council and Fareham and Gosport Primary Care Trust have been provided at Cold East, where the 80 bedrooms offering the most up-to-date facilities and state-of-the-art baths for the handicapped were due to be

opened on March 9.

Dr Ellis stressed the role of scrutiny bodies in maintaining the frontline health service and said Hampshire's contribution had been highlighted at a recent national conference.

FAREHAM SOUTH & EAST 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

.....

Your name
 Address
 Postcode.....
 Tel Email

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

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Our 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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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.

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



Devastation: This is how travellers left the Lysses site.

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

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