

FAREHAM WEST WARD

MARCH 2007

**4th year in succession
BELOW INFLATION
Council Tax Rise for
FAREHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL**

With inflation at 4.4%
it's just

3%

£132.57

Band D

**STOP
PRESS!**

Delight as

**DEBENHAMS
DESIRE
SIGNS UP
TO
FAREHAM
SHOPPING CENTRE**

**DISABLED
TO PAY?**

**NO
WAY**

Clear statement
by Council
Leader

**We keep in
Touch
All year round
Not just at
Election time!**

**SERVICES
FOR
FAREHAM'S
NEW HOSPITAL**

Full details and reports on these items on Pages Two,
Three & Four.

Fareham Borough Council sets one of the lowest district council taxes in England - just 3%

For the fourth year in succession the council tax increases will be below the rate of inflation, at just 3%. For a Band D property the tax will be £132.57, in real terms 1p. per day over last year.

At a Special Meeting of the Council on 22nd February, Executive Leader Cllr. Sean Woodward gave his eight "State of the Borough" speech lasting almost an hour, outlining the achievements of last year, our aims and objectives and targets for the coming year, together with comprehensive details of our Capital and Revenue Budgets.

"For the fourth year in a row the council tax increase will be below the rate of inflation so I think we can safely say that **delivering more for less is the Conservatives 'forte'**!"

"The budget for 2007/8 again represents a major achievement in terms of finance strategy and budgetary control but in order to ensure that we can score the fifth goal as well as achieving the budgets projected for future years and to implement the priority actions, more savings, innovations and income must be identified."

But of course Fareham Council's share of the bill is a small part of the story and we set out below table showing the increases set by the other three authorities which make up our bills.

The overall position for Fareham's Band D tax payers will be:

	Council Tax	Increase
	£	%
Fareham Borough Council	132.57	+ 3.00
Hampshire County Council	955.62	+ 4.94
Hampshire Fire & Rescue	56.07	+ 4.53
Hampshire Police	125.37	+ 4.97
TOTAL	<u>1,269.63</u>	+ 4.72

Councillor Diana Harrison comments:

"If Fareham Borough Council can achieve under-inflation increases, despite ever-decreasing Government support funding, still continue to deliver some of the best performing services in the country yet demand one of the lowest council taxes from our residents, why can't the County Council. It is a real worry to so many that the authority with by far the lion's share of our bills, keeps compounding up year on year with such large increases, an unavoidable tax on our income already net of income tax. Where will it all end? I am just asking the question that so many of Fareham West residents ask Leslie and me."

With a wry smile she added— "As the collecting authority, it is usually us Borough Ward Councillors who take the 'flak' May I suggest that this year they ring their County Councillors for an explanation?"

If you would be interested to read Cllr. Woodward's address in full —there is so much interesting information in it—log on to www.farehamconservatives.org.uk - click on Below inflation Council Tax Rise for Fareham, and click the word here at the end of the last sentence of Cllr. Woodward's press release. In the meantime, see the comment by Mark Hoban MP on Page Four.

PLEASE NOTE - There are no elections in Fareham scheduled for this year. (just in case in April you wonder why you have not received a Polling Card when elections elsewhere are mentioned on TV or National Press).

Delight as Debenhams Desire signs up!

Fareham Borough Council is delighted to reveal that Debenhams Desire will be the newest addition to Fareham Shopping Centre.

Enabling work to create the two-storey retail outlet alongside Bhs at the shopping centre looks set to start within weeks. The store will bring 20,000 square feet of fresh new retailing to the town's main shopping area, along with a new, state-of-the-art multi-storey car park and three further units ranging from 1,000 to 6,000 square feet.

Executive Leader of Fareham Borough Council, Councillor Sean Woodward commented: "I am delighted that Debenhams Desire has signed up to Fareham Shopping Centre. We already have an excellent shopping selection in the town centre, but the addition of this store brings with it even more reasons for people to shop in Fareham.

"We will be working closely with the centre and developers to ensure that this exciting new outlet is open for business as soon as possible.

"In addition, I know that other retailers in the centre will be delighted by this news as fresh outlets bring new and repeat retail business."

West Ward Councillor Diana Harrison said "I couldn't be more delighted. Good though Fareham is for shopping, I have always felt that this was the one type of departmental store that was missing. My kind of retail therapy—I think I can hear my credit card groaning already."

Services agreed for Fareham's new hospital

AN AMBULANCE stand-by point may be provided at Fareham's new community hospital at Coldeast. Discussions are taking place with the Hampshire Ambulance Service for the inclusion of an ambulance bay and service from the site.

The Hospital Planning Group agreed the schedule of accommodation on January 5 after consulting local GPs. It is planned to provide:

- Large out-patient department replacing the Sylvan Clinic with 6 consulting suites and 2 suites for ante-natal clinics.
- 12 maternity beds including two delivery rooms to replace Blackbrook Maternity Home
- Rehabilitation department with 2 consulting rooms and 6 treatment cubicles to replace and enhance services at Highlands Road Clinic.
- 2 general-purpose diagnostic X-ray rooms and 2 ultra-sound units.
- Elderly assessment centre, with large treatment area and 2 consulting suites.
- Older persons' mental health day hospital with 2 consulting suites, treatment room, large sitting room and 2 activity rooms.
- There will be an out-of-hours & minor procedures facility serviced by GPs to save residents having to travel to Gosport or Southampton. It will include a pharmacy.

After speaking with Fareham's representative to the Primary Care Trust, Ward Councillor Leslie Keeble said Fareham would have the initial elements of a very comprehensive health service campus by 2010. However, the hospital will have only maternity beds. Beds for Fareham residents will be at Gosport War Memorial Hospital. This is because of a promise, made in 1998 by the NHS management to the residents of Gosport, that if the MoD left Haslar Hospital alternative facilities would be provided in Gosport."

Any questions or query ring Cllr. Leslie Keeble on 845339.

DISABLED TO PAY FOR PARKING NO WAY!

At the Council meeting on 15th February, the Executive Leader categorically stated that no member of the Executive nor of the Conservative members would agree the option of charging the disabled for parking as had been falsely reported in the local press.

Each year the Council has an obligation to review the level of parking charges, together with arrangements for parking on Sundays, Bank Holidays and in evenings together with disabled parking. The outcome of the recent consultation exercise would be reported to the April meeting of the Executive.

WARD NEWS

Basil Baird has for several years held the funfair on a 500-acre farm at Peak Lane, Stubbington. But in April last year several neighbours complained about the noise stemming from it. Fareham Borough Council was going to prosecute but dropped the case when Mr. Baird agreed not to hold future funfairs.

Although the farmland is in Stubbington, most complaints came from Fareham West Ward. Ward Councillors Leslie Keeble and Di Harrison had quite a lot of complaints from residents about the noise and can imagine they will be very pleased. This extra peace and quiet, together with the removal of the glass recycle bins and illegal car sales on the corner of Rowan Way, will be welcomed by residents in that part of our Ward.

FAREHAM PROBUS asked if we would accept an advert inviting new members to join their gentlemen's club. Whilst we do not accept advertisements of any kind for this newsletter, we are happy to give a non political, no religious affiliation social club a mention.

Space in this issue is at a premium, but briefly this club is for retired business & professional people over 50 who reside within Fareham. Meets 2nd Tues. of each month at Cams Hall Golf Club for luncheon & guest speaker, they have a maximum of 50 members with a few vacancies at this time. Once a year a ladies day where wives & partners are invited. Minimal joining fee of £5. Yearly sub is £10, dining fee at present £11.

Interested eligible persons contact Vic Tarry on 01329 822919 or by e-mail at victarry@aol.com for application form.

It is Council Tax time again. Whilst national newspapers report inflation-busting increases, it is good to see Fareham Borough Council coming in with an increase below inflation for the fourth year running despite low Government grant support.

A combination of low Government grant increases and increased pressures on budgets means that Hampshire County Council has increased its council tax ahead of inflation.

The Government increased its grant to Hampshire by 2.7%, which is **the lowest possible increase** and this has been the case for the last few years. In 2007/8 HCC will receive a grant of £96 per resident compared to the national average of £160. As a consequence where there are increased pressures on budgets, savings have to be found elsewhere or the council taxpayer foots the bill.

There has been a great deal of debate over the last few months about how the County balances its books. We need to remember that because of an aging population and our success in improving the life chances of children born with complex medical needs, that there are pressures to increase spending on care. Because the County Council has to provide more and more of this care, if the Government grant does not match this increase in demand, then the council taxpayer has to foot the bill.

So the pressures are there to increase spending, but with the lowest possible government grant increase and a ceiling of 5% on council tax increases, it is clear that the only way the books can balance is to keep looking for savings. This is not easy but it is the only way that excellent councils such as Fareham and Hampshire can continue to deliver good services and good value for money.

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