



Conservatives

In Touch

with our community

FAREHAM EAST – WINTER 2010

Summer start for residents' town centre parking plan

THE LONG awaited parking scheme for residents living in and near Fareham's town centre should be in place this summer.

The Borough Council undertook two consultations to try to make it acceptable to most.

An exhibition in Ferneham Hall enabled residents to discuss the plans with officers and give feedback.

Changes were made and modified proposals were sent out for consultation in the autumn.

A street-by-street analysis allowed the scheme to be tailored to residents' preferences as far as possible, some roads having a permit system and others restrictions on when and where vehicles can park.

Existing schemes in King's Road and Queen's Road will be incorporated.

Arrangements will be made for essential services that have to visit in permit scheme roads and there will also be temporary parking permits for visitors.

It is hoped it will be running by the end of July, but the Council will review it during the first 6 months of operation.

County Councillor Ray Ellis said although the scheme must be self-financing, it was not intended to be a way for the council to raise money and permit costs would be kept as low as possible.

Council volunteers answer the call of the community



COUNCIL staff take a rest from clearing snow at the Rainbow Centre car park at Cams Alders.

'The Three Amigos' (l to r) Tony Hopkins, Paul Carter and Charlie Read gave up their lunch breaks to help centre staff and volunteers.

It was one of countless examples of how people across the Borough rallied in true community spirit.

County Council budget figures

Council tax for Hampshire County Council will be increased by 1.9%

Police Authority's tax will rise by 2.9% and the Fire Service's by 1.8% This gives a total bill for a band D property in Fareham of £1,385.73, an increase of £24.93.

Zero rated: Tories find the 'holy grail' of top value for lowest tax

HOW DO they keep doing it year after year?

Fareham's Tory councillors have set another record low budget.

This time a **Zero** rise.

The Borough Council's element at £140 for a Band D property remains almost the lowest in England.

Executive Leader Seán Woodward explained: "I am often asked how we achieve the holy grail of good services with a low council tax, despite a low government grant.

"My reply is always that we seek to do more with less, using innovative means to save money without damaging the frontline services on which our residents depend."

Delivering his 11th budget speech, he said the average property in Fareham was band C which would continue to pay just £125 a year.

Borough Council services cost only 34p per day per household.

"Contrast that with nearest neighbour Gosport, which charges 44% more than Fareham despite receiving double the grant per head from the government," he stated.

Several districts in Hampshire hide their council tax rises by passing services to parish councils to run, but Fareham cannot do that as it has no parishes.

Nearby parish councils, Whiteley for example,

have raised their tax by 250% in just 3 years.

"Most district councils receive far more in government revenue support grant per head of population than Fareham, yet we still have a low tax.

"Despite having a high tax rise, most are sacking staff and slashing services – we are maintaining and, in a number of cases, improving our services."

Pressures facing the Council are similar to those experienced by many families, but on a larger scale – costs rising and income not increasing or, in the case of interest on savings, actually dropping.

The fall in interest rates, while good news for those with mortgages, has seen the Council's income on its investments fall by up to £1,000,000 per year.

Every £40,000 lost equals around a 1% council tax increase to make up, so the fact that there is no increase is even more remarkable.

The Council agreed the following as part of the budget:

- £500,000 to a Matched Funding Account to which organisations in the Borough can bid to fund capital schemes. For every £1 of council taxpayers' cash, it means £2 to £3 of worthwhile schemes such as new school sports facilities, sports club houses etc.

CCTV upgrade means you WILL be caught on camera

THERE will be no escape for criminals captured on CCTV at Fareham's upgraded control centre.

Digital cameras and displays can record at up to 25 images per second; 12.5 is more than enough for

successful prosecutions.

Police at Fareham and Park Gate can log into the system to save time investigating incidents.

It features unique mapping and display of camera locations across the Borough. New keyboard and

joystick controls enable operators quickly to control cameras independently.

Extra cameras to be connected include 5 for the new rapid bus route, 2 for Broadlaw Walk and 2 for the Quay Street Tesco store.

We keep *In Touch* throughout the year - not just at election time



WARD NEWS BRIEFS

Cash for repairs

Home improvement grants of up to £5,000 are locally available for elderly and vulnerable people; these may be supplemented by interest free loans from Push 4 Safer Homes.

They are additional to Warm Front grants, which are available to replace heating systems and fit insulation.

Details available from www.push.gov.uk/4safer_homes or by calling 0800 519 1717.

Paedophile vetting

A new vetting system for people working with children could cost the County Council £6m.

Revised anti-paedophile rules could apply to thousands of staff whose police and employer records will be vetted

£200 to grass

Blow the whistle on housing cheats and earn yourself £200.

It's the reward for anybody who reports tenants illegally sub-letting council or housing association properties that are subsequently allocated to persons on the waiting list.

Fareham Council has received a £10,000 grant under the Government's scheme to crack down on the cheats.

Farm downloads

You can now download Hampshire Fare's 2010 directory containing details of your nearest farm shop and the dates of local farm markets from www.hampshirefare.co.uk.

John throws some light on 'new lamps for old' project



WORK to replace and maintain 250,000 streetlights across Hampshire is at last a step nearer.

A five-year private finance initiative will be carried out by Southern Electric Contracting. All lighting columns over 15 years old – about 150,000 in total – and all lanterns will be replaced by new high efficiency units.

Focus for the following 20 years will be on maintaining and operating the new lights to a high standard.

County Councillor John Bryant

said: "I hope that once the project is up and running many areas in Fareham Town Division will be upgraded within the next two years.

"I have been requesting new lighting in several roads for a considerable time and officers are aware of my requests for roads in Fareham North, which deserve to be at the top of their priority list.

"Unfortunately, other areas are considered worse than ours."

Photo: Don Smith shows John a rusty lamp post.

Hampshire wins 'excellent' rating for giving taxpayers value for money

TORY-RUN Hampshire County Council gives great value for money.

The Council was praised for excellent financial management that has kept council tax low and made savings to reinvest in improved services.

Hampshire is one of only three county councils in the country to score such a high rating.

The judgement is part of the new and more demanding Use of Resources assessment by the Audit Commission.

The audit highlighted the Council's 'innovative approach to securing value for money' and 'strong track record in delivering efficiency savings' - some £57m to date.

The result is backed by a County survey which showed 85% of residents satisfied or very satisfied with Hampshire as a place to live; just 4.4% feel education could be improved.

County Councillor Ray Ellis said: "We should be proud of all the hard work that staff in all our departments and our partners have done to ensure

Hampshire remains a great place to live and work.

"We have a strong local economy, which is holding up well in the recession with below average unemployment most residents are healthier than the average, and our communities feel relatively safe.

"The police and their partners have been successful in reducing the number of burglaries and boosting neighbourhood policing, but the level of violent crime is still too high."

Inspectors praised all the county services and noted how they were working together to address issues that are important for residents, such as cutting crime, achieving a robust local economy, a good education system, quality of the environment and health provision.

He added: "We face a challenge with diminishing government finance and rising numbers of older residents, so it's more necessary than ever to show we are giving the very best services with excellent value for money."

The facts on councillors' allowances and staff pay

COUNTY Council staff have been offered a zero pay rise for 2010 in response to a union claim for 2.5%.

Contrary to Press reports, the council's cabinet members declined a rise.

The Independent Review Panel recognised Hampshire cabinet members received less than comparable authorities, but they unanimously refused a 6% pa rise over the next three years.

Due to past actions councillors' allowances are at least £1,000 pa less than that recommended.

Under a standing agreement, rises in members' allowances should match any awarded to staff, but if a rise above 0% were agreed for staff, all members are likely to refuse in the present economic situation.

To avoid redundancies, a review of car mileage allowance and overtime is being discussed with staff.

Reductions in mileage allowance will apply equally to councillors.

'Ludicrous' 1.5 parking spaces rule dumped

NEW parking standards will be introduced for future housing developments in Fareham.

The Borough Council has got around the ludicrous figure of 1.5 spaces per household dictated by the Government.

It was a nightmare for planners who had to obey Whitehall rules for the past 10 years.

Government believed that by preventing people from parking at new

properties it would reduce car usage.

Like many Labour ideas it didn't work.

The Council tried to circumvent the rules by agreeing to use average parking across the borough to equal the target, allowing some flexibility.

But it still left new developments with insufficient parking.

As a result of the Local Development Framework process, Fareham was able to introduce new parking

standards for future developments, based on the number of bedrooms a property has, which is far more reasonable.

Garages, which tend to be used for storing anything but a car, will not normally count as a parking space.

County Councillor Ray Ellis said: "The Council can't do much about developments already approved and built, but this change does allow Fareham to get it right for the future."

County pays £800,000 to triple number of grit bins

MORE grit bins are on the way so communities can cope better with a future big freeze.

Hampshire County Council will spend £800,000 to triple the number to 6,000.

Sites will be agreed with local communities.

As the bins will not all be available immediately, difficult situations such as steep roads will receive top priority.

This will enable side roads and pavements to be treated and the role of volunteers such as neighbourhood watches will be crucial to successful clearance.

County Councillor Ray Ellis (Fareham Town) said the council was considering providing salt and grit for small shops and businesses.

Co-operation of the public in keeping salt supplies in the bins secure will be necessary to maintain availability.

Legal issues regarding public liability are being considered and the minister responsible has indicated it is unlikely anybody would be held responsible for injury if surfaces have received proper treatment.

Salt used during the big freeze cost the County over £1m.

£325,000 cash boost paves way for new Fareham council homes

FIVE new council homes can be built in the Borough thanks to a capital boost.

Fareham is one of 10 local authorities in the South East which has received capital match funding of £325,000 to build the homes for rent.

Following a comprehensive review of land in Fareham Council's ownership, five infill sites were identified for development and detailed resident consultation has taken place with immediate neighbours.

Planning applications will be submitted in the next few weeks.

Council Executive Leader Councillor Seán Woodward commented:

"We are delighted to have been successful in our bid for funding from the Homes and Communities Agency.

"We will now be able to build some of the most energy efficient homes in the Borough.

"The majority of the new homes will be two bedroom bungalows and we will be keen to see whether existing tenants in large 3 or 4-bedroom houses might be interested in downsizing."

Council scoops top IT award

HAMPSHIRE County Council scooped a first prize at the Real IT awards ceremony.

This is national recognition for its work to improve communication skills in local communities.

The awards recognise the best IT from public and private sector organisations.

The Council's prize came in the Corporate Social Responsibility category for its work enabling older people to make the most of the internet to improve the chances of job seekers.

The judges also commended learning skills for life, which helps towards social inclusion by delivering courses at libraries, schools and community centres.

School crossing wardens wanted

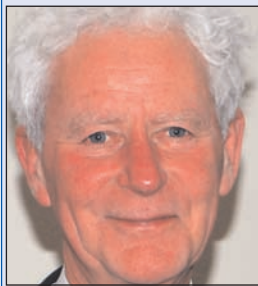
THE County Council has appealed for more lollypop people.

They are men and women who safely escort school children and parents across busy roads.

If you could give up a short time every school day to help, then please contact erniesage@hants.gov.uk

Pay is £7 an hour and you'll be given training and a uniform.

Former council leader joins ward action team



A FORMER leader of Fareham Borough Council, Peter Latham, has joined the Fareham East Ward action team.

Peter was a member

of the Council from 1982-1991 and leader from 1987-1991, when he retired to become Deputy Coroner for Portsmouth and South East Hampshire, a post he filled until 2003.

After an absence of 19 years, he would like the opportunity to go back and play an active part in Council decision making.

He said: "I imagine that much has changed and I will have much to learn, but that is a chal-

lenge which I look forward to."

A solicitor by profession, he has lived and practised in Fareham all his working life.

So Peter has a good knowledge of the issues that have affected the Borough over that period.

He added: "If elected to Fareham East Ward it will be a privilege to represent everyone and help with any Council problems anyone may have."

Youth orchestra performances win acclaim

YOUNG musicians have struck a chord with County Councillor Ray Ellis.

After listening to Fareham and Gosport Youth Orchestra's performance at St Peter's and St Paul's Church in December, he said:

"The performance was first class and the dedication of all the young musicians is to be highly commended.

"It's a pity the publication media doesn't praise the youth of today as much as it decries them.

"I also attended the Albert Hall to hear the Hampshire musicians at the Youth Prom – again a first class performance.

"It is important that we give as much support as possible to these events and to the performers."

FAREHAM 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 councillors.

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Our man in Westminster



By Mark Hoban MP for Fareham

I was talking to pupils at a couple of schools in Portchester recently about the need to get involved when you see something happening to a place or a service that matters to you.

It was a theme echoed by a couple I met from Locks Heath who asked me to support a campaign to protect children's services at Southampton General.

Change is one of the main reasons why people get involved in politics. It certainly motivated me to get involved when I was 16. It still drives me today.

As a politician, change can mean resolving a constituent's problem or persuading the Government to change tack.

After the longest and deepest recession since the 1920s, it is clear we cannot go on like this. The country needs so many changes to get back onto the right track.

When I talk to local businesses, they tell me they want interest rates to remain as low as possible as long as possible, but unless we reduce Government borrowing, this won't be possible. But Gordon Brown is fighting shy of making the difficult decisions that are needed to encourage economic recovery.

In the health service and in our schools, I hear examples of where staff are required to put into practice decisions made in Whitehall that don't meet the needs of local people. Shouldn't we be giving our doctors, nurses and teachers the authority to do the right thing for pupils and patients rather than be dictated to by Whitehall?

2010 is the start of a new decade. I feel that we have been stuck in a rut in the last few years. I believe that 2010 must be a year for change in our country. We cannot afford another wasted decade.

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Borough-wide community centre modernisation plans under way



Bath Lane, Fareham pavilion



Portchester Community Centre

PLANS to provide each of Fareham's neighbourhood areas with modern community facilities are under way.

Top of the list is Portchester Community Centre where options for raising the £1.7m cost are being considered, but others (some pictured) also need urgent attention.

The Council's policy objectives prioritised the need to review the use of its community buildings, rationalise their provision and, as appropriate, modernise them by 2012.

The review set out a longer-term, innovative approach to the provision of Council community-owned buildings, including sports pavilions and community centres.

The vision to provide a well-designed, modern community centre in each of the six neighbourhood Community Action Team areas was agreed by the Executive, which pledged £500,000 towards the initiative, plus £40,000 for a community buildings health and safety fund.



Osborne Road, Warsash officials' changing rooms (left) and players' changing rooms

A phased implementation



It's no bull – less spending reduces waste

HUNDREDS of empty coke cans went into making this life-size bull to beef up the recycling message.

But it's no bull that people are buying less in the recession, so they put less in their bins.

Fareham has seen a 5.5% reduction in green top bin waste and a 6% fall in blue top bin recyclables. But the Borough's recycling rate still reached 39.6% in October.



"An excellent figure and we aim to achieve the target for 2010 of 40%, although any continuation of reductions in total waste will make this a challenge," said Councillor Keith Evans, Executive Member for Streetscene.

Fareham is one of only three districts in Hampshire to provide free garden waste collection, although it had to be restricted to one bag per household.

One in four households generates more and they can buy disposable bags – £20 for a roll of 25 sacks or £5 for a roll of 5 – which will be collected with the green waste bags.

He added: "Fareham residents are among the best recyclers in the country. It's a good performance, but one we intend to improve

with advice and encouragement."

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