



# In Touch

with our community

LOCKS HEATH – AUTUMN 2008

## Hospital go-ahead after 25-year wait

But is the prognosis another quarter century before the beds arrive?



**Gentle curves:** Shape of the new hospital is captured in the artist's sketch (above) as the Coldeast site (right) awaits the first digger.



**IT'S BEEN hanging around for 25 years in the waiting room, but this month the trauma finally ended when the community hospital was given the all-clear.**

Initially, it will not be a hospital in the true sense because there are no beds in Phase 1, but there will be space for a two-storey extension with beds.

The Borough Council's planners approved plans for the new hospital at Coldeast with parking for 120 cars on October 1 and work should begin soon.

It was hoped that access to the hospital could have been achieved via Cold East Way, but both the Primary Care Trust (PCT) and the Hampshire County Council argued that this was not possible.

The entrance will be via a new access on Brook Lane, which will mean some tree loss although the curved roadway should ensure that the visual damage will be kept to a minimum.

Councillor David Swanbrow, Executive

Member for Planning and Transportation, said: "All traffic studies suggest that traffic on Brook Lane as a result of the hospital will be only marginally increased."

The building will be of single-storey design in the shape of a gentle curve. It will be built on a part of the Coldeast site that was reserved for health facilities in the 2000 Fareham Local Plan Review.

### High quality care

The hospital will provide a brand new facility that will focus on the needs of the local community and improve patients' access to high quality health care close to their homes.

There will be diagnostic and imaging facilities with space reserved for a mobile MRI scanner. Services currently provided by the Sylvan Clinic will transfer to the new facility.

These amenities should save many residents having to make visits to Gosport or Portsmouth for diagnosis or treatment.

Acute conditions will still be treated at Queen Alexandra Hospital in Portsmouth.

### Free parking

The PCT originally wanted to charge patients for using the car park, but after pressure from local councillors it has been agreed that the use of the car park will be free for the first 3 hours.

"This should ensure that most patients visiting the hospital will not have to pay for parking, but will meet the PCT's requirement to prevent the car park being used as a free all-day car park for commuters using Swanwick Station," said Councillor Swanbrow.

He added: "Fareham has waited a long time for a community hospital. What has been approved may not yet be all that residents want but it is a start.

"Further facilities that would normally be found in a hospital will, hopefully, follow before another 25 years are up."

## New look West Street wins top award in regional 'In Bloom' contest



**FAREHAM'S new-look West Street won the Best New Commercial Landscape award in the South and South East in Bloom contest.**

The day was crowned by Fareham scooping the overall winners prize for the fifth year running and a gold medal in the Large

Town/Small City category at the regional awards ceremony in Crawley.

The sensory garden in Osborn Road won the Best Small Park category and a gold medal and the Fareham in Bloom team won the Community Involvement Award for their outstanding work over the past 13 years.

•Pictured (left to right) volunteers Heather Othen and Jean Kingdom, TV gardener Chris Collins (presented awards), volunteers Bridget and Geoff Thickett, Matt Wakefield (Horticultural Development Officer) Councillor Connie Hockley and Heather Scott (volunteer).

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



# WARD NEWS BRIEFS

## Reflectors appeal

Councillor Ruth Godrich has asked drivers to park their cars properly at night with reflectors facing on-coming traffic.

If they park the wrong way round, especially where the street lighting is poor, vehicles are not easily recognised by approaching drivers.

## Winter security

Now that winter evenings are approaching, make sure windows and doors are safely secured at night.

You could be especially vulnerable at dusk if you are gardening, when speculative intruders can gain easy access to your home.

"I write this as somebody who had that experience some years ago," said Councillor Ruth Godrich.

## Planning changes

The Government has changed planning rules making it easier for people to make changes to their property by building extensions, erecting garages or sheds etc.

From October 1, many changes no longer require planning permission.

For example, you may now be able to build a two-storey extension on the back of your house without planning permission provided it meets certain guidelines.

## Public to have a say

The public will be allowed to address meetings of Hampshire Police Authority, but not the sub-committees.

It brings the authority into line with councils who allow deputations to their main meetings.

# Wide range of interests are catered for in Locks Heath

**ANYONE** who says there's nothing to do in Locks Heath and surrounding wards should change their views after reading this.

Councillors Mike and Ruth Godrich have listed a variety of organisations to suit all ages and interests.

In Locks Heath, there is the Genesis Youth Centre which caters for various indoor activities and also has a group run by mums for disabled young people.

There is also the Locks Heath Day Care Centre which caters for the elderly and infirm to give them a change of environment and social inter-change as well as giving their carers respite.

The skateboard park now has lighting and hand ball goals for young people to exercise their skills.

There is an over 60s club in the Lockwood Community Centre for

badminton and other activities.

Not far away are the Locks Heath Community Centre, A b s h o t Community Centre, L o c k s H e a t h Sports and Social Club with cricket and football pitches.

Then there is the Prioory Park Community Association and Lockwood Bowling



**Caring:** Mike says the Day Care Centre plays an important role.

the Victory Hall in Warsash, Sarisbury Community Association and the Burr ridge Village Hall. In addition, there

are working men's clubs and the various church organisations with their youth clubs.

"Add to this the other football and tennis clubs

and the Scout and Guide groups and you can see that, while things can always be better, we are not badly served," said Councillor Mike Godrich.



**Popular venue:** Mike and Ruth visit the skateboard park which now has lighting and hand ball goals.

Club with an all weather pitch. All of these clubs have many user groups following a variety of activities and sports.

Further afield in the Western Wards there is

# Litter louts cost taxpayers £1m to clear over 1,200 tons of rubbish

**WHILE** Fareham taxpayers fork out £1m a year to clear up litter, European towns are exceptionally clean and tidy compared to those in Britain.

Executive Member for Streetscene Councillor Brian Bayford: "Litter isn't casually dropped as seems to be the fashion in the UK."

Fareham Council spends about £1m cleaning up litter – 1,213 tonnes of it in 2007-08.

There are over 650 litter bins in the Borough, each costing around £200 a year to empty.

This year, over £200,000 has been spent to provide extra sweeping machines and more staff.

A Clean and Tidy Neighbourhood Fund has been set up to deal with areas not in Council ownership, where owners cannot be identified or land is in multiple ownership.

Funds may be used

towards:

- Cost of removing litter and fly tipping.
- Cutting back undergrowth on small areas of abandoned land.
- Removing graffiti from private property.
- Supporting community clean-ups.

Community groups, including volunteers, Scouts, Guides, residents, schools etc, can apply for up to £500.

You can apply at any time. Contact 01329 82447/8

# County may face legal challenge over gravel plan decision

**THE PROCESS** to bring the County Council's recommendations for mineral extraction before a government planning inspector is effectively on hold due to a possible legal hitch.

Although the County removed Brownwich and Chilling from its list after a storm of protest, its recommendations still have to be accepted by the Government.

This is because of a claim that the basis of the recommendations is 'a County determined' reduction from that required by the government in their guidance paper (from 2.3m tonnes per year down to 1.82m tonnes) which could render the report 'illegal'.

It is possible this argument could be sustained so the timetable for this submission is now dependent on the progress on the modifications to the aggregates targets in the South East Plan.

A fundamental issue is that if Hampshire's annual volume is reduced another county will have to accept an increase.

When plans were announced earlier in the year to rip up 740 acres of countryside down to Solent shore to extract 8m tonnes of sand and gravel, there was a public outcry.

Residents formed an action group – Campaign Against Mineral Extraction and Landfill (CAMEL) – and packed a public meeting at Brookfield School.

Western Wards councillors are still hopeful the issue will be resolved favourably.



## Waste permit scheme is extended

**THE PERMIT** scheme allowing residents with commercial vehicles to use recycling centres for household waste has been extended.

Controls on commercial vehicles at recycling centres were designed to improve customer service and eliminate trade waste.

Permit systems were introduced so that householders owning commercial vehicles could still use the sites.

Councillor Mike Godrich said it had unintentionally affected a minority of householders, although generally the scheme had been successful and deposits of trade waste noticeably reduced.

"With this in mind, it was agreed to extend the permit scheme from October 1 to incorporate all householders who have access to a commercial vehicle for domestic purposes.

"It is hoped this will enable newly eligible householders to apply for a permit and provide a fairer system," he said.

Council officers will closely monitor fly tipping and trade waste abuse."

## Western Wards swimming pool still top priority despite setbacks

**A SWIMMING** pool in the Western Wards remains a top priority, despite recent setbacks.

Councillor Mike Godrich said: "Unfortunately, the planning consent for the swimming pool has now expired.

"The reason is that the ownership of the Locks Heath Shopping Centre recently changed hands just as the Council was reaching agreement with the previous owners.

"The new owners have failed to reach agreement with the Council to lift the caveat to allow the scheme to progress.

"Now that their development plans are finalised it is to be hoped that they will cooperate.

"Meantime, land at Coldeast, which could come into the Council's ownership, is being looked at as a potential alternative.

"Provision of a swimming pool in the Western Wards remains a high priority."

One ray of hope is that the Council might be able to wring funding from the Government in response to its proposals for free swimming sessions for over 60s and under 16s (see story in P4).

## Distributor should ease local traffic

**THE NEW** distributor from Dibles Road through the old Warsash Motors site to Warsash Road roundabout should be open soon.

Access to Warsash Road from Cutter Avenue has been closed.

This completes a Hampshire commitment to address the safety aspects of exiting from Schooner Avenue so close to the bend in Warsash Road.

County Councillor Keith Evans said:

"The work, which has been completed to schedule, provides a more substantial roundabout with better speed reduction emphasis and good pedestrian walkways from Dibles Road and the 'boats' area."

## Queen's Awards

THE County Council is asking for nominations of volunteers of all types for the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service. Forms may be obtained from [www.queen-sawardvoluntary.gov.uk](http://www.queen-sawardvoluntary.gov.uk) or phone 020 7781 2397

## Ugly car park fencing upsets shoppers

**THE UNSIGHTLY** fenced-off car park in the Locks Heath Shopping centre car park has been the subject numerous complaints from residents and shoppers.

Another is the moving of the recycling bins.

Originally, permission was given for a McDonald's drive-through and the fencing was erected and ground works started just before the end of the 5-year planning validity period.

Subsequently, permission was sought for a Kentucky Fried Chicken outlet, which was refused on ascetic or design grounds.



**Unhappy:** Mike and Ruth Godrich say the ugly fencing should be removed and the car park restored.

Yet another application was made to return the site to a car park which was granted, concurrently with consent for the retail shopping parade.

Nothing has happened since.

Councillor Mike Godrich said: "We await the start of works to restore the car park to use."

## LOCKS HEATH 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

As part of the Conservative Treasury team, I spent much time over the summer thinking about how the Government got us in a mess.

During the good times rather than save for a rainy day, Gordon Brown continued to borrow to the point that he has, according to statisticians, breached his own borrowing rules, which were meant to control government finances and are now in tatters. Now we are in more difficult times, he can't help families and businesses to weather the storm.

How do we put our public finances back into good order and ensure governments stick to the rules? We will set up an Office for Budget Responsibility to keep politicians on the straight and narrow when it comes to tax and spending. It will be like the old fashioned bank managers, the ones who would let you know that you were overdrawn and rather than offering more credit, suggested you might like to reduce your overdraft and live within your means. That's what the office will do. When Gordon Brown was overdrawn, like Oliver Twist he asked for more credit.

Once we have the public finances back in order, we will be able to do what government is meant to do, which is to be on your side. So when the economy is not going so smoothly, the Government has the money to help businesses and families, rather than doing what has happened this year, raising taxes on families with big hikes on car tax or asking small companies to cough up more.

Government is not about flashy gimmicks and wheezes; it is about doing the dull, sensible things that make real differences to families when it matters. It is about reassuring people that you have got a firm grip on what is happening. Our Office for Budget Responsibility shows that we are serious about putting our economy right.

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# Free swims for over 60s

## But who pays for 10 Drowning Street's latest brainwave?

THEY ALWAYS look wonderful on paper...free bus travel nationwide for over 60s and now a new Government plan for free swimming for old and young.

But Labour's grandiose freebie schemes have one flaw. Who splashes the cash in the long run?

Concessionary bus passes are already forcing Fareham Council to swim against a rising financial tide and Conservative councillors fear free swimming sessions for under 16s and over 60s will plunge finances into deep water.

Nationwide bus passes started in April, but the scheme was not funded properly, leaving several councils with huge problems.

"In most authorities, the gap will have to be met by the council taxpayer and the additional costs could be significant," said Councillor David Swanbrow, Executive Member for Planning and Transportation.

And that is the worry following the Government's approach to councils asking them if they are interested in a grant towards the introduction of free swimming sessions.

Funding has been promised for only the first two years for the over 60s; no details have been given for the under 16s group and nothing beyond.

Councillor Connie Hockley, Executive Member for Community, said: "On the surface, this seems a wonderful idea provided it is **fully funded** and applies only to local residents, BUT – and there is always a catch in many schemes proposed by this Government – what happens after the first two years?"

"Is the initial funding sufficient or will the local taxpayers end up by subsidising another Government initiative?"

It's the question that's already been answered in respect of the concessionary fares debacle, for the Government pays only 43% of the cost in Fareham.

"The cost over the first four months suggests



**At a stroke:** Free-style may take on a new meaning for over 60s at Fareham swimming pool.

that by the end of the financial year the Council is likely to spend at least £280,000 on top of the £1.5m it budgeted for concessionary travel, with the possibility it could rise much further.

"This equates to a council tax rise for Fareham of 5%-6% on its own," said Councillor Swanbrow.

Councils have to pay for any pass holder's journey starting within their boundaries. For example, a Gosport resident travelling to Winchester will have to change at Fareham and it's Fareham Council which then pays for the rest of that traveller's journey.

"The Gosport resident gets the benefit of free travel, Winchester shops may well benefit, but all Fareham gets is the biggest slice of the cost – and the Fareham council taxpayer pays," said Councillor Swanbrow, who said the Council was asking the Government to reassess a wholly unfair situation.

The Council has expressed interest to get funding for free swimming for over 60s, provided it is restricted to local residents..

Councillor Hockley said the Council was also interested in operating a scheme for free swimming sessions for under 16s which could be run during school holidays, but only for Borough residents and provided it was fully funded.

The Council also asked the Government for cash towards the cost of building a new swimming pool in the Western Wards.

She added: "We await the Government's decision with bated breath."

## Borough crackdown on untaxed vehicles

**THIRTY untaxed vehicles were clamped and impounded in a two-day crackdown across the Borough by Fareham Council, the Driving and Vehicle Licensing Agency and the police.**

A further joint operation was planned for October.

The DVLA used a vehicle equipped with Automatic Number Plate Recognition

equipment which identified any untaxed and uninsured vehicle.

The vehicle was then clamped and a notice attached stating that it had been seized and would not be released until a valid tax disc was obtained.

If a valid tax disc could not be provided, the vehicle was towed away to a storage pound until the owner provided a valid tax disc

If no tax disc was provided,

the vehicle was crushed or, if of value, was sent to a further vehicle pound in the Midlands to be sold

Each day a vehicle is in the pound charges are incurred by the owner.

Vehicles shown by the ANPR camera to be uninsured were also removed.

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