



In Touch

with our community

LOCKS HEATH – SPRING 2008

Tories hit the Government with a 'bunch of fives' over council tax

What you pay

Band D Properties will now pay £136.53 pa to Fareham Borough Council, with the total bill, including the County Council and the emergency services' share, rising to £1,329.30 pa.

Band C (the average property in the Borough), will respectively pay £121.36 and £1,181.60.

What you get

Improvements include:

- Play ranger and events programme (3 year commitment)
- Community safety initiatives
- New mechanical road sweeper
- Two more litter clearing operatives
- Improved free green waste collection service
- Free national bus pass scheme for older residents starting at 9am
- Every street and foot-path will be swept and litter picked at least once every 10 weeks.
- Grant to enable Titchfield Carnival to take place in 2008

The aims

- To maintain a spending reserve equal to 5% of total gross expenditure
- Continue to minimise the increase in the overall revenue budget, aiming for a council tax increase within inflation (currently 4.1%) to meet expectations as expressed in the residents' survey.

FAREHAM'S Conservatives have given the Labour Government a 'bunch of fives' after setting Hampshire's lowest council tax and a below inflation rise for the fifth year running.

Councillors of all parties voted in favour of a 2.98% rise in the Borough Council's share of the bill.

And that was again achieved after getting the usual pittance in the grant from the Labour Government, which allocated most of the spoils 'oop North'.

Delivering his ninth budget speech, Council Executive Leader Councillor Seán Woodward said they had achieved this despite the government's lack of funding for the Borough.

"I have pledged certainty and stability to our taxpayers, and I have demonstrated how next year's settlement from Government was one of the meanest we have seen for some time.

"To be fair, the Government has delivered certainty and stability with the support they will grant Fareham until 2011.

All is not rosy

"John Healey MP has promised a settlement which provides 'sustained real terms increases for local government', one which is equitable and fair. It all sounds very rosy for years to come.

"But Mr Healey's idea of 'fair' for Fareham is a 0.5% increase despite inflation running at 4.1%.

"So his promise of a real terms increase doesn't seem to stretch as far as Fareham.

"It's a real terms cut which effectively doubles the savings and efficiencies this Council must deliver to fulfil its council tax pledge, which residents feel so strongly about."

So where is the extra £3 billion



Simply the best: The Royal Marines Band and Fareham's Tories have plenty to celebrate.



Seán Woodward: His 9th budget speech

earmarked for local government going?

"I can tell you that 93% of shire districts receive more Government support per

head than Fareham and the 20 most favoured district councils will all receive two to three times as much support per head as we do.

"You won't be surprised to hear that those lucky authorities are not on the south coast.

"The money has, of course, gone to those in the North – places like Lancashire (Burnley), Durham (Easington), Cumbria (Barrow-in-Furness and Wear Valley)."

Worst in Hampshire

Fareham receives just £56.09 per person in Government support – the worst settlement in Hampshire – and a long way behind neighbouring Gosport which receives £92.43 per resident.

He added: "For the fifth year in a row, the council tax increase will be below the rate of inflation, so we

can safely say that 2008 is another year when the Conservatives have dealt a bunch of fives to tax hikes."

Councillor Woodward recognised the important role the Council plays in South Hampshire by running the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) which he chairs.

Positive spin-off

This is a joint committee of 11 local authorities who are demanding adequate support to replace infrastructure in South Hampshire and to plan for the housing which the Government wants built over the next 20 years.

A positive spin-off was the £1m funding received by the Council to renovate the western end of West Street in the town centre.

Fareham leads the country with a 45% recycling rate and has also achieved its target to provide over 100 affordable homes per year which are available for low cost home ownership or for rent.

In contrast to most surrounding boroughs, no cuts have been made to Fareham's services, while £800,000 of worthwhile improvements have been introduced.

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

WARD NEWS BRIEFS

Web site change
Locks Heath Forum keeps you up-to-date on all Locks Heath issues. It has a local police section and free directory for businesses. The new website address is: locksheath.forumarena.com

Shops appeal
Developers of the Centre Way site have appealed against Fareham Council's refusal to allow a new terrace of shops, and the redesign of the car park. This does not include the KFC / McDonald's site. Date for the public inquiry at which residents can object will be announced later.

'20 is Plenty' signs
Some schools in the area have decided to use the '20 is Plenty' signs, having raised the money themselves. Councillor Ruth Godrich said: "I hope that other schools will follow the lead they have shown. "It is hoped that the signs will encourage motorists to take note and enhance road safety for school children."

Caring
Locks Heath Day Care Centre continues to provide for the elderly and infirm, collecting and returning them to their homes by mini bus, accompanied by an escort. They can socialise, enjoy coffee, a cooked lunch and tea, with the option of a bath, hair dressing and foot treatment.

Outrage over massive gravel grab plan for Chilling



Cliff-hanger
Environmental disaster: Sand and gravel would be gouged out of the fields (top right) up to the edge of the cliffs at Solent shore (above). Photo by David Brims

PROPOSALS to extract 8 million tons of sand and gravel from a 740-acre (300 hectares) site bordering the Solent at Chilling have outraged residents and councillors.

Chilling and Brownwich Farms south of Warsash Road were identified by Hampshire County Council while updating the strategic plan for the extraction of land based minerals and for the provision of landfill sites to meet Government requirements.

But the suggestion, which would see land gouged out right to the cliffs looking across the Solent to the Isle of Wight, resulted in massive opposition from the community who say it will destroy countryside and wildlife.

Councillor Keith Evans said: "Residents were alarmed at the proposals and quickly formed a local action group that they called CAMEL (Campaign Against Mineral Extraction and Landfill).

"The response to this has been magnificent with hundreds of formal letters of objection being sent to Hampshire and a public meet-

ing attended by more than 800. "The farms were acquired by the County Council several years ago specifically to protect this area of coastline and to retain and develop it for the benefit of the public. "In fact, at entrances to the area there are colourful Hampshire signs proudly proclaiming the good job the County has done - and they have with footpaths, bridleways, cycle paths and wildlife and a long stretch of the Solent Way along the cliff edge giving magnificent views over the Solent.



Under threat: Keith Evans (left), Ruth and Mike Godrich fear all the County Council's good work will be undone and the area blighted.

Blighted for 20 years



"If Hampshire sells this land for extraction it will be blighted for up to 20 years with an estimated one million large lorry movements over that time finding ways to get to the A 27 and the M 27.

"Inevitably lorry drivers on tight schedules will seek out any shortcut or bypass they can find - Hunts Pond Road, Abshot Road, Warsash Road, Titchfield Road etc.

"And at the end of all this disruption we will most likely be left with a dramatically different area - probably a wetland habitat with much reduced public amenity access."

Local Councillors Ruth and Mike Godrich have all opposed using these sites and Councillor Evans has had separate meetings with Hampshire officers to ensure they understand just what will be destroyed and how much the area is used by public both local and further afield.

Councillor Evans added: "We hope that Hampshire listens to the public and resists Government pressures and recognises this area an unofficial country park that must be retained for the benefit of the Hampshire public.

"Our message is - Don't destroy our countryside."

•email CAMEL at camelsolent@aol.com or log on to the web site www.camelsolent@aol.com

Local grants pilot scheme success

A PILOT County Council scheme allowing local councillors to allocate grants to organisations in their area has proved so successful that it will continue for another year.

Councillor Keith Evans received four requests that he was happy to support. These are:

- 1 £5000 to the Victory Hall towards the much needed redecoration of the main Hall
- 2 £935 to the Genesis Special Needs Youth Club to buy a Wii system with console and accessories.
- 3 £957 to the Lockswood Active 60+ Group to provide an essential new sound/PA system.
- 4 £1000 to Locks Heath Day Care Centre for the frail and elderly towards refurbishment of the bathroom.

The pilot scheme gives Councillor Evans control of £10,000. Details and a form can be found on the Hampshire web site in the Councillor Grants subsection.

Still top of the recycling league

FAREHAM stays top of Hampshire's recycling league with the most recent figure at 46.2%.

Contamination of recycling has reduced from 19.9% to 7.4% due to a major advisory campaign.

Fareham collects only material for which there is an acceptable recycling market in the UK. All other waste goes to the Portsmouth incinerator that produces enough energy a year to heat and light 30,000 houses and nothing goes to landfill except for the bottom ash.

Fareham remains the only council in Hampshire providing free green waste sacks and a non-chargeable service.

People wanting replacement sacks delivered to their homes will be charged £5. Proof of identity is required for collection.

Recycling clinics will be held at the Lockswood Community Centre on April 10 3pm - 6pm and at the Civic Offices on April 16 3.30pm - 6.30pm.

Council fights uphill battle with Whitehall to control development

GOVERNMENT interference in planning issues can often be blamed for the Council allowing unpopular applications.

But Fareham Planning Committee is often up against rules it cannot ignore, says Councillor Ruth Godrich.

For example, loss of a view is not a material consideration and must be ignored.

More upsetting is potential loss of value that may occur to your property, which is also immaterial.

Other factors are:-

- Matters controlled under the Building regulations or other non-planning laws eg structural stability, drainage, fire precautions
- Traffic Congestion
- Lack of schools, medical facilities
- Private Issues between neighbours eg land or boundary disputes
- Damage to property, private rights of way, covenants etc
- Problems arising during the construction period eg noise, dust, vehicles and hours of work

If the Committee refuses an application for reasons an appeal inspector decides are not material, the appeal will



Too many: Councillors are trying their best to control building of flats.

succeed and the Council not only loses the chance to impose conditions, but may have to pay applicants' costs.

"There are examples of applications being refused by FBC but being overturned at appeal in the form of blocks of flats at Park Gate," she said.

Density of dwellings is also controlled by the Government in planning directives, mainly PPS3 which is set at a minimum density of 30 per hectare - greater than the maximum that Fareham Council used to allow.

Councillors do their best to protect Locks Heath Ward and generally succeed, but as Ruth Godrich stresses:

"The odds are stacked against them and it is remarkable that they achieve the degree of success that they do."

Get it off your chest at a CATs meeting

THREE Community Action Team (CATs) meetings have been held in the Western Wards, the latest at the Victory Hall in Warsash.

Their purpose is to enable the public to raise issues of concern.

Councillors Mike and Ruth Godrich attended with other Western Wards' councillors and the Council Leader.

Council officers and Police represen-

tatives were there to deal with matters that had been requested at the previous meeting.

The team tries to answer questions and if necessary forward an answer or give it at the next meeting.

If you were unable to come along to one of these meetings, perhaps you can make the next ones. Dates will be announced.

Developer's bid to build 70 more homes at Locks Heath

A PLANNING application to build up to 70 homes between Heath Road and Centre Way has been submitted to the Council.

Councillor Mrs Ruth Godrich commented: "We are in the position of being deemed to have a prejudicial interest in this application due to the location of our house and are legally unable to give a personal opinion.

"However, a recent change in Government legislation does enable us to represent our residents' views and objections and present them to the Planning Committee

"You can send these to us by letter, email, telephone or in person if you see us in the Shopping Centre.

If you wish to make an individual deputation to the Committee, telephone Fareham Council on 01329 236100 and ask the customer services operator to connect you to an admin officer who will assist you.

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.

WARD COUNCILLORS Locks Heath



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Four man in Westminster



By **Mark Hoban**
MP for Fareham

IF YOU LISTEN to the forecasters, it would appear we are entering uncertain economic times. The credit crunch, which kicked off in the US, is having its impact here with many homeowners facing higher interest rates.

This compounded with higher energy prices and increasing taxes means that many people face a reduction in living standards.

Sadly, this means for many people real challenges in paying bills and meeting mortgage repayments. We started to see evidence of this last year with repossessions increasing by 21% compared to 2006. Nationally, the Citizens' Advice Bureau is receiving more and more queries about debt and seeing 6,600 new debt problems a day.

The Government is compounding the problem through higher taxes. Because of a shortfall in Government funding and despite the best efforts of councils like Fareham, we will see council tax bills rise faster than inflation. More tax changes in April such as the doubling of the 10 pence rate to 20 pence will hit young people and those in their early 60s hard. The Government can do little to help those finding it hard to make ends meet because it borrowed so much in the good times that it has to keep a tight grip on spending and taxes in the more uncertain times we are in now. Prudent management of the nation's finances would have given us much more room for manoeuvre. The Government has let hardworking families down.

If you need help to manage finances, you should contact the CAB or the Consumer Credit Counselling Service or approach your bank and building society.

Mismanagement of the economy by Gordon Brown and Alistair Darling has a knock-on effect on our own finances. Their failure to prepare for a rainy day means that the heavens could open on us.

**•You may contact Mark via his office
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Higher police profile leads to 13% Fareham crime fall



CRIME figures for Fareham have fallen dramatically, thanks to higher profile policing and a crackdown on blackspots.

"We have invested heavily in more bike and foot patrols and hope you have seen a difference," said Borough Commander Chief Inspector Steve Wallace.

Figures show a 13% decrease for 2007-08 and surveys showed 89% of residents perceive low crime as making Fareham a good place to live.

"It is safe after dark in Fareham - most violent offences occur between parties who are known to each other.

"Criminal damage and graffiti are down 23% and are a top priority. There are very few drug related problems in Fareham and a zero tolerance approach," said Chief Inspector Wallace.

"The Borough alcohol ban is very effective and we can show it has reduced rowdy and drunken behaviour. Supply to juveniles is also a top priority. Unfortunately, parents often provide the alcohol and some licensed premises sell to juveniles.

"We also carry out regular truancy patrols calling on regular absentees at home.

"We want to know what your neighbourhood priorities are. Parking, speeding and littering are the main issues raised. We target speeding hotspots you raise and 27 tickets were



issued on one day alone.

"Accidents are down and any speeding enforcement is based on accidents and speeding data," he said.

He appealed for more community intelligence and asked people to use the Crimestoppers 0800 555111 number.

Fareham Police and the Community Safety Partnership are committed to make Fareham even safer, with the Safer Neighbourhood Teams offering a local presence.

"One final plea... too many crimes read 'Bike left unlocked', 'Satnav stolen from unlocked car', 'Entry via unlocked rear door'...

"We need your help to prevent offences as most crime in Fareham is opportunist.

"We do catch and charge a lot of criminals, but it is no secret that imprisonment is often a last resort for the courts and many are released early. My advice is to avoid becoming a victim if at all possible."

Council wins extended bus pass times

OVER 60s and those with qualifying disabilities will benefit from an extension to the hours of the new national bus concession.

Free travel will apply from 9am until 12.59am Monday to Friday for journeys which start within the borough of Fareham.

This is an extra two and a half hours' free travel each day as well as the statutory minimum (which is from 9.30am until 11pm Monday to Friday and all times at weekends and bank holidays).

Executive Leader of Fareham Borough Council, Councillor Seán Woodward, said:

"We have successfully negotiated this extension with bus operators to allow bus pass holders to travel

free from 9am, which is important for those who have doctors' and hospital appointments."

From April 1, people who qualify will be able to enjoy free off-peak local bus travel on buses anywhere in England.

Existing pass holders do not need to reapply; their new pass will be sent to them by March 31.

The new national passes will be valid for five years. There will be two types:

Passes with a blue stripe down the right-hand side are for the over 60s.

Those with the orange strip are for disabled residents.

In addition to the national standard scheme, Fareham will continue to provide £35 worth of tokens for an administration fee of £5.

This concession is available to eligible disabled residents and those currently in receipt of travel tokens.

It is offered as an alternative to the bus pass and is renewable annually.

Companion passes are available for disabled persons who cannot travel alone. They allow holders and one companion to travel free within and directly to and from the borough of Fareham.

As this concession is provided solely by Fareham Council, it cannot be used in other areas of England. Those eligible will receive two passes – a national standard pass and a Fareham Council pass.