



In Touch

with our community

LOCKS HEATH – WINTER 2009

Council's vision for top quality community facilities

COMMUNITY centres are in line for top quality improvements under a new Fareham Council initiative.

The Executive approved a broad vision for providing high quality community facilities across the Borough and asked interested parties to give their views via a consultation through the Community Action Team process.

The broad vision and proposal to adopt a phased approach, by reviewing the Council-owned community facilities in each of the CAT areas in turn, was well received at the October round of CAT meetings.

The Executive formally adopted the proposed vision and set aside £500,000 capital budget for pump-priming to assist in delivering the vision.

Work has started on Phase 1 to develop a master plan based on providing new community facilities to replace the ramshackle Portchester Community Centre, where a public consultation was held to establish what local people wanted.

Executive Member for Community Councillor Mrs Connie Hockley thanked those who attended the event.

"The views expressed by residents will be reported to the Executive," she said.

Tory 'magic' beats all the odds for a recession busting budget

A RECESSION-busting budget. That's the rabbit Fareham's Conservative 'magicians' have conjured out of the hat.

Against all the odds – and that includes what Executive Leader Seán Woodward lambasted as "one of the most derisory Government grants in the country" – a below inflation rise of just 2.7% has been achieved.

So the Borough share of council tax will rise by just 1p a day, less than any other Hampshire district council and lower than almost every council in the country.

Delivering his 10th budget speech, Councillor Woodward said: "In a recession it is more important than ever to achieve a below inflation council tax rise of just 2.7%.

"Services remain essentially intact and charges rise only a modest amount in line with the requirements of Fareham's residents.

"Fareham's proportion of the council tax for a band D property will be just £140 per year. Compare this with Gosport at over £200 and you can under-

stand the value for money provided by Fareham Borough Council."

Other improvements to services in response to residents' concerns included removal of the £20 charge for pest control officers to deal with domestic rat infestations.

Sunday and Bank Holiday car parking charges would be changed to allow free parking up to 10.30am in the short-stay car parks with free Sunday and Bank Holiday parking in the long-stay car parks.

Charges on these days in short-stay car parks from 10.30am – 4pm will be just £1.50 for as long as shoppers wish to park.

While other centres outside Fareham are losing shops, June will see a Debenhams department store and new multi-storey car park open in the town centre.

Councillor Woodward added: "With the country in a deep recession and many of our older residents seeing their fixed incomes eroded by decreasing interest rates, it is more important than ever that we continue to set the lowest possible council tax to give the best possible value for money

"I am proud that we have for the 10th year been able to achieve this by constantly looking for more innovative and cost effective ways of both reducing expenditure and increasing income."



'ello, 'ello, 'ello...did you know, Sarge, that Fareham council taxpayers now contribute more towards us than they pay for their own Borough Council services?

Costs soar to keep the blue lamp alight



How it's made up for Band D taxpayers

Fareham Borough Council £140.22 (+£3.69)
 Hampshire County Council £1,017.99 (+£18.99)
 Hampshire Police Authority £142.11 (+£6.57)
 Hampshire Fire & Rescue £60.30 (+£2.07)
 Total: Band D taxpayers £1,360.62 (+£31.32) = +2...36%

Fareham capital budget improvements include

Footpath improvements: £50,000
 Holly Hill lakes de-silting: £15,000
 Cliff Road, Hill Head replacing public toilets: £170,000

Fareham revenue budget improvements include

Replacing green waste sacks: estimated cost £100,000
 Residents' parking Phase 1 in town centre: £100,000
 Capital Programme Fund: £500,000 towards new and improved community buildings

Extra green waste charges down to health and safety

CHANGES to the garden waste service will start in April 2009.

The Health and Safety Executive advised they were necessary to avoid problems of repetitive strain injury and worse.

So extra staff had to be employed, adding to the cost.

Handling one or two sacks is not a problem, but in some months crews are being asked to lift up to 20 tons per crew per day.

When the service was introduced in September 2005 it was on the basis that it would be cost neutral; however, in the current economic climate the Council had no option but to review discretionary services.

It was decided to retain this popular service and that it should be free for most residents.

There will be no charge for the collection of one garden waste

sack. Most councils charge for this service and those which charge for extra sacks charge more than Fareham proposes.

Fewer than 50% of residents use the service at any one time and most put out only one sack.

People can order extra disposable bags similar to the existing sacks at £20 for 25 sacks, which will be collected regardless of how many or when they are put out.

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

WARD NEWS BRIEFS

Closed for the crunch

The eastern part of Locks Heath Shopping Centre car park is still fenced off.

Councillor Ruth Godrich said: "Since the site received planning permission for restoration – in tandem with that for the new shopping parade – we have been pressing for it to be brought back into use.

"In view of the present crunch, it seems likely that neither of these projects will come to fruition until the financial climate improves."

Inconvenience

The Shopping Centre toilets have reopened after two weeks' closure in January for refurbishment.

Councillor Ruth Godrich said: "This was an unavoidable inconvenience to all the visitors, but they do get a high usage.

"While the cleaning contractors strive to keep them clean, a high usage means a lot of wear on the fittings.

"Our thanks to the shopkeepers who helped out during the closure period."

CAT meeting

The next CAT meeting in the Western Wards will be held at Sarisbury Social Club on Wednesday, March 25, when Council officers will make a presentation on 'Householders' Planning Permission'.

Ward councillors and local police will attend to answer questions.

Tell us if you have a local project in mind which may be achievable with a modest outlay,

Life is good in Fareham, say 98% of residents

MOST residents are happy to live in Fareham Borough and satisfied with way the Conservative Council operates.

A survey found that overall 95% say Fareham is a safe and attractive place to live and work.

And 89% think the Council does a good job.

However, a better picture could be obtained if more people bothered to respond to questionnaires.

There are a few areas where things could be improved.

Satisfaction with the waste collection service is 71%, but only 64% say the Borough is kept clear of litter on open land controlled by the Council.

Although 98% of residents say they

feel safe outside during the day, the figure drops to 72% for those who venture outside after dark in their neighbourhood and the feel safe factor is lower outside after dark in town and district shopping centres.

A random sample of 4000 was selected from the electoral register to reflect the population within each ward.

A total of 928 residents completed and returned the form, a response rate of 28%.

Locks Heath Councillor Ruth Godrich commented: "While the return is not bad when compared to other surveys, it would be helpful if more responded. Perhaps if you get one you will complete it."

CAT meeting learns how kitchen waste generates electric energy

WASTE collection and recycling were top issues at the January meeting of the Western Wards Community Action Team at the parish hall in Park Gate.

Councillor Mrs Ruth Godrich (Locks Heath) reported that waste management was split into four sections – alternate weekly collection of kitchen waste, garden waste in green sacks and recycleable materials in blue top bins.

The 4th element was vegetable waste which could be composted in bins, which you can buy from the Council. Shredded confidential papers should go into

these bins.

Kitchen waste is taken to the nearest of three sites in Hampshire, where it is incinerated in controlled conditions. Electrical energy generated (about 10Mw) is exported to the national grid.

None of Hampshire's kitchen waste is taken to landfill, but some thin plastics, although marked with the recycling symbol, do not have a market in Britain, so they join the energy stream.

Paper and plastics collected for recycling are taken to a materials recycling centre to be sorted and packaged and the sent to the

agreed manufacturing industry.

In Hampshire, no resident sorted recycling materials go to landfill; those unsuitable due to lack of market go to the energy project.

Changes had to be made to the green waste collections, details of which are on Page 1

Glass from bottle banks goes to a depot in Southampton Docks where it is sorted, crushed and shipped to Goole, Yorkshire whence it is transported to a factory for reprocessing.

Green bottles currently do not have a direct market, but are used in other industrial processes.

Brook Lane narrowing to improve road safety

CARRIAGEWAY width may be reduced along part of Brook Lane to improve road safety.

The County Council is focusing on the section between Brookfield Gardens and Holland Park.

Narrowing the road will allow extra space for the footpath on the western side and calm traffic.

But it will not be enough to provide a path on the eastern side without avoiding a battle with residents.

County Councillor Keith Evans said: "The only way such a footway could be provided would be by residents offering part of their front gardens to be dedicated highway.

"This is likely to be costly and time consuming, and if contested by a resident there is no guarantee that the land could be obtained by compulsory purchase."

Developers' contributions from Phase 1 of the Coldeast residential site will pay for the scheme.

Meanwhile, yellow lines will be painted in Heath Road North and nearby roads to reduce congestion caused by inconsiderate parking at school times.

Growers call for Western Wards deer cull

DEER are causing havoc in gardens and allotments across the Western Wards and may have to be culled.

Allotment holders say they have been plagued for some time with deer eating their crops despite the Council erecting stock fencing.

Councillor David Swanbrow, who opposes a cull, said deer were increasing across the South, perhaps being displaced from their natural habitat by development.

"Gardeners find that deer will eat almost anything – even roses with

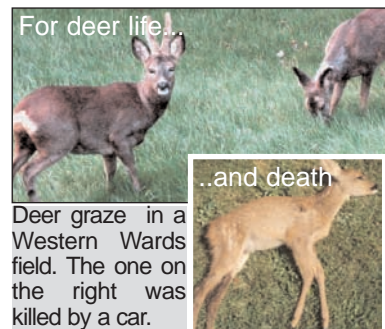
long thorns – and many have called for a cull."

They can also be a hazard to motorists as they tend to leap out suddenly from scrub or woodland beside the road.

A deer hit even at low speed can do a lot of damage to a car and it is also very distressing for the driver.

Three deer were killed in three weeks on Barnes Lane in January.

"The Council removed each within an hour, but it is still a distressing sight for children walking to



Deer graze in a Western Wards field. The one on the right was killed by a car.

school," he said.

Deer have no natural predators in this country which may mean that in the long term there will have to be culls.



Major police operation to crack down on burglars

POLICE must protect the sanctity of people's homes against burglary.

Hampshire Chief Constable Alex Marshall admitted burglary had shot up by 30% and 4 out of 5 burglaries were unsolved.

He launched Operation Nemesis, which involves police forces across Hampshire concentrating on catching burglars, touring areas of high risk and increasing stop and search tactics.

Police will also contact known offenders, target the hard-core repeat offenders and opportunists.

Mr Marshall warned: "If you are a burglar, we will use all modern policing tools to catch you."

Council on-line

IF YOU have access to a PC you can key into Fareham Council's Web site www.fareham.gov.uk on either Google or Yahoo. It will tell you about the Council, agendas and committee minutes etc.

It's sod's law as blizzards delay hospital turf cutting

IT'S BEEN 25 years on the waiting list – longer than Casualty or Holby City have been running.

But Fareham's long overdue Community Hospital has suffered yet another delay.

This time, it was down to the weather.

Blizzards at the beginning of the month caused the traditional 'first sod digging' ceremony, due to have taken place at the Coldeast site on February 4, to be postponed.

"Many feel this ceremony should have taken place when winter snow was the norm," remarked Councillor David Swanbrow.

Instead of attending the ceremony to lend a hand with the turf cutting, he went out with his camera to record the conditions (above) which led to its postponement to a new



date.

The spadework was to have been performed by Fareham Mayor Councillor Ernest Crouch, with Council Leader Seán Woodward and Councillor Swanbrow in attendance.

Councillor Woodward said: "I've been campaigning for this hospital for 23 years, but will now have to wait just a little longer until a new date can be arranged."

Council may look to Coldeast for swim pool site

AN ALTERNATIVE site for the Western Wards swimming pool is being investigated by Fareham Council.

It could be built on land which may come into Council ownership at Coldeast.

Council Leader Councillor Seán Woodward said:

"Unfortunately, the planning consent for the swimming pool has now expired because 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 covenant to allow the scheme to progress.

Meantime, the possibility of finding a site at Coldeast is on the cards.

"Provision of a swimming pool in the Western Wards remains a high priority for the Council," said Councillor Woodward.

Road safety in Fareham is their prime concern

FAREHAM Road Safety Council meets three times a year under the chairmanship of Locks Heath Councillor Ruth Godrich.

Chairmen of the other Hampshire Road Safety Councils also meet three times a year in Winchester to discuss what each is doing.

They cover a range of issues, including safety of children walking and cycling to school, the '20 is plenty' advisory speed limit, cycle training, child car seats and school crossing patrols.

Also on the agenda are cycleways, police speed checks and illegally parked vehicles.

"We cover all aspects which affect the safety of all road users in Hampshire, Fareham being our first consideration," she said.

More school crossing patrols are needed. Contact Sam Orchard on 01962 874614 or email samanthaorchard@hants.gov.uk if you can help.

Training and uniforms are free.

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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Your man in Westminster



By **Mark Hoban**
MP for Fareham

The recession brings its own pressures on different aspects of life. Whilst we often think about its effect on employment in the private sector, we don't take into account the effect on Government finances.

The money the Government receives from taxes falls as fewer people work and company profits are slashed. At the same time, there are additional pressures to increase spending.

We see this affecting the police. The deteriorating economic position will have an impact on crime levels. There has already been an increase in burglaries, which is borne out by figures in Fareham. It's a Hampshire wide issue and the police are cracking down on it with Operation Nemesis.

But the police are faced with squaring the circle of increasing pressures on costs, a lower increase in their income from Government and a limit on how much they can increase council tax, while meeting the expectations of the public that there will be no cuts in the number of front line officers.

We need to lift some of the burdens which get in the way of putting police on the beat.

When I've been out on the beat, the police have complained about form filling and paperwork. When an arrest is made it is not just the alleged criminal who is detained at the station. Cut the form filling and we can put more police on the beat.

In these difficult times when there will be more demands on public services, we need to look at the changes we can make in our schools, hospitals, councils and police service to get the best value for money.

More bang for the buck.

You may contact Mark via his office
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Fareham's 'Get well soon' message to 'sick' councils

FAREHAM Council staff are happy to be firmly at the foot of one league table.

They are currently bottom of the sick list, so they are the healthiest of all town hall workers among Hampshire's 12 councils.

With an average of 7.2 working days lost per employee, they have just recorded their lowest sickness absence figures.

The 'sick man' of the county is Rushmoor Council with nearly twice as many absences

as Fareham, with Hart and Portsmouth close behind and also needing to 'get well soon'.

Executive Leader Seán Woodward said: "Low levels of sickness absence mean our staff are at work, providing residents with the high quality services they deserve.

"We work hard to ensure we manage the levels of sickness. Employee well-being and health is an important part of keeping a fit and healthy workforce."

WASTE NOT, WANT NOT...



IT WAS one of the World War 2 slogans which inspired people to save even their potato peelings.

Rationing ended over 50 years ago, but did you know that today on average 30% of all food bought in the UK is wasted?

Of all the rubbish dumped 20% is food leftovers.

In an effort to publicise this waste a campaign organised

by the Council was held in October in Fareham. It included stands in the Shopping Centre, Lockwood Centre and Stubbington

The highlight was a visit by the catering team from 3rd Field Ambulance, recently returned from Afghanistan, to Sainsbury's at Wallington to demonstrate and produce a selection of meals from food that would usually be binned.

The team, based at Haslar Hospital, served up an excellent pumpkin soup, a vegetarian quiche



Delicious: Sgt Mark Holbrook (right) and Cpl Martin Pollard serve the scraps to Brian Bayford and waste advisors Wendy, Jane and Karima.

and a Thai curry for visitors to the store.

The menus were produced by students and staff at Fareham College.

These were available to visitors to the exhibitions, who were advised that the reason for food wastage included

several factors, among them 'Buy One, Get One Free', misunderstanding of 'sell-by date' and 'best before'.

"Too much choice and wastage," said Councillor Brian Bayford, Executive Member for Streetscene.

Positive response to future planning strategy

FAREHAM Council has passed another milestone towards the production of a Local Development Framework (LDF) to replace the existing Local Plan Review, by publishing its preferred options for the core strategy.

The current Local Plan Review dates from June 2000, and the core strategy sets the framework for the LDF which will replace it.

It must largely conform with the South East Plan which is expected to get final Government approval imminently.

The process has been held up by the Government continually changing its rules.

If a council does not follow these rules the plan is likely to be found unsound at the inspection stage, so wasting a lot of council taxpayers' money.

Currently, the Council does not have to publish its preferred options for consultation before submitting its core strategy for inspection, but by doing so it gave all interested parties a chance to comment in time to make changes before finalising the plan.

Responses have been gen-

erally positive with many useful comments and suggestions, including input from a well-attended seminar held for members of Networkfareham, Fareham's Local Strategic Partnership.

County Councillor Ray Ellis commented:

"It was good to see a lot of response to the draft strategy, which is aimed at ensuring Fareham continues to be an attractive, safe and pleasant place to live, work and visit."

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