



**Conservatives**

# In Touch

with our community

PORTCHESTER – SPRING 2007

## New drinks clampdown welcomed by police

**DRINKING** alcohol and misbehaving in public places could land you in trouble anywhere in Fareham.

The Council has extended its Designated Public Places Order to cover all the Borough from June 1, 2007.

Police, who found an earlier Order designating the town centre useful in reducing nuisance, backed the move.

The Council and police gathered evidence to identify other potential areas where designation would provide relief from the impact of drink-related disorder.

Highlands, central Portchester, West End and Stubbington were identified, with Hill Head and Locks Heath also causing concern.

If an Order were made for each area, a small part of the Borough would not be covered and the risk of dispersal to nearby areas would be high, hence the Borough-wide Order.

It is an offence to drink alcohol after being asked not to by a police officer. Police may confiscate and dispose of any alcohol and containers; it is an arrestable offence to disobey an officer's request.

It is **not** an offence to have a glass of wine or beer at the family picnic on the beach or in the park **unless** it causes alcohol-related nuisance, annoyance or disorder.

# Fareham top choice for a happy family

**WE'VE BEEN** saying it for years, but now you're getting it from a renowned independent source – Fareham IS in the top six places in Britain to raise a family.

A *Reader's Digest* survey of all 408 local authority areas in England, Scotland and Wales put the Borough in 6th position.

Classy Winchester came 42nd, Manchester 328th and three London boroughs at the bottom.

It was parents themselves, not councillors or officials, who came up with their own criteria.

Most important was living in a family-friendly area with good schools and hospitals, low crime rates, affordable housing and high employment.

Other factors included low flooding risk, proximity of universities, colleges, major cities, coast and country parks and climate.

The survey's findings utterly refuted a survey published by two national newspapers last October which outraged the town by placing it bottom of the list of desirable places to live because of poor employment and high crime figures.

Council Executive Leader Seán Woodward said: "The results of this survey are wonderful news for Fareham. It is a really great place to raise a family, with countryside and the coast on your doorstep, along with the two larger cities of Portsmouth and Southampton close by.

"We have excellent schools and low crime rates and offer a safe and very attractive place to live.



"As well as being a great place environmentally, it is also a friendly place to live with good neighbours and supportive communities."

The Council took the *Independent on Sunday* and *Daily Mail* to the Press

Complaints commission and both printed apology letters.

Councillor Woodward added: "These letters quite clearly show that the producers of this survey made a mistake, but I am still anxious to ensure that the authors of the survey respond to us and that they explain how their data placed Fareham at the bottom of the ranking."

**•Research was carried out on behalf of *Reader's Digest* by YouGov who surveyed 1,162 parents with children under 16 in February.**

## Colours, bayonets, drums and a famous name in Falklands parade

**A VIP whose name was a top secret was to join veterans and dignitaries to mark the 25th anniversary of the Falklands War on Saturday, May 12.**

Fareham Council scheduled the official commemoration for 11am.

Shortly before, a Royal Navy guard of honour was to exercise

HMS Collingwood's right as freemen of the Borough to march through town with bayonets fixed and colours flying.

A Drumhead Service in West Street featuring the Royal Marines Band was to precede an address by the Council's Executive Leader, Councillor Seán

Woodward, and one by a veteran of the Falklands conflict.

The VIP was to open the Falklands Arch as an entrance to the town from Market Quay car park. A formal march past was being followed by a field gun display by HMS Collingwood Volunteer Cadet Corps.

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

# Fareham planning chairman gives insight into the system and strategy



**More flats:** Several large houses were demolished to make way for this controversial development on Portchester Road at Downend.

**FAREHAM Planning Department receive between 1650 and 1800 applications per year. These range from small extensions to major volume house building applications. Central Government dictate that the majority of applications should be delegated to professional planning officers to determine.**

Applications which are controversial and have either letters of support or objection come before the Planning Development Control Committee made up of elected Councillors with the assistance of professional planning officers.

Each application that comes before the committee will have a planning officer recommendation, either for permission or a refusal. Recommendations for or against an application are based on policies taken from the Borough Council's own approved book of planning rules known as the Fareham Borough Plan Review 2000.

This document, which is now almost out of date, is backed up by a series of Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) and more recently by Planning Policy Statements (PPSs), together with emerging policies which are issued by Central Government. These must be taken into consideration when applications are being determined.

Fareham Policy Planners are currently

working on a replacement for the nearly out of date Fareham Borough Plan Review 2000 which is called the Local Development Framework or LDF which will essentially shape the future planning requirements of Fareham Borough until 2026.

### Complex document

This is a very complex document which will have to stand the test of soundness by Central Government Planning Inspectors before it becomes approved.

Applicants and objectors are permitted to address the Planning Development Control Committee to voice their support or objection to a particular planning application.

A guidance note is provided to all deputies explaining what matters can be considered by the Committee as relevant and those that cannot (loss of property value etc).

Many deputies base their objections to an application on perhaps one or two policies from the Borough Plan which they feel are tailored to their objection and are surprised and angry to find that their objection is not taken into account and the Committee vote for approval of the application.

Councillors are bound by a Code of Conduct and are obliged to judge all applications against a whole raft of poli-

cies and guidelines before approving or refusing an application.

There have to be sound reasons for Councillors to go against a professional officer recommendation because an applicant does have the right to take a refused application to a Government Appeal and the matter is then decided by a Government Inspector.

Fighting an Appeal is both costly in Officer time and can, in some cases, involve costs being awarded against the Council if the Inspector considers that the planning officers or councillors put forward unsubstantiated grounds for refusal.

Too often I have heard some Councillors and members of the public say "We should stand up and be counted – refuse the application!"

### Council costs

The downside of this if carried through without good solid planning policies for refusal, is a lost Appeal decision and sometimes costs awarded against the Council.

The knock-on effect of enough lost Appeals could result in a rise in Council Tax for all local tax payers to pay for these extra incurred costs.

Another factor for Councillors to consider is that lost Appeals can affect the Planning Department's overall perform-

ance figures when submitted to Central Government.

Fareham is amongst the highest performing Councils in England and its PDG goes towards funding the Planning Policy Department and its staff of highly trained Officers who are responsible for our LDF and ultimately the complex future of planning in Fareham for many years to come.

**Brownfield sites**

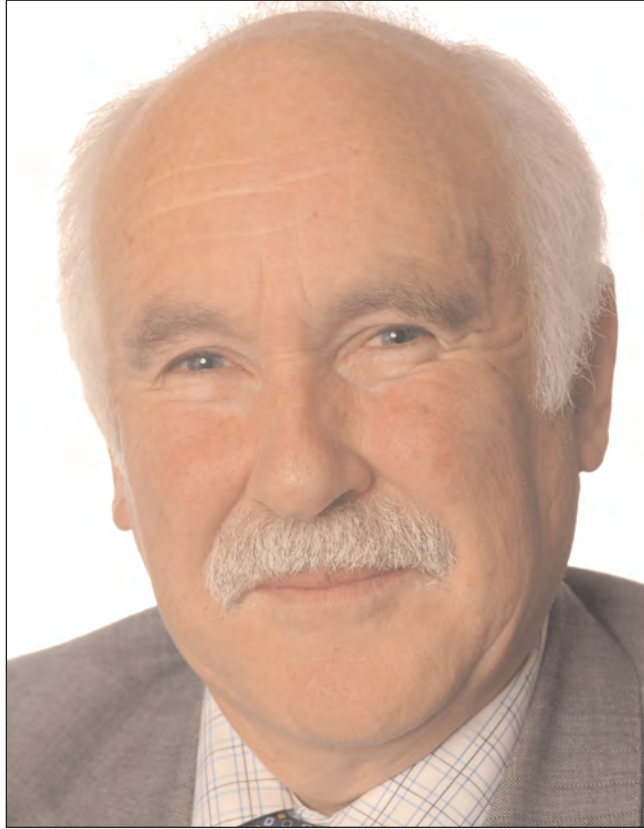
Finally, I turn to the highly controversial and thorny issue of current policy regarding redevelopment of so called "brownfield sites", back gardens developments and replacement of large houses with flats or higher density housing.

Current Government thinking requires Councils like Fareham to make more efficient use of previously developed land (brownfield sites) and encourage replacement of large houses and gardens with higher density housing or flats in order to preserve existing countryside and strategic gaps and other types of open space.

It is not surprising with these constraints and Government annual targets to meet on new dwellings that developers respond by seeking out large plots within the urban areas in order to meet the demands for new housing.

Fareham also has a target for providing 100 affordable houses per year.

Fareham through the "Partnership for



**Portchester Councillor Nick Walker is chairman of the Planning Development Control Committee.**

Urban South Hampshire" (PUSH – which is representatives from a number of local Authorities) have proposed Strategic Development Areas (SDAs) for large developments. One is north of Fareham and one at Eastleigh.

These areas will absorb huge amounts

of housing after 2016 and should take the pressure off the existing urban areas.

We are however faced with annual target numbers until then, which will have to be accommodated within the existing urban areas.

**Denser development**

This will inevitably lead to much more denser development unless this Government changes its policies and direction on housing development in the South of England. Fareham Planning Department and its councillors do strive to make sure that new developments are of a high standard and design.

Like myself, all members of Fareham Planning Development Committee often feel frustrated and unhappy about some of the decisions we take, but inevitably we have to strike a sensible balance given all the constraints and rules that surround us.

We have to abide by Government dictate where the first rule states "presumption is that planning consent should be granted unless there is an extremely good reason why not".

The perception by many members of the public is that this should be the other way around.

I hope this small insight helps you to understand the dilemma faced by me and my fellow planning councillors.

**PORTCHESTER 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.**

**ANY PROBLEMS? WE'RE HERE TO HELP**

Please write the details here and give the exact location

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.....  
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Your name .....

Address .....

..... Postcode.....

Tel ..... Email .....

Please cut this out and post it or email or phone your councillors who are listed here.

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## Our man in Westminster



By  
**Mark Hoban**  
MP for Fareham

IN THE last edition of *In Touch*, I wrote about the importance of education and the seminar that I was to chair at the beginning of March.

I am delighted to say that we had an excellent turnout and a first class discussion. We had a broad cross-section of local people including governors, head teachers, teachers, parents and employers.

What I found interesting was the degree of consensus achieved from such a diverse audience and this was expressed in three main themes.

The first was the fundamental importance of getting the basics right. We could not allow children to leave school without having mastered English and maths. Basic skills are fundamental to living and working in a society that is increasingly dependant upon technology.

The second point was the need for a balanced curriculum. Whilst we must get the basics right, children need a broadly based education too. There was a concern that the emphasis on league tables and targets is skewing what is happening in our schools. There has to be time for music as well as maths!

The third theme was to recognise that every child is different and their needs vary. At every level of ability, education should be tailored to meet individual needs. Concern was expressed about the support available for children with special needs and for the most able. This led to a discussion about the choices available for young people at 16 and 18: making sure a wide range of academic and vocational courses is offered to meet the needs of those wishing to continue in education.

In an increasingly demanding world, we need to ensure that our young people are well equipped for the challenges that lie ahead. As I visit local businesses, I see the increased pressure that there is for skills, but education is about much more than turning people out ready for work. As the expectations on our schools increase, it is vital we give the support that they need as they change to meet these pressures.

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# Double yellow peril alert



**WATCH OUT!**  
Fareham has almost doubled its corps of parking wardens.

And they have orders to stick one on you if you infringe regulations.

The crackdown follows the Council taking over full responsibility for parking enforcement from the police, which now covers on and off street parking.

It aims to discourage indiscriminate parking that causes obstruction to other motorists, pedestrians, cyclists and people with disability and to make sure there is safe passage through the borough.

There are currently eight parking attendants, including one supervisor, but this figure will rise to 15 with two supervisors.

From April, enforcement is taking place seven days a week with wardens working a



**Just the ticket!** But not if you're on the receiving end from one of Fareham's 15 parking attendants.

shift system

They can now to slap a penalty charge notice on any car parked in a no waiting area, an area of single or double yellow lines and they are managing off street car parks and issuing residents' and visitors' permits.

## New community action teams promised £100,000 to tackle grass roots issues

**FIVE community action teams will be set up across Fareham to encourage more grass roots public participation in shaping the borough's future.**

The Executive agreed the principle as part of the Community Engagement Strategy which should be ready for consideration in June.

Councillor Trevor Cartwright, Executive Member for Service, Performance and Improvement, said the aim was to develop greater emphasis on neighbourhood working and community engagement so local people could have more influence over local services and a greater capacity to tackle local issues for themselves.

"Fareham has always been a council committed to providing good quality services for the local community. This success has been built on a good relationship between

elected members and the local community," he said.

Community action teams, will offer the opportunity to:

- Strengthen the power of local councillors to act as advocates and leaders of the communities that they represent
- Provide information of interest and relevance to local communities, hear residents' views and provide feedback on issues raised
- Permit communities to bid for extra funding to be used on specific projects in their area
- Enable people to raise specific issues of local concern with the appropriate people

Meetings of the community action teams will be held at various venues throughout each neighbourhood and last no longer than two hours.

They will be attended by

ward councillors and will be championed by a council chief officer to provide a senior profile and ensure that any follow-up action is treated with the appropriate level of urgency and importance.

Representatives of other agencies such as the Police, Hampshire County Council, and the Primary Care Trust will also attend.

The Council will set aside a central budget of £100,000 in 2007/8 for neighbourhood initiatives and councillors will work with their community action teams to put forward bids for projects in their area.

It is proposed to appoint two new community engagement officers, supported by a community assistant, to assist the teams.

Action teams will be set up in Portchester, Crofton, Titchfield, Western Wards and Fareham Town.

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