



In Touch

with our community

PORTCHESTER – SPRING 2005

Tories' sweet chariot carries home smallest ever council tax increases

Swing low, low, low

CONSERVATIVES are acclaiming a double first in Fareham and Hampshire by setting the lowest borough and county council tax rises.

Fareham's share of the council tax bill showed just a 2.41% rise. It was the lowest tax and lowest actual increase in cash terms in the county and was below the 2.8% inflation figure for the second year running.

Hampshire's tax rise of 3.5% was its lowest ever, despite receiving the fifth lowest Government grant among all the counties.

Fareham Council Executive Leader Seán Woodward hailed it as 'a major achievement in terms of finance strategy and budgetary control'.

He said: "Despite receiving the lowest Government grant of any district in Hampshire, we continue to set the lowest council tax."

County Council Chairman John Bryant said: "We know our residents do not want steep rises in council tax, but expect excellent services. We have achieved this by efficiency gains and savings."

Presenting his sixth budget since the Conservatives took control of Fareham Borough Council in 1999, Councillor Woodward said his aims had always been to:

- Establish and maintain a reserve equivalent to 5% of total gross expenditure. Current figure is 4.9%
- Minimise council tax rises by keeping them in line with inflation.

This has been achieved for 2005-06, thus meeting resi-



Seán Woodward: "A major achievement."



Apollo launch: Artist's impression of the state-of-the-art cinema at Market Quay.

THE COUNCIL TAX BILL

BAND D	
Fareham	£126.27 + 2.41%
Hampshire County Council	£869.40 + 3.48%
Hampshire Fire and Rescue	£52.11 + 1.58%
Hampshire Police	£113.76 + 4.98%
TOTAL	£1,161.54 + 3.42%

Most Fareham properties are in Band C, where the council tax for 2 adults will be £112.24, an increase of just 5p a week.

dents' requests in a recent survey.

A Liberal-Democrat move during the meeting to filch nearly £250,000 from the reserve was thrown out by the council.

Councillor Woodward continued: "At the same time, we have been able to absorb all unfunded government initiatives while freezing pay and display parking charges for the past three years."

An upbeat review by the independent Audit Commission showed Fareham to be "a good authority" - good enough to be within two points of excellent and to place the borough in the top 20% of all English district councils.

He outlined the Conservatives' high priority ambitions, which included providing a swimming pool in west Fareham, supporting building of the community hospi-

tal and development of shops, restaurants, cinemas and leisure facilities at Market Quay.

Fareham's capital programme embraced £42m of schemes over the next five years.

These included new skate parks, play areas, bus shelters, CCTV, pay-on-foot car parking, improvements to Fareham Leisure Centre, Ferneham Hall and other community buildings, a customer service centre in the Civic Offices and matched grants to external organisations.

•If you are having difficulty paying your council tax bills, you may be eligible for council tax benefit. Phone the County Council Information Centre on 0800 028 0888 for more details.



WARD NEWS BRIEFS

Dore Avenue trees

Work to thin and crown lift trees in Kilmiston Drive will be done after requests from residents to Councillor Nick Walker.

It will help to reduce shading to the backs of properties.

Councillor Walker said: "I understand that tree surgeons will undertake these works shortly."

Public drinking ban

Police and shopkeepers have welcomed the new law which came into force on March 1, banning the drinking of alcohol in certain public places.

Police now have powers to arrest anybody who defies a request to stop drinking in a designated area.

They can also seize opened or unopened cans or bottles.

Traders have been asked by police to help enforce the ban.

Disabled access

The path around the Cams Hall site, which has been a problem in an application for lottery funding for improvement and disabled access along the creek to Portchester, should be resolved soon.

It will open up a long scenic rural route for wheelchair users and provide shorter circular routes.

Foundry site

Tesco is applying to build a supermarket and 89 residential properties on the site of the former foundry in Quay Street.

Portchester Parish Hall is Nick's pride and joy



ONE OF the biggest issues raised by residents is the provision of modern, up to date community facilities.

As chairman of the trustees of Portchester Parish Hall, Councillor Nick Walker was at the forefront of providing a new, much needed modern parish hall near the top of Castle Street, which caused some local concern at the time.

Four years on, he feels fully vindicated insofar as this new facility has proved to be

an enormous success with Portchester people and 37 users groups, many of which have been formed since opening, now using the hall to virtual capacity.

He says: "The provision of modern facilities such as this encourage user groups to form and provide useful recreational facilities as the needs of the population change."

He is also proud that his design concept for the parish hall is now being adopted in other areas.

MP to discuss Portchester residents' fears

Alarm over four-lane M27 plan

A SCHEME to widen the M27 motorway to four lanes has alarmed Portchester residents.

People living near the motorway have written to Fareham MP Mark Hoban because they are worried about the impact they will have on their homes and quality of life.

Mark Hoban says he will be meeting the Highways agency next month and will discuss residents' fears.

Councillor Ernest Crouch, who has investigated the plans, said that the Highways Agency stated there would be no need to widen the cutting between Junctions 11 and 12,

although the embankments would have to be strengthened.

"The extra lanes will ease the traffic congestion at peak periods, avoiding the problem of stationary cars and lorries polluting the locality."



Ernest Crouch: Investigated the plans

More patrols to catch the litter louts and dog foulers

TWO more enforcement officers will be patrolling the borough from April to help keep Fareham clean.

In the past three years, 140 fixed penalties for dog fouling have been issued and there have been seven successful prosecutions for non-pay-

ments. Eight penalties have been issued to litter droppers, three of whom will be appearing in court for non-payment.

Officers are also visiting schools to increase awareness that the team mean business.

Penalty for not recycling

PEOPLE have not been putting enough into recycling bins.

The council will now introduce alternate weekly collections of household and garden waste to try to meet the Government's 40% target by 2006.

The alternate weekly cycle will start on September 5, 2005.

Householders can have more than one blue-top recycling bin. Contact the council on 01329 236100 or email waste@fareham.gov.uk for more information.

Fareham house prices keep nine in ten people from getting a foot on the ladder

A SURVEY conducted recently, when over 6,000 households in Fareham were consulted, shows that house prices have risen so far that nine out of ten people can no longer anticipate being able to get a foot on the ownership ladder.

Councillor Ernest Crouch and his team of housing offi-

cers responsible for strategy will be using all the information gathered to develop the updated Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document.

This is used to inform landowners and developers of their part in the provision of social housing, either for rent, low cost or shared ownership.

Looking after the needs of young people

AN UNBIASED appraisal of the needs of young people was delegated to Cloud 9 consultancy, and an action plan has been approved by the Executive.

It aims to improve the health and well-being of young people, provide affordable, safe and accessible leisure, help find homes, promote and develop education, ensure

they can live free from crime, discrimination and prejudice.

It will also help them to learn about money and work and generally to increase the resources devoted to young people's organisations and services.

It has been a very wide-ranging consultation and included a conference attended by 150 young people.

'Hands off' the strategic gap warning shot to developers

A BID to develop on the strategic green gap between Portchester and Fareham has been hit for six by the council's planners.

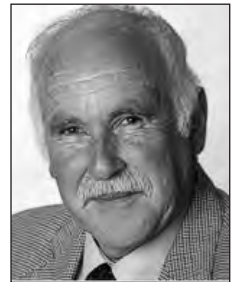
Officers rejected an outline application to build on land at the end of Cranleigh Road.

Councillor Nick Walker said a detailed application would also be fiercely opposed for six good reasons.

- 1 It's an intrusion into open countryside
- 2 The special character of the coast viewed from the sea would be spoilt and an important strategic gap lost
- 3 Undesirable loss of Grade 1 & 2 agricultural land
- 4 Impact on nature conservation interests
- 5 Cranleigh Road is unsuitable to take traffic from the development
- 6 Greenfield sites in the council's local plan have not been released for building.

Councillor Walker added: "All of the above reasons for refusal are policies within the current Fareham Borough Local Plan Review.

"This will eventually be replaced by a new plan called the Local Development Framework, expected to be in force in approximately two to three years."



Nick Walker

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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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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Your man in Westminster



By
Mark Hoban
MP for Fareham

Under Mr Blair's Government, council tax bills have gone through the roof. Pensioners, on fixed incomes, have been hit the hardest by this stealth tax, with the hike in council tax snatching back over a third of the increase in the basic state pension for a typical pensioner. To make matters worse, if it keeps going up at the current rate, experts predict bills will hit £2,000 for the typical household if Mr Blair wins a third term in power.

I believe that increasing taxes for people who cannot afford to pay is unfair. It is unfair to people who have worked hard, always played by the rules and dutifully paid their taxes on time. Pensioners deserve to live with dignity and security when they retire.

That's why a Conservative Government will introduce an automatic discount on council tax bills for pensioners over 65 - in addition to the existing single person's discount. We will halve council tax bills both for single pensioners over the age of 65 and for pensioner couples where both people are over 65, up to a maximum £500 discount per bill. This will cut typical Band D bills in Fareham by £500.00 for a pensioner couple. We will fund this tax cut by cutting waste and bureaucracy across government, so your frontline local services will still receive the support they deserve.

This commitment is just one part of our Action Plan for pensioners. We are also committed to increasing the state pension in line with earnings, not prices, providing an extra £7 a week for single pensioners and £11 a week for couples over and above inflation by the end of our first term.

Our plans will lift the council tax burden from hard-pressed local people, helping those who have been hit hardest by Labour's tax increases.

**•You may contact Mark via his office
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email: mail@markhoban.com**

Prescott's message to travellers and gypsies...

Carry on camping

NEVER mind the filth and damage they leave behind, travellers will be able to defy local planners and set up permanent camps in the countryside if the Deputy Prime Minister gets his way.

In yet another move to undermine the powers of local councils, John Prescott proposes a series of modifications to planning laws to give itinerant advantageous approvals for developments.

The idea will outrage council taxpayers, who already have to foot hefty legal bills for eviction orders to get rid of travellers and clear up their mess.

Mr Prescott intends to impose a duty on councils to provide transit facilities.

If they do not, then they will have no legal right to move on those who park illegally.

Councillor Brian Bayford said: "Your councillors acknowledge that there is a great difference between the true 'Romany' gypsy, who has been a feature of our culture for centuries, and the 'drop out travellers' who cause significant damage wherever they stop.

"There are some permanent gypsy sites

in Fareham that cause no problems. However, residents will be aware of the council's constant vigilance against incursions by travellers and the cost to council tax payers of clearing the damage.

"Fareham Council has expressed its grave concern to the Deputy Prime Minister that the proposals define a system that discriminates against the majority of citizens who live settled lives in their communities and pay income and council taxes."

He added: "Any proposal that allows different beneficial rules to apply to minority groups at the expense of the majority is unacceptable."



Devastation: This is how travellers left the Lysses site.

Good on yer, Connie! Litter campaign from Oz should be tried in Britain

DON'T be a chucker!

"Australian, and probably one of the best captions promoting a responsible attitude to litter disposal that I have seen," says Councillor Mrs Connie Hockley.

Anybody visiting Australia will see these signs at road junctions and along the highways.

"The marvellous thing about them is that they have actually worked.

"While there are still idiots who throw anything out of the car window, the signs have reduced the overall incidence of litter loutish behaviour substantially.

"Why can't it work here?" asks Mrs Hockley.

There were 543 incidents of illegally dumped waste

recorded in Fareham between April 2004 and January 2005.

Disposing of fly-tipped rubbish could cost council tax payers over £19,000.

She said:

"Who hasn't despaired at the amount of discarded rubbish that accrues at motorway slip roads leading into our towns?"

"Who among us are socially irresponsible and continue to be a chucker? Take it home and dispose of it properly!"

Britain should follow the Aussies' example and place signs on highways and shop-



Connie Hockley:
'Don't be a chucker.'

ping areas reminding people to dispose of rubbish in a responsible way.

She added: "It's largely an education problem and one that must be made to work before we flounder under a

mountain of bottles, cartons, cigarette packets and other rubbish that blights our communities."

•If you see anyone fly-tipping, call the council's enforcement team on 01329 236100 or email waste@fareham.gov.uk

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