



In Touch

with our community

PORTCHESTER WEST – 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 footpath 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

Development ruled out in wake of conservation area changes

Unacceptable harm

The planning application for the erection of 14 dwellings with garages, car parking and landscaping, following demolition of existing buildings at 34-36 Portchester Road, was dismissed by a Government inspector.

The inspector said the development would result in unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area and would not achieve a good quality of design.

Obstruction

Parked cars often obstruct refuse collection vehicles trying to gain access to roads across the Borough.

This can result in crews having to return the following day hoping that access will be clear.

Vehicles that obstruct are reported to the Police.

On collect days please help your refuse crews by ensuring your vehicle does not cause an obstruction.

Healthy walking

Several 'Walking to Health' events are available during March.

The free walks are organised by Fareham Borough Council and run by a network of volunteer walk leaders.

Note: only guide dogs and hearing dogs are allowed on walks, unless otherwise stated in the walk programme.

For information, either phone 01329 236100 or email.

FEARS that removal of the Shearwater housing estate from a conservation area would lead to nearby open space being developed have been quashed by Fareham's planning chief.

Councillor Nick Walker, chairman of the Development Control Committee, said:

"I can assure residents that this is not the case. This open piece of land, which was formerly an old household tip site, is still protected because it is in an area of coast and countryside.

"Fareham Lake is also a site of special scientific interest, a RAMSAR site and special protection area due to its importance for nature conservation.

"Not a single expression of interest has been put forward by any potential developer for this land to be included under the requirements of the Local Development Framework (LDF)."

LDF is the policy document to replace the redundant Fareham Local Borough Plan, which will provide site allocations for many years to come.

A review of boundaries in Portchester led to the Shearwater housing estate being removed from the conservation area.

It means that residents wishing to make alterations to their homes, such as extensions or conservatories, no longer have to obtain conservation area consent as well as planning permission.

It will also save money as applications made to the Council in a conservation area have to be advertised in local newspapers, which is costly and time consuming.

Councillor Walker said many people were unaware that Portchester had



Cams Hall: Its restoration was part of the bargain to release land from the former estate for the Shearwater development.

two conservation areas, one at Cams Hall and the other being Castle Street and the area around Portchester Castle.

He said: "The open land upon which Shearwater Avenue, Magpie, Partridge, Goldcrest and Peacock Close were constructed was part of the original Cams Hall estate and, therefore, when the boundaries of the conservation area were set in 1982 this land was included.

"Subsequently, Fareham Borough Council released this land for housing as part of the enabling development requirement to secure the restoration of Cams Hall and the Home Farm buildings."

Councils have a statutory duty to review their conservation areas from time to time, including the boundaries, and more particularly whether any part of the area is no longer considered to possess the special interest which led to its original designation.

"For this reason it was considered that a modern but high quality development such as Shearwater Avenue etc no longer came within the remit of the Cams Hall Conservation Area status," he added.

Fly-posters lead to flood of inquiries

WORRIED residents bombarded the Civic Offices about 11 planning notices posted on lampposts around The Thicket.

Although they resembled official planning notices, they had been fly-posted and had nothing to do with the Council.

Residents feared development might be on the cards at Winnham Farm, Portchester, which has been submitted to the Council by an agent on behalf of the landowner for consideration for future housing.

The site lies within the countryside, and the current Core Strategy document states that greenfield sites are not required to fulfil our housing requirement as the target can be achieved on previously developed land.

But it is the purpose of the Site Allocations document to illustrate all sites submitted to the Council hence its inclusion.

A planning officer photographed the posters and the enforcement team was contacted. People who called in were made aware of the situation and were allowed a further week to submit comments, giving them time to read the consultation documents.

Jack pipes up with winning flats name entry

A COMPETITION to name new flats in Portchester revealed an interesting bit of local history.

Pupils at Portchester Community School were invited to find a name with a local connection for the 14 flats above Lloyds TSB in West street built by Portsmouth Housing Association in partnership with Fareham Council.

Ten-year-old Jack Rowe produced the winning entry 'Pipers House', which relates to the clay pipe factory once located nearby.

The Mayor, Councillor Katrina Trott, presented Jack with £50 Woolworths vouchers. Runners-up Ryan Lee and Matthew Noyce, both Year 8, received £10 vouchers.

The first floor of the building was previously

unused office space and was empty for several years.

The Association bought a long-term lease from the freeholder to acquire the first floor and convert it, also building a second floor to allow more flats on the site.

The flats will be home to tenants from the Council's housing waiting list, through the Letselect bidding scheme.

New planning forms offer faster on-line processing

THE NEW Standard Planning Application Form will be rolled out across England under Government management, in conjunction with the Planning Portal, which provides planning information and services online.

From April 6, the forms will be the only official method of submitting a planning application, which is expected to lead to a significant rise in applications submitted online.

Applications submitted on existing forms after this deadline cannot be accepted by councils.

The Government is committed to making the planning system faster and easier to use.

It will speed up the process, enable more planning services to be provided online and give applicants certainty about the information they need to provide.

Residents' £12,000 grant to spruce Portchester precinct

PARKING and a cash boost for the precinct were the main topics at the second round of Community Action Team (CATs) meetings in Portchester in January.

Around 50 residents attended and got the chance to identify hot spots, where parking on double yellow lines and grass verges were causing issues.

Several people were concerned about parking outside schools during drop-off and pick-up times.

They heard that since taking over parking enforcement in April 2007, Fareham Council had regularly deployed parking attendants to the Portchester area.

Over 230 hours had been spent in this area of the Borough and some 145 penalty charge notices issued.

Residents received updates showing a 12.5% reduction in reported crimes in the Portchester area, and a presentation on fire safety from Hampshire Fire & Rescue.

Councillor Nick Walker, who chaired the meeting, said: "I was determined to ensure that residents had a real chance to voice their concerns, so with this in



mind I extended the meeting until all the issues were raised.

"As a result, I and the officers could learn first hand about the issues causing most concern."

A report was given on the progress of the projects that had been submitted already for CATs funding.

Councillor Walker confirmed that at the Executive meeting on February 4 the first bid from residents in the Portchester CATS area was considered and £12,000 allocated for improvements to the precinct.

It will enable the renewal of four tree seats and two benches, the painting of 12 lighting columns and re-paving under seating which has become uneven due to tree root growth.

Planning roadshow draws an audience

A RECENT consultation roadshow offering residents the chance to comment on development in the Borough of Fareham has been hailed a great success.

More than 700 people attended over the six consultation days and many more have commented via on-line forms and information on the Council's web-site.

Residents were able to find out more about the Local Development Framework (LDF), which is the blueprint for development in the Borough until 2026.

The roadshows gave residents the chance to talk to officers working on the area's plans for development, to ask questions about specific and possible sites and to comment on where they think development should and should not take place.

PORTCHESTER WEST 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.

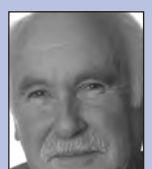
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Your man in Westminster



**By Mark Hoban
MP for Fareham**

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 crack-down 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 speed-



ing 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.