



In Touch

with our community

SARISBURY & PARK GATE – 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.

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



WARD NEWS BRIEFS

Council stumps up

The council found itself on a sticky wicket with residents living around Sarisbury Green.

Six hits have been crashing into their gardens for years.

But the sound of leather on willow should be sweeter this season.

The council has stumped up £5,000 for poles and netting to be placed along that side of the boundary in April, similar to those erected years ago to prevent lofted drives landing amid traffic on the A27.

Rookery Farm

The Rookery Farm saga continues.

Planning consent on the recycling facility expired in December and the County Council's Regulatory has postponed its decision to April 27.

Public concerns remain on the need for the site, noise, dust and wildlife. We hope permission will be refused.

Deer lamping

Poachers are "lamping" for deer at night in Holly Hill Park.

They shine a bright light at animals, making them freeze and easier to shoot.

Evidence of butchered deer has been found near an entrance to the park, and a carcass was found in the allotments in Allotment Road.

Anyone hearing gunshots near the park should phone Hampshire Police immediately on 0845 045 4545.

Prescott goes flat out with his planning dictatorship

He's bulldozing thousands of 'Coronation Street' homes

DEPUTY Prime Minister John Prescott's dictatorial planning policies are forcing us to become a nation of flat dwellers, while scores of 'Coronation Streets' are being demolished.

Planning applications to build flats in Park Gate have been flooding into Fareham Council and it is being repeated across South East England, with councils powerless to stop them.

Sarisbury Councillor David Swanbrow said last year, for the first time, 50% of new homes built in the South East were flats.

In 2000, just over 25% of new dwellings were flats and 40 in every 100 homes were detached houses.

"So what has changed? The main driver is the Government's demand for higher density housing, which is forced on local councils by planning guidance which they cannot ignore.

"Whether or not there are enough people wanting to live in flats rather than houses has yet to be seen.

"There is always the possibility that much of the new development being built today will remain empty unless the developer is prepared to drop the price considerably.

"If that is the case then market forces may reverse the trend.

"Meanwhile John Prescott is still determined to demolish perfectly good Victorian houses in the North of England in the name of urban regeneration.

"Not just a few in run down areas, but hundreds of thousands of good solid homes.

"The architect, Lord Rogers, who chaired the task force set up by John Prescott to look at revitalising urban areas, says that this is totally contrary to what his task force proposed."

Councillor Swanbrow added: "One must wonder just how joined up are the planning policies that are imposed on us."



Demolition job: Bastins will make way for even more flats.



David Swanbrow: 'We're forced to obey'

He overrules council to force flats on Park Gate

FAREHAM planners rejected six applications to build flats at Park Gate.

And each time they were overruled.

Four were granted on appeal, the others referred to a Government inspector and then granted. The result?

- Bastins will disappear to be replaced by 40 flats.
- The garage at the Middle Road-Station Road junction will be replaced with flats.
- AMV in Botley Road has been demolished to make way for 32 flats.
- 30 plus flats are nearly finished in Station Road
- Two further developments are planned off Lower Duncan Road.

Councillor Marian Ellerton said: "All these developments provide one parking space per unit and will lead to further congestion on the already overcrowded local roads and on-street parking problems.

"Residents should be aware that decisions are being made under Government instructions.

"This makes it impossible for your councillors to help and support decisions that should be judged locally."



Marian Ellerton: 'Further congestion'



WHITELEY *Matters*

Spring 2005

Decision soon on Sweethills parking ban

RESIDENTS were consulted on a no-parking at any time order covering all of Sweethills Crescent.

Five objections were received and it will be considered by the Council's Executive soon.

It is being paid for by developers of

215 houses off Dickens Drive, plus a traffic calming scheme for Sweethills Crescent. Extent of the order could be greatly reduced by the Executive to tackle significant visibility problems which made the bus company seriously consider stopping the service.



Whiteley Primary School: Top of the class for quality, but extending it would mean felling trees in the background.

Huge response to education survey

“We’d move to find best schools for our kids” say parents

MANY parents would prefer to sell up and move from Whiteley to get the best education for their children.

Although they say the quality of primary education in Whiteley is excellent, there is not enough of it available at convenient locations

The distance some families are expected to travel to a primary school is unacceptable and more primary school provision in Whiteley is required urgently.

People are also dissatisfied with the provision for secondary education.

These were just some of the main issues highlighted in the Conservatives' recent education survey, which brought an unprecedented response.

Hundreds of forms were returned, demonstrating parents' interest and concerns

“There were some very clear mes-

sages which we will ensure are fed into Hampshire County Council's consideration of education facilities to serve Whiteley,” said Council Executive Leader Councillor Seán Woodward.

“This year, even the next nearest schools (Sarisbury Infant and Park Gate Primary) are full, necessitating travel even further afield.

“Secondary education provision is viewed as, if anything, even more unsatisfactory with many parents unwilling to send their children the large distance to north Fareham to Henry Cort School.

Councillor Woodward, who thanked residents for their superb response to the survey, said many would be willing to sell up and move to get their children into the school of their choice, be that primary or secondary.

“This may go some way to explain why Whiteley Primary School, despite being oversubscribed at Reception level, has nearly 100 empty places in the later years with an abnormally high number of children being withdrawn before they complete their education at the school.”

Conservatives will ensure that the education authority continues to be made forcefully aware of the issues.

“Hampshire County Council is currently consulting on primary education provision, but continues to completely ignore the equally unsatisfactory nature of long journeys to an out-of-area secondary school.

“There are six secondary schools in Fareham, but only one in the west of the borough, despite 40% of the population living in the Western Wards.”

The County Council is currently consulting on four options:

- New 210-place primary school in Whiteley
- New 90-place infant school in Whiteley
- Extending Whiteley Primary School from 630 to 840 places
- Using surplus capacity in existing Western Wards primary schools

Councillor Woodward added: “Their consultation document effectively rules out the first three options!”



WHITELEY *Matters*

Spring 2005

Shop will remain open

ONE STOP announced closure of their temporary building by the end of March on Yew Tree Drive which houses Whiteley's only convenience store, chemist and post office.

This is because they failed to get the franchise for the permanent shopping development due to open in September at Gull Coppice.

Councillor Seán Woodward instantly had approaches made to One Stop to persuade them to leave everything on site so that the building and its lease could be taken over for the intervening six months by SPAR, the new retailer for Gull Coppice.

One Stop eventually agreed and, subject to completing the lease, trading should continue with minimal disruption until the permanent facilities are available.

Skatepark back on the agenda

WHITELEY Parish Council agreed to reconsider pleas for a skatepark adjoining Meadowside Leisure Centre at a meeting on March 30.

Winchester City Council dropped the £46,000 plan after the parish council objected, although Fareham Borough Council was footing the bill for the scheme, which had earlier been agreed by all the authorities.

It is hoped to have it ready for the summer holidays. *In Touch* will keep you informed.

Rangers patrol to protect woodland

FAREHAM'S Countryside Ranger Service was established to help improve the green spaces and countryside within the borough.

Four Rangers, all of whom have practical countryside and conservation skills, provide advice and practical work that aims to benefit wildlife and people.

Each has local knowledge and is responsible for sites in a specific part of the borough and is a point of contact for local people.

They patrol the informal open spaces to ensure they are safe for public use, undertake practical conservation work, run events and involve local people to care for their natural environment.

One of their beats is Whiteley Woods, which are what remain of a lost landscape, once forming part of the sprawling Forest of Bere.

Today, nestled within the modern landscape, patches of woodland containing hazel coppice, ancient oaks and numerous species of flora, such as bluebells and wood anemones, can still be found.

These wooded sites provide a perfect habitat for Whiteley's resident deer population, and are invaluable homes



to insects, birds and fungi.

With all the immediate path and fencing work complete the woods of Whiteley are about to enter an extremely busy period.

Traditional woodland management practices such as coppicing, alongside modern methods designed to increase site biodiversity, are about to commence and any help with this work will be greatly appreciated.

A task is held in Whiteley every Wednesday from 10am, at varying locations. Next event is a nightingale walk on Friday, April 15 at Round Coppice Woodland, off Whiteley Way. Bring binoculars and meet bright-eyed and bushy-tailed at 5.00 am.

Doctors' delight as search for new surgery ends



WHITELEY'S doctors and their patients will be delighted to get a new surgery to replace the ramshackle prefab in Yew Tree Drive.

GPs have been looking for a site for ages, the Fareham Council came to the rescue by agree-

ing to sell them the land which they currently share with One Stop.

Once terms have been agreed and planning consent granted, the surgery can be built, possibly with an attached pharmacy.

Relief wardens



Following our success in getting the crossings designated and with thanks to those who volunteered to man them, we now have an appeal for relief wardens to cover for holidays, sickness etc.

Amazing response to borough survey

THERE was "an incredible response" to the Conservatives' borough survey which was distributed with the last edition of In Touch.

Key issues to emerge are traffic, vandalism and anti-social behaviour, planning and council tax.

Main national issues were crime, education, the NHS, asylum and immigration.

Councillor Seán Woodward, who thanked everybody who filled in the forms, commented: "Most residents support our campaigns to preserve open spaces and strategic gaps by having higher housing density on selected sites.

"They also support the provision of a Community Hospital at Coldeast with accident treatment and consultant outpatient facilities.

"Not surprisingly most residents also want to see more police officers visible on the beat in the area."

Kids delighted with Badgers Copse play area



Children are delighted with the long-awaited play area in Badgers Copse, which opened in February after Councillor Brian Bayford stepped in to talk to Wimpey Homes.

Future projects for the area include a protected bus shelter and the provision of a crossing at the junction of the A27 (Bridge Road) and Botley Road to make it safer for mums and kids.

SARISBURY & PARK GATE 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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Four 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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Telephone: 01329 233573
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