

Hospital go-ahead after 25-year wait

But is the prognosis another quarter century before the beds arrive?



Gentle curves: Shape of the new hospital is captured in the artist's sketch (above) as the Coldeast site (right) awaits the first digger.



IT'S BEEN hanging around for 25 years in the waiting room, but this month the trauma finally ended when the community hospital was given the all-clear.

Initially, it will not be a hospital in the true sense because there are no beds in Phase 1, but there will be space for a two-storey extension with beds.

The Council's planners approved plans for the new hospital at Coldeast with parking for 120 cars and work should begin soon.

It was hoped that access to the hospital could have been achieved via Cold East Way, but both the Primary Care Trust (PCT) and the Hampshire County Council argued that this was not possible.

The entrance will be via a new access on Brook Lane, which will mean some tree loss although the curved roadway should ensure that the visual damage will be kept to a minimum.

Councillor David Swanbrow, Executive Member for Planning and Transportation, said: "All traffic studies suggest that traffic on Brook Lane as a result of the hospital will be

only marginally increased."

The building will be of single-storey design in the shape of a gentle curve. It will be built on a part of the Coldeast site that was reserved for health facilities in the 2000 Fareham Local Plan Review.

High quality care

It will provide a brand new facility that will focus on the needs of the local community and improve patients' access to high quality health care close to their homes.

There will be diagnostic and imaging facilities with space reserved for a mobile MRI scanner. Services currently provided by the Sylvan Clinic will transfer to the new facility.

These amenities should save many residents having to make visits to Gosport or Portsmouth for diagnosis or treatment. Acute conditions will still be treated at Queen Alexandra Hospital in Portsmouth.

Free parking

The PCT originally wanted to charge patients for using the car park, but after pres-

sure from local councillors it has been agreed that the use of the car park will be free for the first 3 hours.

"This should ensure that most patients visiting the hospital will not have to pay for parking, but will meet the PCT's requirement to prevent the car park being used as a free all-day car park for commuters using Swanwick Station," said Councillor Swanbrow.

Long wait

He added: "Fareham has waited a long time for a community hospital. What has been approved may not yet be all that residents want but it is a start.

"Further facilities that would normally be found in a hospital will, hopefully, follow before another 25 years are up."

Councillor Keith Evans said: "The hospital at this stage is limited although with a range of important health facilities.

"It is a start and land has been reserved for a second phase when we will press for, among other aspects, maternity/birth facilities and an out-of-hours treatment centre".

New look West Street wins top award in regional 'In Bloom' contest



FAREHAM'S new-look West Street won the Best New Commercial Landscape award in the South and South East in Bloom contest.

The Borough scooped the overall winners prize for the fifth year running and a gold medal in the Large Town/Small City

category. The sensory garden in Osborn Road won the Best Small Park category and a gold medal and the Fareham in Bloom team won the Community Involvement Award for their outstanding work over the past 13 years.

•Pictured (l to r) volunteers

Heather Othen and Jean Kingdom, TV gardener Chris Collins (presented awards), volunteers Bridget and Geoff Thickett, Matt Wakefield (Horticultural Development Officer) Councillor Connie Hockley and Heather Scott (volunteer).



WARD NEWS BRIEFS

Planning changes

The Government has changed planning rules making it easier for people to make changes to their property by building extensions, erecting garages or sheds etc.

From October 1, many changes no longer require planning permission.

For example, you may now be able to build a two-storey extension on the back of your house without planning permission provided it meets guidelines.

Having a say

The public will be allowed to address future meetings of Hampshire Police Authority, but not the sub-committees.

It brings the authority into line with councils who allow deputations to their main meetings.

Barking glad

Dog owners have praised the County Council for its policy on beach access.

The acclaim came at a recent Barking Dog Bonanza at Lepe beach for dog owners from across the county.

The policy differs from many other local authorities in allowing dogs on certain areas and not having a blanket 'no dogs admitted to beach' rule.

Queen's Awards

The County Council wants nominations of volunteers of all types for the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service. Forms may be obtained from www.queen-sawardvoluntary.gov.uk or phone 020 7781 2397

County rejection of Solent shore extraction plan hits legal snag

THE PROCESS to bring the County Council's recommendations for mineral extraction before a government planning inspector is effectively on hold due to a possible legal hitch.

Although the County removed Brownwich and Chilling from its list after a storm of protest, its recommendations still have to be accepted by the Government.

Councillor Keith Evans explained: "This is because of a claim that the basis of the recommendations is 'a County determined' reduction from that required by the government in their guidance paper (from 2.3m tonnes per year down to 1.82m tonnes) which could render the report 'illegal'.

"There is a view that this argument could be sustained so the timetable for this submission is now dependent on the progress on the modifications to the aggregates targets in the South East Plan - this is the matter currently being consulted on by South East



Solent shore: Not yet safe from extraction plan.

England Regional Assembly.

"The fundamental issue is that if Hampshire's annual volume is reduced another county will have to accept an increase."

When plans were announced earlier in the year to rip up 740 acres of countryside right to Solent shore to extract 8m tonnes of sand and gravel, there was a public outcry.

Residents formed an action group - Campaign Against Mineral Extraction and Landfill (CAMEL) - and packed a public meeting at Brookfield School.

Councillor Evans added: "I am hopeful that an agreement will be reached and will ensure that CAMEL and other residents are kept updated."

Ward gardeners collect a bunch of awards

CONGRATULATIONS to Titchfield and Titchfield Common residents who were individual winners in the Fareham in Bloom competition.

Councillors Keith Evans and Connie Hockley attended the awards ceremony. They said that the contributions of so many people across Fareham really helped the Borough to be so successful.

Titchfield Common

David & Doreen Englefield - Silver in the Plantsman's Front Garden category, Silver in the Unusual Garden Feature category and Silver Gilt in the Plantsman's Back Garden category.

N J Wakefield - Silver Gilt in the Hanging or Wall Basket category,

Silver in the Best Floral Display Using Any Type of Basket category and Silver Gilt in the Floral Back Garden category.

Titchfield

Plantsman's Front Garden - Mrs. Di Harrison, Silver Gilt; Denise McGowan, Bronze.

Plantsman's Back Garden - Mrs. Di Harrison, Silver Gilt; Denise McGowan, Silver Gilt; Stephen & Jean Brown, Silver Gilt

Wildlife Back Garden - Denise McGowan, Silver Gilt.

Business Premises - Hallmark Jeweller's, Silver.

Schools' Gardening Project - West Hill Park Pre-Prep, Silver Gilt.

Keith puts his devolved budget to good use

HAMPSHIRE County Council devolved grants budget is continuing through to April 2009.

Over the past 18 months, Councillor Keith Evans has been able to approve grant requests for the following:

£935 for The Genesis Special Needs Youth Club for equipment.

£5000 to the Victory Hall Management

Committee for internal refurbishment.

£957 to the Lockswood Over 60s Club for a new sound/PA system.

£1000 to the Locks Heath Day Care Centre towards refitting an old bathroom facility.

£936 to the Priory Park Methodist Church to help with a new Hearing Loop system.

£2500 to the football

section of the Locks Heath Sports and Social Club for training kit and match kit.

Councillor Evans said funds were limited but the process to apply etc was quite simple. Organisations should access the grants section of the Hampshire County Council web site to see the eligibility rules and to download the application forms.

'No better, no worse' traffic situation at St Anthony's

RESIDENTS were alarmed that a planning application to increase the number of classrooms at St Anthony's School would cause more traffic chaos in Primate Way.

Councillor Keith Evans asked Fareham planners to defer their decision and ask the school for more information.

The school has now confirmed that the two extra classrooms are to cope with existing overcrowding.

It also stated that there were no plans to increase pupil numbers.

The planning application was approved.

"There were no solutions to the existing parking problems, but it will not get worse because of this," said Councillor Evans.

New distributor eases traffic

THE NEW distributor from Dibles Road through the old Warsash Motors site to Warsash Road roundabout should be open soon.

Access to Warsash Road from Cutter Avenue has been closed.

This completes a long standing Hampshire commitment to address the safety aspects of exiting from Schooner Avenue so close to the bend in Warsash Road.

Councillor Keith Evans said: "The work, which has been completed to schedule, provides a more substantial roundabout with better speed reduction emphasis and good pedestrian walkways from Dibles Road and the 'boats' area."

Waste permit scheme is extended

THE PERMIT scheme allowing residents with commercial vehicles to use recycling centres for household waste has been extended.

Controls on commercial vehicles at recycling centres were designed to improve customer service and eliminate trade waste and permits were introduced so householders owning commercial vehicles could still use the sites.

It had affected a minority of users, although generally the scheme had been successful and deposits of trade waste noticeably reduced.

Then scheme will now include all householders who have access to a commercial vehicle for domestic purposes.

Council officers will closely monitor fly tipping and trade waste abuse.

Western Wards swimming pool still top priority despite setbacks

A SWIMMING pool in the Western Wards remains a top priority, despite recent setbacks.

Councillor Mike Godrich said: "Unfortunately, the planning consent for the swimming pool has now expired.

"The reason is that 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 caveat to allow the scheme to progress.

"Now that their development plans are finalised it is to be hoped that they will cooperate.

"Meantime, land at Coldeast, which could come into the Council's ownership, is being looked at as a potential alternative.

"Provision of a swimming pool in the Western Wards remains a high priority."

One ray of hope is that the Council might be able to wring funding from the Government in response to its proposals for free swimming sessions for over 60s and under 16s (see story in P4).

Bid to cut volunteer drivers tax threshold

HAMPSHIRE County Council has asked the Government to scrap the 10,000 miles per tax year threshold for volunteer drivers reclaiming mileage expenditure.

It is worried about drivers withdrawing services.

The Council is asking for drivers to be allowed to claim all mileage incurred providing volunteer services, without fear of tax penalties.

Councillors were particularly concerned about the impact the increase in fuel prices has had on volunteer driver services.

The 10,000 miles threshold has not changed since 2002.

Extra £1m to fill in county highway potholes

GOOD NEWS for motorists.

The County Council has added an extra £1m to the £56m budgeted for road improvements this year.

The number of work gangs tackling road maintenance in Hampshire has doubled from 20 to 40.

Extra work on filling pot-

holes, which are a nuisance and potentially dangerous, started in September and will continue until the end of the year.

The money is being spent on nearly 6,000 miles of road in the county.

Keeping roads in good condition is a top priority, but the bad weather con-

ditions and ever increasing volumes of traffic have resulted in potholes forming faster than usual.

Each year HCC conducts a systematic highways inspection and surveys of road conditions, which helps to decide priorities for repair. Residents may report road pothole conditions directly to 0845 6035633

TITCHFIELD 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

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Your name

Address

..... Postcode.....

Tel Email

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

WARD COUNCILLORS

Titchfield
Connie Hockley
27 Heath Lawns
Catisfield PO15 5QB
Tel: 01329 287365
email: chockley@fareham.gov.uk 

Tiffany Harper
20 Hampton Grove
Catisfield
Fareham PO16 5NL
Tel: 01329 844074
email: tharper@fareham.gov.uk 

Titchfield Common
Keith Evans
94 Abshot Road
Fareham PO14 4NH
Tel: 01489 582450
email: kevens@fareham.gov.uk 

COUNTY COUNCILLOR

Fareham Titchfield
Geoff Hockley
27 Heath Lawns
Catisfield
Fareham PO15 5QB
Tel: 01329 287365 



Our man in Westminster



By
Mark Hoban
MP for Fareham

As part of the Conservative Treasury team, I spent much time over the summer thinking about how the Government got us in a mess.

During the good times rather than save for a rainy day, Gordon Brown continued to borrow to the point that he has, according to statisticians, breached his own borrowing rules, which were meant to control government finances and are now in tatters. Now we are in more difficult times, he can't help families and businesses to weather the storm.

How do we put our public finances back into good order and ensure governments stick to the rules? We will set up an Office for Budget Responsibility to keep politicians on the straight and narrow when it comes to tax and spending. It will be like the old fashioned bank managers, the ones who would let you know that you were overdrawn and rather than offering more credit, suggested you might like to reduce your overdraft and live within your means. That's what the office will do. When Gordon Brown was overdrawn, like Oliver Twist he asked for more credit.

Once we have the public finances back in order, we will be able to do what government is meant to do, which is to be on your side. So when the economy is not going so smoothly, the Government has the money to help businesses and families, rather than doing what has happened this year, raising taxes on families with big hikes on car tax or asking small companies to cough up more.

Government is not about flashy gimmicks and wheezes; it is about doing the dull, sensible things that make real differences to families when it matters. It is about reassuring people that you have got a firm grip on what is happening. Our Office for Budget Responsibility shows that we are serious about putting our economy right.

•You may contact Mark via his office
14 East Street, Fareham PO16 0BN.
Telephone: 01329 233573
email: mail@markhoban.com

Free swims for over 60s

But who pays for 10 Drowning Street's latest brainwave?

THEY ALWAYS look wonderful on paper...free bus travel nationwide for over 60s and now a new Government plan for free swimming for old and young.

But Labour's grandiose freebie schemes have one flaw. Who splashes the cash in the long run?

Concessionary bus passes are already forcing Fareham Council to swim against a rising financial tide and Conservative councillors fear free swimming sessions for under 16s and over 60s will plunge finances into deep water.

Nationwide bus passes started in April, but the scheme was not funded properly, leaving several councils with huge problems.

"In most authorities, the gap will have to be met by the council taxpayer and the additional costs could be significant," said Councillor David Swanbrow, Executive Member for Planning and Transportation.

And that is the worry following the Government's approach to councils asking them if they are interested in a grant towards the introduction of free swimming sessions.

Funding has been promised for only the first two years for the over 60s; no details have been given for the under 16s group and nothing beyond.

Councillor Connie Hockley, Executive Member for Community, said: "On the surface, this seems a wonderful idea provided it is **fully funded** and applies only to local residents, BUT – and there is always a catch in many schemes proposed by this Government – what happens after the first two years?"

"Is the initial funding sufficient or will the local taxpayers end up by subsidising another Government initiative?"

It's the question that's already been answered in respect of the concessionary fares debacle, for the Government pays only 43% of the cost in Fareham.

"The cost over the first four months suggests



At a stroke: Free-style may take on a new meaning for over 60s at Fareham swimming pool.

that by the end of the financial year the Council is likely to spend at least £280,000 on top of the £1.5m it budgeted for concessionary travel, with the possibility it could rise much further.

"This equates to a council tax rise for Fareham of 5%-6% on its own," said Councillor Swanbrow.

Councils have to pay for any pass holder's journey starting within their boundaries. For example, a Gosport resident travelling to Winchester will have to change at Fareham and it's Fareham Council which then pays for the rest of that traveller's journey.

"The Gosport resident gets the benefit of free travel, Winchester shops may well benefit, but all Fareham gets is the biggest slice of the cost – and the Fareham council taxpayer pays," said Councillor Swanbrow, who said the Council was asking the Government to re-assess a wholly unfair situation.

The Council has expressed interest to get funding for free swimming for over 60s, provided it is restricted to local residents..

Councillor Hockley said the Council was also interested in operating a scheme for free swimming sessions for under 16s which could be run during school holidays, but only for Borough residents and provided it was fully funded.

The Council also asked the Government for cash towards the cost of building a new swimming pool in the Western Wards.

She added: "We await the Government's decision with bated breath."

Borough crackdown on untaxed vehicles

THIRTY untaxed vehicles were clamped and impounded in a two-day crackdown across the Borough by Fareham Council, the Driving and Vehicle Licensing Agency and the police.

A further joint operation was planned for October.

The DVLA used a vehicle equipped with Automatic Number Plate Recognition

equipment which identified any untaxed and uninsured vehicle.

The vehicle was then clamped and a notice attached stating that it had been seized and would not be released until a valid tax disc was obtained.

If a valid tax disc could not be provided, the vehicle was towed away to a storage pound until the owner provided a valid tax disc

If no tax disc was provided,

the vehicle was crushed or, if of value, was sent to a further vehicle pound in the Midlands to be sold

Each day a vehicle is in the pound charges are incurred by the owner.

Vehicles shown by the ANPR camera to be uninsured were also removed.

In Touch is published by Titchfield & Titchfield Common Conservatives, 5 Valerian Avenue, Titchfield Park, Fareham PO15 5TF and printed by Bishops Printers Limited, Fitzherbert Road, Farlington, Portsmouth PO6 1RU.