

YES! 2009 DATE FOR FAREHAM HOSPITAL

But Titchfield consultant is 'horrified' at sacrifice of historic Haslar site

A TITCHFIELD doctor has fiercely attacked the decision to axe Haslar Hospital to pave the way for replacement community hospitals at Fareham and Gosport.

Fareham councillors also came out strongly against the closure at their December meeting and pledged to fight it.

Dr Richard Ashton, dermatology consultant at Haslar for the past 20 years, stated:

"I am horrified by what has happened over the past five years with Haslar and think there is a moral dimension to this as well.

"We are talking about a 250-year-old historic building which is still in good condition and much used as well as highly regarded by local people.

"I don't think I've heard anyone yet support the closure."

Dr Ashton said Queen Alexandra Hospital should be the centre for emergency medical care for Portsmouth and East Hampshire and Haslar should be fully used as an elective surgical or medical centre, so all admissions booked from out-patient clinics and waiting lists would be treated there.

Haslar had all the investigative facilities needed for such work and an intensive care unit, although it was currently closed due to staff shortages.

"All the facilities are at present at

Haslar and no money needs to be spent on building or upgrading."

The argument for putting everything into one site on staff efficiency grounds was costly and problems of scheduling consultants' work between QA and Haslar sites could be overcome.

The advantage of having two sites (one for emergency and one for elective) was that beds in the elective site did not become blocked or filled up with medical emergencies.

The main argument against Haslar was its position and inaccessibility, but money should be spent on transport infrastructure and not a new hospital.



Horrified
Dr Richard Ashton



Site meeting Councillor Seán Woodward (left) and Fareham MP Mark Hoban at Coldeast where the new hospital will go

"Clearly £1 billion over 30 years is rather a lot to spend so that all in-patient facilities are on one site. What we are doing is mortgaging the future for something that is completely unnecessary," added Dr Ashton.

Although decades of languishing on the hospitals' waiting list are almost over for Fareham, there will be no let-up in the campaign to prevent the sacrifice of Haslar.

Fareham councillors agreed to challenge the Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust PFI (Private Finance Initiative) bid to place all acute and elective services at Queen Alexandra Hospital.

The council has written to Hampshire County Council's Health Review Committee, Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust and The Save Haslar Task Force urging them to work to restore Haslar to traditional hospital status.

Executive Leader Seán Woodward said community hospitals at Coldeast and Gosport War Memorial would provide best value for the area.

"However, we believe Haslar should be transformed into a traditional NHS secondary care hospital.

"We will be lobbying the County's Health Review Panel in January to challenge the Queen Alexandra PFI bid, which should enable services to be shared between QA and Haslar, thus providing the best value and combination of services for the whole area.

"The QA site cannot cope with all services, whereas a two-site solution could work well."

OPERATIONAL BY 2009

Fareham's hospital will be operational to match the opening of the new, extended QA Hospital by April 2009. Phase 1 will offer:

- An enhanced maternity unit with birthing pool
- Beds and day care centre for the elderly
- Consultant out-patient suites providing approximately 25,000 appointments a year
- On-call facilities for GPs
- Physio/occupational therapy and speech therapy
- Diagnostic services including X-Ray

A later phase is confidently expected to provide an accident treatment centre to serve the Western Wards of Fareham, Whiteley, Bursledon, Lowford and Hedge End.

The 25-acre site has room for expansion.



WARD NEWS BRIEFS

Annual meeting

The branch AGM is diared for Thursday, January 20 at 8pm in the Lockswood Centre.

If you are interested in joining the Conservatives or can give occasional time, please contact Keith Evans on 01489 582450.

Just a couple of hours each quarter would help to deliver the *In Touch* news sheet.

Emergencies

Noise accounted for most of the 700 out-of-hours emergency calls received by Fareham Council in 2003, resulting in 150 visits.

Other problems that fall into this category are dogs, drainage, bonfires, pest control, smells and gypsies.

If you call direct on 0800 374485 an officer will usually contact you within an hour.

Recycling

Fareham still has some way to go to meet the Government's 40% recycling target.

The Borough's 21.2% rate is better than several neighbouring areas including Portsmouth and Winchester, but behind Gosport and East Hampshire.

Councillor Keith Evans commented: "Recycling does not make money for the council, but lack of it will cost money and affect council tax.

"There are also positive environmental gains."

Swimming pool comes several strokes closer

Council's extra cash boost to get plan moving

FAREHAM Council has taken the plunge to provide a swimming pool and gymnasium for the Western Wards.

It has agreed to consider putting up extra cash to speed up the plan, which could see a positive step forward in the first half of 2005.

Consultants and architects have prepared an outline scheme for a 25-metre pool, small learner pool and 70-station gymnasium.

There would also be ancillary accommodation and car parking.

The site earmarked for the scheme is on council-owned land next to Locks Heath Shopping Centre and would be landscaped.

Titchfield Common Councillor Keith Evans, who has played a central role in trying to move the plan forward, said the first formal report issued by the council's consultants confirmed a clear demand from local people for the leisure facilities.

He said: "The consultants' report raises some concerns about finances, but believes it will be commercially viable



Going swimmingly Councillor Keith Evans expects progress this year.

with a few changes."

He said the council remained committed to establishing a facility in the Western Wards and had asked the consultants to formally advertise this opportunity to develop it at the Locks Heath Centre site.

Councillor Evans added: "I initiated this evaluation of the need for Western Wards swimming/leisure facilities a few years ago.

"The current status and the council's commitment is excellent news and there is now a very good chance that an agreement can be reached in the first half of 2005."

Remember this one?

It won't be the first swimming pool to be built in Locks Heath. Older residents may recall the mammoth community effort when parents and teachers raised nearly £5,700 in three and a half years. They put in thousands of hours' work to build a 55ft x 25ft indoor pool which opened at Locks Heath Junior and Infant School in 1971.

Fareham ban on anti-social drinking

BOOZE in public in future and you could be arrested.

A ban on drinking alcohol in designated public places comes into force in Fareham on March 1, 2005.

It will be welcomed by long-suffering residents in areas such as the town centre and may be extended.

"The aim is to control consumption of alcohol in public places and tackle alcohol-related crime, disorder and nuisance, as well as problems of under-age drinking," said Council Executive Leader Seán Woodward.

The Criminal Justice Police Act 2001 gives councils powers to designate

areas known to be anti-social drinking trouble spots.

Anyone caught drinking in public in a designated area who refuses to stop can be arrested by police, who can also seize and dispose of any alcohol containers found in offenders' possession.

Councillor Woodward, chairman of the Vandalism Task Force, said the council was working hard with the police to fight vandalism across the borough.

"This latest initiative to ban drinking in public places should, hopefully, go a long way to achieving our goal."

Fears over rush of new planning applications

A FLURRY of planning applications has alarmed residents in Titchfield.

It follows recent changes affecting rules on densities (see P4 for full story).

"Where the Fareham Local Plan once demanded that maximum densities be respected, new directives require minimum densities on new sites.

"Where we once expected a small number of houses, we are now seeing permissions being sought for flats and apartments," said Councillor Francis Devonshire.

It is not limited to Titchfield as can be seen from applications and building at Park Gate, Locks Heath and The Avenue in Fareham.

Fareham has also lost control over the previous minimum number of parking spaces per dwelling.

New developments must have a limited amount of parking.

Councillor Devonshire and fellow ward Councillor Connie Hockley, both deputy members of the Planning Committee, promise to raise your concerns, although they are not allowed to express views on any planning matter before the meeting.

You can also talk to one of the planning officers by phoning 01329 236100

Keith calls for a better deal

HAMPSHIRE should give Fareham people a better deal.

Councillor Keith Evans says nearly 80% of council tax collected by Fareham Council is to meet county demands.

The county must put more effort into meeting local needs.

He listed repairing pavements, street lighting, improving sports and recreation facilities and supporting schools with better maintenance, temporary classroom replacement and more places in some areas.

"Perhaps we could even see some community policing," he added.

Recycling: Why the council can't take everything you want to bin

HOUSEHOLDERS often ask why Fareham does not collect and recycle all types of plastic material in the bluetop bins.

Titchfield Councillor Francis Devonshire explains there are four main reasons for this.

1 Finding someone to buy the material

It is bulky, but light compared to glass or paper and to maximise the environmental benefit from recycling any material it is best to move it as little as possible to save costs and limit air pollution

"The only market we can sell mixed plastic waste to at the moment is in Asia, but we don't know what might happen to it once it gets there or what conditions people are working under."

2 Having enough space

Recycling bins are not big enough to cope with all types of plastic packaging, neither are collection vehicles' carrying capacity nor the sorting areas.

"Changing everything just to collect material of low value would not make best use of time, space or council taxpayers' money."



3 Sorting recyclable materials

Hampshire has advanced automatic and manual sorting designed to deal with paper, cardboard, cans and plastic bottles.

Accepting other materials would slow the process; to keep running at the same speed would lead to plastic getting mixed with paper.

4 Food scraps

Some plastics are used for food such as margarine, yoghurt and wrapped meat. But not everybody cleans these containers before putting them into bluetop bins.

So smelly food residues could be rubbed off on to clean materials like newspapers, which would affect the quality of paper and would result in its rejection by the paper mills the council supplies.

"All these problems could be solved in time and we are looking for ways to do it. Meantime, we can do more for the environment by increasing the recycling of materials we can process easily," he added.



Francis Devonshire

TITCHFIELD & TITCHFIELD COMMON 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

RESTORING school discipline is one of my top priorities as Shadow Schools Minister.

In a recent poll, over 70% of respondents thought it was getting worse.

Poor discipline lowers teachers' morale and disrupts learning. The Government has failed our schools by being too soft.

Parents need to play their role in restoring standards. We should have home-school contracts, whereby parents and pupils sign up to a school's rules and it is clearly stated that a breach of contract could lead to a child being excluded.

Decisions to exclude pupils are second guessed by appeals panels, who can reverse a decision which the head teacher thinks is right. We will scrap them.

The Government recently announced plans to force schools to admit disruptive children excluded from other schools. We will stop this.

Pupils who are excluded need support, too, and we will introduce Turnaround Schools to replace Pupil Referral Units. Unlike Pupil Referral Units, Turnaround Schools will be full-time, focus on behaviour and learning the basics, and follow an established curriculum. Attendance and performance will be monitored.

Finally, teachers deserve protection from false, malicious claims against them. Only about 5% of allegations against teachers prove to be true. Too many careers and lives are destroyed by false accusations. Conservatives will give teachers anonymity until they are charged with an offence.

By being soft on school discipline, we are harming the chances of children who want to learn. Disruptive pupils can stop others from learning and teachers' time is spent tackling their behaviour rather than helping those who want to get on. Let's give every child a chance by restoring school discipline.

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County Hall savings needed to cushion council tax rise

Whitehall's 4.9% grant not enough

HAMPSHIRE County Council should get 4.9% more from the Government towards providing services next year, but it still will not be enough to cover costs.

So the council is already looking at ways of cushioning council tax rises by cutting expenditure through increased efficiency.

"While it's too early to say what the impact of the settlement will be on the budget, it is clear that the extra funding is to keep council tax as low as possible, rather than spending more money on services," commented County Council Chairman

John Bryant (Fareham NW). "While the Government has given us a 4.9% increase in grant, we will still need to find 40% of our budget from council tax."

Pressures on the budget were huge. Spending on social care must increase to cope with increasing numbers of frail elderly people and vulnerable children.

Government has also told Hampshire to increase school spending by 4.9%. Waste disposal is another burden.

Councillor Bryant said the extra Government cash would not meet the rising costs, so departments have been asked to look for savings up to 17% (about £9m).

"Over the last three years we've made efficiency improvements of £12m, but at the same time we have lost a massive £29m in



John Bryant: 'Government has manipulated the figures'

Government grant."

The Government had based its grant on 1991 census data for the second year running, but it had itself admitted that Hampshire lost around £7.5m a year through the out-of-date figures - equal to 2% on council tax.

Planning changes forced on council

GOVERNMENT changes to planning law are forcing Fareham Council to increase housing densities and making it harder to refuse developers without risking costly appeals.

And 90% of planning applications will shortly have to be decided by planning officers and not the elected councillors.

Whitehall says residential development should provide 30-50 dwellings per hectare (12-20 per acre) and the council will need good grounds to refuse.

Most decisions are already made by the officers when there are no objections, but to meet the 90% target some will be decided by officers regardless of objections.

To safeguard democracy, Fareham Council has agreed a system to allow the Planning Development Control Committee to decide before the publicity period expires.

If you have a serious objection, you should not only write to the Planning Department, but make sure you send copies to **both** ward councillors.

However, they may not ask for a committee hearing unless there are solid planning reasons for objecting.

The Council is now very careful about refusing applications because it could land taxpayers with a big bill and kill any chance of impos-

ing conditions if the developer wins an appeal.

It is possible the size and design are out of keeping with the area and could be refused, but if that is not the case and people still do not want the development, it leaves the committee with three choices.

- 1 Approve the application as it stands
- 2 Approve but impose conditions
- 3 Reject it

If they opt for the third choice and there are insufficient grounds for refusal, the developer will certainly appeal and he can choose the format:

- A 'paper' appeal - done with an exchange of correspondence with an inspector
- Informal inquiry - both parties sit down at a table and thrash it out with an inspector
- Full hearing - developer knows he has a strong case and will call in legal experts

Losing a full planning inquiry will mean the council has to pay the developer's legal expenses and court costs, which could total £20,000 - equal to 0.5% on the council tax.

So the committee may have to disregard public opinion and allow an unpopular application, but at least members can impose conditions which mitigate some objections.

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