



Warsash in Westminster - Suella Braverman MP supporting our community

## Local College welcomes Education Secretary Gavin Williamson

Recently I was honoured to welcome the Education Secretary to Fareham College to officially unveil both the new 'T Level' teaching facilities at the Bishopsfield Road campus and the College's new Civil Engineering Training Centre in Lee-on-the-Solent.

Officially launched in September 2020, T Levels are a new two-year qualification for 16 to 19-year-olds, designed in collaboration with employers and businesses to prepare students for work, further training or study. A 45-day industry placement, which is at the heart of each course, will help young people development relevant industry experience in pursuit of their desired careers.

Matched by funding from the Department for Education, Fareham College have invested £1 million into the new facilities to support the T Level courses now available to students. This includes the development of a simulated nursery environment for the Education and Childcare

T Level, as well as a state-of-the-art IT suite fitted with high-end gaming computers and a nine-screen video wall that will support the Digital Production, Design and Development course.

Fareham College's newly revamped Civil Engineering Training Centre (CETC), opened during the visit, will also support the blossoming careers of the world's future construction and engineering experts. While bolstered by national funding, the project reflects the accumulative efforts of a pioneering collaboration between employers – such as Blanchard Wells – and Fareham College, and will equip civil engineers with the skills necessary to fulfil an increasing demand for regional infrastructure and housing.



Suella with Andrew Kaye, Principal and CEO of Fareham College and Education Secretary, Rt Hon Gavin Williamson MP

## Challenging times lead to difficult decisions

Recent weeks have been challenging for all of us here in Fareham. At the beginning of November the Prime Minister took the difficult decision to impose tougher restrictions throughout England to protect NHS capacity this winter and save lives.

As a member of his Cabinet, I know that this decision was not an easy one and very much a last resort given the scientific data and predictions of a 'second wave' possibly proving worse than the first one.

The government has been clear that we will do whatever it takes to support you as the situation evolves. That is why we extended the furlough scheme throughout November so that employees will receive 80% of their current salary for hours not worked. Business premises in Fareham forced to close have been able to receive grants worth up to £3000 per month and £1.1bn has been provided to local councils to enable them to support businesses locally.



# InTouch

with Warsash and Hook

THE LATEST NEWS FROM YOUR LOCAL COUNCILLORS AND MP

Winter 2020

## Fury over draft Local Plan

Once again, Councillors Mike Ford and Trevor Cartwright have spoken out against the disproportionate allocation of housing for Warsash.

Fareham is compelled to draft a Borough-wide plan to propose where the formula-based housing and employment sites are to be built.

This plan runs through to 2037 and once the 6-week consultation has been concluded, the plan will go to a Government Inspector who will decide whether it is sound. This plan runs alongside the plan for Welborne and, once confirmed, it will form the Council's development strategy for the next 17 years.

The draft plan came before a full Council meeting on 22 October and once again, Cllrs Mike Ford and Trevor Cartwright spoke strongly against the housing numbers proposed for Warsash. Mike says, "I was shocked three years ago when large housing numbers for Warsash were proposed. That shock remains with me now. To my mind it is wholly wrong that Warsash should take on the bulk of Fareham's housing need.

"I told my Council colleagues that the Warsash housing numbers were not acceptable and I proposed an amendment to the draft plan that reduced the numbers for this area. Trevor seconded it and also spoke vehemently against the proposal. This generated a lengthy debate, but regrettably, did not muster enough support to carry the amendment."

Cllr Ford concludes, "We have argued against these proposals for the past three years. The difficulty we now have is that a substantial number of homes on the land either side of Greenaway Lane have outline planning permission, so these cannot be reversed. We will however continue to resist further applications that fail to align with local requirements."



## Coronavirus strikes Council coffers

Fareham Borough Council has agreed an emergency mid-year budget to manage a predicted £1.1m shortfall as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The pandemic left the Council's original break-even with a £3.7m shortfall, two thirds of which have been covered by government grants and other financial support. However, this still leaves the Council with a £1.1m hole in the budget.

It is proposed that the shortfall for this year is met from the Council's reserves, but a number of other measures, including charging for parking in coastal car parks and for green waste collections, will be needed to bridge the funding gap for future years.

Before the pandemic, the Council's medium-term financial strategy predicted a funding gap - the gap between what the Council needs to spend to maintain services and what it will have available to spend - of £1.5m over four years. Plans were in place to overcome the shortfall, but COVID-19 means that gap is widening, putting Council services at significant risk.

In addition to unforeseen costs incurred in response to the pandemic, the Council has seen a reduction in income such as:

- Parking charges being suspended.
- Reduced demand for trade waste.
- Concessionary payment terms for commercial property tenants.

- Reduced number of planning applications.
- Suspension of market pitch fees.
- Reduced investment income caused by adverse cash flows and reduced interest rates.

A 14% Council Tax rise - approximately £23 - would cover the £1m funding gap but has so far been dismissed as an option.

Executive Leader of Fareham Borough Council, Cllr Seán Woodward, said: "Most residents are surprised that Fareham Borough Council delivers all of our services for a cost of just £3 per week for the average home, almost the lowest in the country.

"However, COVID-19 has had a significant impact on every aspect of life and society in our Borough and has led to an immense impact on the UK economy.

"It is fortunate that as a Council we have been so prudent with our reserves for a number of years, so have a strong financial standing, but this is still going to have a very significant impact on what we can and cannot do as a Council for the this and future years.

"We must take action now - hence the emergency mid-year budget and why we are looking at alternative ways of bridging the funding gap for the future.

*Continued on page 2.*

## D Day remembered

Many of you will be aware of the key role that Warsash played in the D Day landings in 1944. This story has been graphically described on a story board that has sat for many years alongside the memorial in the Shore Rd car park.

Cllr Mike Ford explains, "Sharon, the Licensee at the Rising Sun pub contacted me pre lock-down to highlight the poor condition of the board. It was removed and last month, a new story board with a beautiful oak base and surround was installed. Please do take a look as this is a truly poignant story of the key role played by Warsash in the Normandy landings."

Sharon and Mike inspecting the new story board.



## Get in touch

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## Supporting local organisations struggling with COVID-19

A COVID-19 Special Grants programme has been launched to help reduce the financial strain on smaller organisations in Fareham that may have struggled throughout the pandemic and not yet been able to access funding.

Charitable and voluntary organisations are able to apply online for a quick and easy one-off payment of £250 to help address some of the unprecedented financial pressures they have experienced due to the COVID-19 virus.

Applications from charitable, voluntary and community groups must demonstrate that they meet all the following criteria to qualify for the grant:

- Provide a community service to residents in the Borough of Fareham.
- Need the requested funding to help meet additional core-running costs, or to cover lost income experienced as a direct result of the COVID-19 restrictions.
- Supply a copy of their constitution and annual accounts.
- Provide evidence that they are a 'not for profit' organisation.
- Confirm that no alternative funding source is available to meet the identified needs.

The Grant is not available to profit-making organisations, ones with large reserves, or to those organisations that have already received funding from Fareham Borough Council during the pandemic.

### Coronavirus strikes Council coffers (continued from page 1)

"Our services are vital to our residents, and for many are a lifeline. But in order to safeguard those services from cuts we must find revenue from other sources - either increasing the Council Tax for everyone in the Borough or introducing a modest charge for demand-led services. We are the only council on the South Coast not charging for coastal car parking and from next year, the only one in Hampshire without a separate charge for garden waste collection."



In addition to providing greater choice for users, the new scheme offers greater safety for the Council's operators.

## Green waste recycling gets an upgrade

The Council's garden waste collection service is being upgraded to allow for safer and larger collections from those people who need the service. This will be a significant change from the sack system which was introduced in 2005.

Fareham is one of only two authorities in Hampshire that provides a free green waste collection service. Although popular, the service is limited as it allows for only one sack per property. After 15 years, the use of sacks has run its course.

The Council has approved the introduction of a fortnightly wheeled bin green waste collection service, which will start in early 2022. For those who might have access or storage problems, households will be able to choose either a large or small size wheelie bin.

The chargeable service will be available via subscription, with the bins being available at 50% discounted price for the first 12 months of the scheme.

Cllr Cartwright said "The Garden waste service is a discretionary service and is not one which the Council has to provide.

"The cost of providing a green waste service is not something that the Council can cover any longer, so we are offering residents a quality service, available by subscription.

"We will continue with a free Christmas tree service to all residents, and will be promoting home composting with a discounted home composter for both green and food waste.

The new contract will see revamped facilities at both Holly Hill Leisure Centre and Fareham Leisure Centre (right).

## Charges at coastal car parks

To help meet the serious financial challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic along with other financial pressures, it has been proposed to introduce parking charges in the Council-owned, off-street coastal car parks.

This unfortunate measure is needed as the Council needs to find new revenue streams to protect vital services. Fareham is currently the only local authority on the South Coast who does not charge for parking by the coast. In Warsash, the car parks at Passage Lane and Shore Road will be affected.

It was agreed that a charge of £1.00 per hour up to a maximum of 6 hours be introduced to all car parks in the Borough between 10.00am and 6.00pm each day. It was also agreed in principle to the introduction of an £80.00 annual season ticket for regular

car park users, which works out to 22p per day.

As part of the consultation exercise, letters have been sent out to Beach Hut owners and other interested parties in the area of the coastal car parks including Warsash Sailing Club. In addition, a six-week consultation exercise on Traffic Regulation Orders will be undertaken outlining any required changes to parking restrictions and charges in all car parks where changes are proposed to current arrangements.

## Fareham Leisure Centres

At November's Council Executive meeting, it was agreed to award the 10-year contract for managing Fareham and Holly Hill Leisure Centres to Everyone Active.

In its tender submission, Everyone Active best met the Council's requirements including how they would invest in the facilities, particularly at Fareham Leisure Centre, and help deliver increased revenue for the Council.

The company's bid included several investment opportunities:

### At Fareham Leisure Centre

- A 617m<sup>2</sup> extension to the ground floor gym are to extend the building and add windows to the roadside elevations.
- The creation of an internal splash pad adjacent to the swimming pool.
- Refurbished foyer and reception areas.
- The creation of a new studio space and climbing area.
- Conversion of the squash courts to a

soft play zone.

- Refurbishment of the dry changing rooms and café area.
- Parking for and additional 32 vehicles.

### At Holly Hill Leisure Centre

- Conversion of the large pool store into a sauna and steam room.
- Improvements to main foyer layout.

Work on Fareham Leisure Centre started in November. The whole project will take approximately 12 to 14 months to complete with the improvement to Holly Hill Leisure Centre being carried out towards the end of the project.

Both Leisure Centres will remain open to the public whilst refurbishment takes place.



## News from Victory Hall

### Help us refurbish our kitchen!

Although the Victory Hall is emerging from lock-down with a partial re-opening, it will be continue to operate at a loss for some time. This has caused a real depletion of the Hall's funds.

Cllr Ford, a Hall committee member says, "We still wish to push on and refurbish the much-used kitchen that is now almost 50 years old. However, the cost of the work is estimated to be over £10,000.

"In addition to donations - there's a collection box next to the Manager's office, we have launched a weekly lottery offering excellent prizes. Tickets are just £1 each, from which the Hall receives 50p. For full details please visit [www.onelottery.co.uk](http://www.onelottery.co.uk) and search for 'The Victory Hall!'"

Mike thanks everyone for their continued and future support for our community hall.



### Delivers and pictures needed

If you are interested in helping deliver InTouch, or have a picture of the area you'd like to share with the community on our front cover, please contact Trevor or Mike (details on back page).