



InTouch

LOCKS HEATH – Spring 2021

Wise Tories had cash job ready to ward off Covid tax hike

SIDE EFFECTS from Covid-19 played havoc with Fareham's finances, leading to the worst budgetary situation in two decades and threat of a council tax hike.

But the wise **Conservative** administration had an antidote ready for rainy days – and pandemics.

Prudent investments and careful handling of the coffers had built up a 'vaccine' of reserves, so £2m was available to inject into the budget to relieve the pain in taxpayers' pockets.

Fareham Borough Council's tax increase for Fareham's 44,000 homes is just 1p per day and the result for the average home stays at less than £3 per week for all Council services.

"This remains almost the lowest in the country," said Council Leader Seán Woodward, recalling that in 1999 **Conservatives** inherited a huge deficit from the previous administration.

'Toughest by far'

"Now we are in a similar situation. This is the 22nd budget that I have presented to the Council and it was the toughest by far.

"The economy of this country has been decimated by the Covid-19 pandemic and Fareham Borough Council, like every family and business, has not been immune to the turbulence.

"Thankfully, due to **Conservatives'** financial prudence that we have practised over two decades, we have been able to weather the financial hurricane.

"The Council has paid over £45m to businesses in the Borough for Covid hardship by way of grants and business rate reliefs."

Share of Council Tax for 2021/22



To Fareham's precept will be added the much larger Hampshire County Council precept and that from the Police & Crime Commissioner and Fire & Rescue Service.

Overall income from council tax of £7.5m represents just 15% of the budget to deliver all services costing over £48m. Other income is realised from fees and charges such as rents arising from the Council's £64m commercial property portfolio, car parking charges, hire of sports pitches etc.

There is also a capital programme over the next 5 years of £86m. Subject to necessary viability studies, we plan to invest:

- £10m for building new council houses
- £15m for improving existing council houses
- £6.5m for acquiring new council houses
- £12m for a new arts and entertainment facility – Fareham Live
- £7m investment in improving Fareham's two leisure centres
- £0.5m for playground improvements
- £2.5m for disabled adaptation grants
- £10m for investment in Solent Airport @ Daedalus including new buildings for businesses and jobs
- £6m for car parking improvements across the Borough

Councillor Woodward added: "I am grateful to our residents for stepping up during these tough times to help friends, neighbours and strangers. Our Borough is one amazing community."

Fareham planning nightmare: 'Events out of our control'

PLANNERS are tearing their hair out after another Whitehall U-turn sent the housing element of the current Fareham Draft Local Plan to the shredder.

Executive Member for Planning and Development Simon Martin said: "We are being penalised by events out of our control."

The Plan went out for consultation just before Christmas after the Council approved an earlier Government change-around allowing a lower number of houses.

Two days before the consultation closed, the Government moved the goal posts

again, reverting from 2018 to 2014 figures for estimating housing growth.

Councillor Martin said: "Consequently, Fareham's annual housing need has been confirmed as 508 homes per year, as opposed to 403 homes per year that the Publication Local Plan was based upon.

"We must now revisit the housing requirement, amendments will need to be put forward and also to consider the responses received from the consultation.

"Additional sites required to deliver the higher number of houses will be included in an amended version of the Local Plan."

Fareham has to submit annual figures on

housing completions over the last 3 years, but fewer houses have been completed against the Government's requirements.

Government added 20% to the 5-year housing targets and required preparation of a Housing Delivery Action Plan.

The Council couldn't meet the target due to being unable to issue planning consents for 2 years due to the impact of nitrates on the Solent. Simon Martin added:

"We are lobbying Government hard to ensure they support us. Despite our best efforts to issue planning permissions and proceed with the Local Plan, we are being penalised by events out of our control."

NEWS ROUND



Service as usual

The Council's Streetscene Service has continued to operate despite Lock-down restrictions. Staff have been emptying refuse bins, removing fly tipping, cleansing streets, footpaths and open spaces that are in public ownership, removing graffiti, emptying litter and dog bins, collecting dead animals both domestic and wild. If you have any concerns, please contact Councillor Susan Bayford.

Hoping to reopen

Lockwood Day Care Centre, which is part of Age Concern Hampshire, was still in lockdown as we went to print. Councillor Susan Bayford said: "We understand members of staff are on furlough, but the hope is they can reopen the centre in April once vaccinations of clients have been completed."

Tree rot alarm

A resident drew Councillor Susan Bayford's attention to a tree that appeared to be rotting at its base during a visit to Lodge Road allotments.

Mrs Myra Shenstone (pictured) pointed to a hole in the base of the trunk.

Susan raised the issue with the Council's tree specialist who will investigate.

The Council is responsible for maintaining thousands of trees on more than 250 hectares of public spaces and housing areas.

Covid grants available

Struggling charity and community organisations can apply to Fareham Council for a Covid-19 special grant. The application process is quick and easy and groups who have had to close or stop operating due to lockdown restrictions are welcome to apply. Those successful will receive a one-off payment of £250, provided they can provide evidence to meet the criteria.

Shopping centre access improvements

MAJOR changes are in the pipeline for Locks Heath Shopping Centre.

InTouch Team Leader Malcolm Daniells (pictured) welcomed the proposals.

Owners Newriver Retail propose to reconfigure the Centre Way access, bus lane and new roundabout junction to provide access to the main car parks. Layout of the public car park will be altered



to allow development of Areas 1 & 2 and reduction of parking spaces.

A new bus turning area will be provided on Centre Way at the western end of the centre, there will be a decked car park within the staff parking area and landscape improvements.

Find consultation results at bit.ly/locksheathshoppingcentre

Allotted a part of Keith's legacy

ALLOTMENT holders paused in tribute to the late County Councillor Keith Evans.

They gathered at Lodge Road at the invitation of the chairman of the Western Wards Allotments Association.

Councillor Susan Bayford, pictured with InTouch Team Leader Malcolm Daniells, said the members were grateful to Keith for awarding them £1,000 from his County Council



budget – part of his legacy – for new fencing.

Volunteers wanted to set up ward Speed Watch



IT LOOKS almost traffic free, but that was probably due to lockdown.

Normally, Church Road, Locks Heath is busy and there have been on-going complaints from residents about speeding.

Councillor Susan Bayford, who visited the street with InTouch Team Leader Malcolm Daniells (pictured), wants to set up a Community Speed Watch to keep speeds down. "Residents have been complaining, so I'm appealing for some of them to volunteer to man Speed Watch check points.

"If I get a sufficient number, I can apply for a grant from the local county councillor's devolved budget to start the ball rolling," she said.

Volunteers use equipment to monitor speeds, record details and add them to a

database.

Vehicle checks are then undertaken by the police and letters sent to registered keepers advising them they were speeding and reminding them why it is a community concern.

Initial cost can be up to £3,000 to secure monitoring equipment, high visibility clothing and a sign.

Police should cover the costs of vetting, training and support for office work.

Speed Watch groups have been successful in other parts of the Borough.

So if you're public spirited and want to help keep speeds in Church Road and elsewhere in Locks Heath Ward within the limit, contact Susan Bayford whose details are in the panel below.

Buyer saves listed mansion

A BUYER has been found for listed Coldeast Mansion.

It had been refurbished and converted into 37 apartments and a function venue which opened in 2017, but sadly went into administration in 2019 and had to be repaired after a flood.

After its original closure in 1996, Council Leader Seán Woodward persuaded the Council to locally list it.

He said: "I very much hope that the new owners will move to trade again and open this impressive community facility."



Lockwood lockdown behind-the-scenes activity

LOCKSWOOD Community & Sports Association (LCSA) is closed with staff on flexi-furlough.

But there's been plenty of activity behind the scenes.

The foot clinic and health visitors continue to use the building for their clinics and the chairman of trustees has been busy repairing the sports hall chairs, badminton nets and goal posts.

The hall floor is being renovated with the cost shared manager Beverley Colborne.



between a grant from Keith Evans' fund (see this page), a grant from the Borough Council and the balance paid by the LCSA.

The library offers a 'ready reads' click and collect service. Details at www.hants.gov.uk/librariesandarchives/library/services/ready-reads or by calling 01962 454747.

PHOTO: Team Leader Malcolm Daniells meets Lockwood office

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COME AND JOIN US

If you support Conservative principles and would like to vote to select your Council and Parliamentary candidates, to attend social and political events or help by delivering InTouch in your street, why not join Locks Heath Branch of Fareham Conservative Association? Please phone Susan Bayford on 01489 577772.

WE SERVE YOU ALL

Whether you voted for us or not, your Conservative councillors promise the highest standards of service to every one in the community. Contact us any time and we'll respond personally within 48 hours.

Tributes from far and wide to a wise, respected councillor who will be sorely missed

FAREHAM has lost one of its longest-serving, most experienced and respected councillors with the death of Keith Evans.

Keith, who represented Locks Heath Ward and also Fareham Warsash Division as County Councillor, died in Queen Alexandra Hospital on December 27.

He had been unwell for a number of years, but was in hospital for a routine operation when he tested positive for Covid-19.

Fellow ward Councillor Susan Bayford said: "Keith will be sadly missed by all who knew him. He served on Fareham Borough Council for over 30 years and Hampshire County Council Warsash Division (which included Locks Heath) for 15 years.

"A dedicated councillor, Keith made a significant contribution to both the County and Borough and all the many committees and panels that he served on."

Other councillors described Keith as 'a real gentleman', an 'inspiration' and a 'voice of calm' in heated situations.

His wealth of knowledge as Executive Member for Planning and Transportation will be particularly hard to replace in the current turmoil over the Fareham Draft Local Plan

Susan added: "I will miss Keith's wise counsel, sense of humour and friendship and I and the InTouch team send our heartfelt condolences to his family and close friends."

Keith's legacy

Councillor Keith Evans had £5,000 remaining in his County Council Grant Allocation Fund at the time of his death.

This was administered by County Councillor Seán Woodward on Keith's behalf and the following allocations have been granted:

- £1,000 to the Lockwood Community & Sports Association towards the renovation of their sports hall floor
- £500 to the Locks Heath Tennis Club towards cleaning the area
- £1,000 to the Lodge Road Locks Heath Allotments towards new fencing
- £2,000 to the Warsash Sea Cadets

Susan Bayford and InTouch Team Leader Malcolm Daniells said:

"We are confident that Keith would have been delighted to support these worthy causes, a fitting tribute to the memory of a much respected and hardworking councillor."





Looking forward to a year of success and recovery

I know that many people are struggling with covid restrictions.

However, I sincerely believe that 2021 will be a year of recovery and success for us.

With Brexit finally done, this Conservative Government fulfilled its major promise to the British people, securing a historic deal with the EU which takes back control of our borders, laws, money and trade restoring our political and economic independence.

We have also delivered one of the most comprehensive economic responses in the world to support jobs and businesses during the pandemic, providing over £280bn in jobs support-including protecting 12 million jobs through the furlough and self-employed schemes.

Together, we are beating Covid.

Please note that I am on maternity leave until September following the birth of my daughter. My office remains fully functional and I continue to serve Fareham residents through my ProxyVote in Parliament and representation to Ministers in the usual manner.

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BRAVERMAN MP for Fareham



BUILDING on my recent visit to the Royal South Hants Hospital in Southampton to meet the team behind the Hampshire Research Hub, I am delighted that we as a nation have now passed the 15 million vaccinations milestone.

At the time of writing, the UK was the first country in the world to approve the Pfizer/Biontec vaccine and is one of the global leaders in its roll-out of the vaccine.

I know I speak for many people in Fareham in paying tribute to the front-line NHS staff and volunteers who have helped to vaccinate thousands of local people at sites like Fareham Community Hospital, Brook Lane Surgery, Portchester Practice and Village Pharmacy. Hampshire and the Isle of Wight is



Suella at the Hampshire Vaccination Research Hub with Team Leader Professor Saul Faust and East Hampshire MP Damian Hinds.

also one of the leading Partnerships in the South East and the country, issuing over 100,000 doses in one week alone.

Community First are providing a safe, accessible and Covid-secure transport option for people in need.

For more information see www.cfirst.org.uk/transport/community-transport-to-vaccinations.

Win up to £25,000 on Fareham's Community Lottery

WANT TO to help good causes and be in with a chance of winning up to £25,000?

Then buy a ticket for Fareham's new Community Lottery which is now live online with draws taking place every Saturday, having started on March 13.

Tickets are on sale at £1 each, of which 40p will go to one of 55 local charities that have registered to take part.

When you buy a ticket, you can choose which charity you want to support.

Funding was awarded to set it up to One Community, whose Chief Executive, Jean Roberts-Jones, said it had been made possible through hard work by volunteers.



"This scheme will help provide vital support to good causes which have been hard hit by the pandemic and it's lovely to be able to offer a positive, simple way for them to increase their income and continue to support people in every generation from our local area."

Fareham Council's Executive Member

for Leisure and Community Councillor Sue Bell said: "I am pleased our Community Lottery tickets are now available to buy and would like to thank One Community for their efforts in setting it up."

"With 55 good causes registered to benefit from the scheme, every ticket purchased will contribute to the fantastic work they do across our Borough."

"I sincerely hope that Fareham residents will show their support now that tickets are on sale."

Tickets can only be bought online, either at www.farehamlottery.co.uk or by visiting Fareham Community Lottery facebook page.

Council's urgent measures to halt spread of deadly ash tree disease

ASH DIEBACK disease is spreading through Western Wards woodlands.

Holly Hill Woodland Park and Whiteley have been affected, so has Wicor Copse, Portchester where 65 trees have to be felled.

Fareham Council started taking urgent measures in February to halt the spread.

It's caused by a fungus whose symptoms range from leaf and branch dieback to the death of the tree.

InTouch Team Leader Malcolm Daniells said a high proportion of ash trees would die once infected, although a few might survive due to genetic factors giving them resistance.

Infected trees lose water

content, so younger trees die more quickly than mature ones.

He said: "Works to remove affected ash trees identified in the summer began last month when the trees were dormant and the environmental impact would be as limited as possible."

"In many areas such as woodlands and semi-natural

greenways natural regeneration will be encouraged, but in parks and open spaces trees will be replaced next winter."

Embrittlement in the wood has implications for arborists who cannot use conventional rope techniques, so work on ash trees will invariably involve the use of mobile elevated work platforms.