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Ten top tips for a safe summer at the seaside

If you’re heading to the beach this summer, spare a thought for safety and where possible choose a lifeguards beach and swim in the area between the red and yellow flags - advice from the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI).

Around two-thirds of people in the UK go to the seaside at least once a year – perhaps for summer holidays or day trips. Last year alone, RNLI lifeguards responded to more than 9,500 incidents and helped more than 10,900 people on some of the UK’s busiest beaches.

Here are 10 top tips to keep you safe:

1. Always swim at a lifeguards beach
2. Swim between the red and yellow flags
3. Never swim alone
4. Know your beach safety flags
5. Never use inflatables in strong winds or rough seas
6. If you get into trouble, stick your hand in the air and shout for help
7. If you see someone else in trouble, tell a lifeguard. If you can’t see a lifeguard call 999 or 112 and ask for the Coastguard
8. Find out about the beach you’re going to before you visit
9. Check tide times before you go
10. Read and obey local hazard signs

There are over 300 lifeguards beaches around the coasts of the UK and Republic of Ireland. This year, RNLI lifeguards are patrolling 140 beaches around the coast of the UK. To find your nearest lifeguards beach, visit www.goodbeachguide.co.uk

For a FREE guide to beach safety, ‘On the Beach’, full of advice on how to stay safe at the beach, contact the RNLI. Email: beachsafety@rnli.org.uk or tel: 0800 328 0600. Practical advice and tips on how to stay safe can also be found at their website: www.rnli.org.uk/beachsafety
Fareham Borough Council cares for many trees, which are often directly adjacent to busy locations like roads, parks and schools. Like all living things, trees can succumb to old age, disease and develop rickety and unstable limbs which may make them unsafe in relation to their surroundings.

It’s therefore important to employ a plan of action to balance the elements of risk with the benefits that the trees provide throughout the Borough.

A new and exciting progression towards proactive tree management is the introduction of the Council’s comprehensive tree survey and inspection programme.

The survey looks at a range of aspects such as species, age, size and current condition. Based on these findings, recommendations are made to ensure the long-term health of the tree and the safety of the community.

Eleven thousand Council owned trees in parks and open spaces are inspected at least every three years using digital mapping equipment which works in a similar way to a Global Positioning System (GPS).

Most trees need no immediate attention but some need minor pruning work to remove dead wood and keep pavements clear. A few need to be removed and replaced using initiatives such as the Tree Adoption Scheme (see page 5).

The survey provides many other benefits. For example, the tree data collected can be analysed to show the distribution of trees of a certain age or species across the Borough, which allows the Council to prioritise locations for planting new trees. This ensures that future generations can enjoy the magnificence of Fareham’s green giants for many years to come.

For further information on the preservation and management of your local trees, please visit: www.fareham.gov.uk
email: parks@fareham.gov.uk or tel: 01329 236100.
Somewhere Over the Rainbow

Continuing our passion for Fareham in Bloom and our community gardening campaign, we’re again giving away thousands of bulbs. This is part of our ‘Somewhere Over the Rainbow’ theme for 2010, allowing communities to plant in their own local green spaces. The bulbs will be provided by Hollam Nurseries in Titchfield who are now working in partnership with us.

These burst into bloom, bringing carpets of glorious colour to the roadsides and parks year after year.

There will be a beautiful mixture of yellow, white and orange daffodils along with giant yellow, white and purple crocuses, which will flower during February 2010.

There are 60 sacks of each available, containing approx 150 bulbs and these will be distributed from the week commencing Monday 14 September for planting by mid-October.

Applicants need to be residents, schools, community groups or businesses within the Borough and the bulbs must be for a location that can be enjoyed by the wider community such as an area of open space or park. Once planted, the bulbs will come up year after year.

Even More Trees of the World

To support the ‘Somewhere Over the Rainbow’ theme we have even more trees up for grabs as part of the Adopt a Tree scheme, where residents can opt to care for a tree by adopting it for their local community.

A dramatic blaze of autumn tints can be expected with two fantastic trees on offer.

Acer x freemanii was bred in the United States and is commonly known as Maple ‘Autumn Blaze’. It has deeply indented leaves that turn a rich flame red during the autumn months.

The second comes from the eastern United States and is known as Liquidambar styraciflua ‘Thea’, glowing a gorgeous autumnal colour.

There are 10 of each available* which will be planted as part of national tree week from 25 November to 6 December.

Please complete and return the application form no later than Friday 14 August and include a contact name/organisation and day time contact number. Applications from schools must be supported by the head teacher. Those received after the closing date will be added to the following year’s scheme.

* These trees are for planting within the local community for the benefit of others. Due to underground services and safety it may not be possible to plant trees and bulbs on some highway verges. We may, therefore, have to suggest an alternative location.
Fareham has been successful in securing funding through a newly launched initiative. The scheme ‘PUSH 4 Safer Homes’ backed by the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) was launched in January 2009 and aims to help improve the condition of privately owned houses for the vulnerable in the community.

‘PUSH 4 Safer Homes’ is a Hampshire based partnership and incorporates seven local authorities. Fareham has received funding of £265,000 and this money is aimed at vulnerable people, especially those who are on low incomes, as well as older and disabled residents, to assist in improving their properties.

We’re committed to help those in private housing improve their living conditions, ensuring they are safe, secure and energy efficient.

Five products are available under this new scheme:

- **The Home Improvement Loan**
  An interest free loan of up to £10,000 which is secured on your property and is available for essential repairs and improvements. No monthly repayments are made, but the loan has to be repaid when the property is sold.

- **The Empty Home Loan**
  An interest free loan of up to £10,000 is available to help owners bring their empty properties back into a rentable state. The owner is required to make the property available for renting to households nominated by the Council.

- **The Landlord Loan**
  Landlords can borrow up to £10,000 interest free to carry out essential repairs and improvements to their property, before renting it out to households nominated by the Council.

- **The Accessible Home Loan**
  Grants are available to enable people with disabilities to have essential adaptations carried out to their home to help them live more independently. This is a means tested grant and applicants may be required to make a financial contribution. Where the client is unable to meet the contribution by other means, a loan will be provided which works in the same way as a Home Improvement Loan.

- **The Warm Home Grant**
  This grant automatically tops up the maximum Government Warm Front Grant of £2,700, to make sure that older people, disabled people and families with young children can have thermal insulation and central heating fitted for FREE. To qualify for a grant, applicants need to claim a means tested income or disability benefit.

More information can be found online at www.push.gov.uk/4_safer_homes, in a booklet available from Fareham Borough Council, tel: 01329 236100 or from PUSH 4 Safer Homes, tel: 0800 5191717.
Credit Union help is at hand

Are you in debt? Are you thinking of borrowing more money? Or, just worried about your finances. The credit crunch is affecting all of us in many different ways and the need to borrow more money is now becoming a reality for many. Whether to help with the cost of living or replacing old and tired equipment around the house, help is just around the corner for the residents of Fareham.

networkfareham, the local Strategic Partnership, has been examining ways to help people on low incomes and people who have built up significant debt. The results revealed that people need financial help and funding to prevent them from reaching for help from doorstep lenders.

networkfareham has been in discussions with Hampshire Credit Union Ltd (HCU) with the view of extending their services into Fareham. Credit Unions are ‘not-for-profit’ organisations, they are able to lend money provided by their savers and can offer services similar to other banks.

Portsmouth Savers (the local Hampshire Credit Union Branch) is able to offer loans from £100 to £5,000 over three years. These loans are available for people on low incomes and people receiving income related benefits. The interest rates are significantly lower than doorstep lenders and all loans are covered by free loan protection.

Other benefits that the Portsmouth Savers can offer include, good returns on savings accounts and a current account with a VISA Debit Card, giving you access to cash machines or paying for goods in shops or on-line. You can also set up the Direct Debit facility to pay for your utility bills in order to benefit from the cheaper tariffs offered by providers.

Other popular saving options include, The Christmas Club, Mini Cash ISAs and Child Trust Fund accounts, all of which are covered by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme, which in the event of a problem with the business, would give back the first £50,000 saved.

HCU will be bringing its ‘Banking in the Community’ services to the Oak Meadow Children’s Centre in Tewkesbury Avenue, Fareham every afternoon throughout June 2009. From July onwards this will continue at the Centre on one morning per week.

For more information about Hampshire Credit Union Ltd, tel: 023 9282 7980 or visit: www.hampshirecreditunion.co.uk

Surviving the Recession

There is no denying the impact of the recession on the finance, construction and automotive sectors and small businesses in general. There will inevitably be local business failures and cutbacks.

This has prompted a series of responses from public sector agencies and measures to assist have been introduced, such as:

• ‘Action for Business’ and ‘Real Help for Businesses Now’ programmes delivered by Business Link;
• Rapid Response teams have been established to co-ordinate the action of business support agencies

The Council is committed to helping where it can, particularly with clear signposting to help and advice from our website, focused on the themes of help for employees and help for business.

More information on these initiatives is available from our website: www.fareham.gov.uk or by contacting Business Link, tel: 0845 600 9006, email: info@businesslinksotheast.gov.uk or visit: www.businesslink.gov.uk/southeast
School Governors

Volunteers from the Local Community are needed

Would you like to be more involved with your local school? If so why not become a school governor? There are no formal qualifications required for this role, as full comprehensive training is provided. However, applicants should have an interest in improving the educational prospects of local children.

We estimate that the minimum time commitment for the role is approximately 20 hours per term, but that may vary depending upon the different roles a governor takes on. Governors usually serve on a committee as well as on the governing body.

There are several different types of governors on each governing body, including staff, parents, community and local authority governors. This is to ensure fair representation and, ultimately, accountability. No one type of governor is more senior than another but we’re particularly interested in filling local authority and community vacancies as there are several across the Fareham area.

As a governor you’d be assigned to a particular school and work with them to help identify and achieve their long term goals. You wouldn’t be involved with the day to day running of the school, that is the job of the head, but you would work on a strategic level. The role is to hold the school to account but also to offer support and celebrate success. Amongst other things, as a governor, you’d get involved with deciding how the school budget is spent, drawing up and evaluating the impact of policies, and even conducting interviews for a new headteacher, should the need arise.

If you’re interested in becoming a governor or would like further information, please contact The Governor Services Officer, tel: 023 9244 1511 or visit: www.hants.gov.uk/education/governors

Help for people with learning disabilities

Provided by Teekew Support

There is a FREE support service for anyone with a learning disability which is now available in the Borough. The service helps resolve problems with accommodation either as a tenant or home owner (such as dealing with mail, budgeting and learning daily living skills).

Support and help can also be provided in finding and setting up a home, enabling the achievement of greater independence.

This service is funded by the Supporting People Programme from Hampshire County Council.

To find out more about how our support service can help you please contact Teekew Support, tel: 01329 316432 or email: teekew.support@ports.nhs.uk
Community Action Teams

What are the local issues that matter to you?

Have you been to a Community Action Team meeting? Why not come along to one of the summer meetings? There are now six CAT areas across the Borough, with meetings three times a year, giving you the opportunity to hear first hand about local issues and to tell us about what you’d like to see improved in your area.

The six CAT areas are:
- Crofton
- Fareham North-East
- Fareham South-West
- Portchester
- Titchfield
- Western Wards

### Dates for your diary

#### Summer meetings

**Topic - Ask the Executive Leader**

Come along to your next local CAT meeting and put your questions and ideas to the Executive Leader of Fareham Borough Council.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAT Area</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Venue</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fareham South-West</td>
<td>Wednesday 10 June</td>
<td>Fareham Methodist Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crofton</td>
<td>Tuesday 16 June</td>
<td>Holy Rood Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fareham North-East</td>
<td>Tuesday 18 June</td>
<td>Oak Meadow Children’s Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Wards</td>
<td>Wednesday 15 July</td>
<td>Burridge Village Hall</td>
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<tr>
<td>Titchfield</td>
<td>Thursday 16 July</td>
<td>Titchfield Community Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portchester</td>
<td>Wednesday 22 July</td>
<td>Portchester Community School</td>
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#### Winter meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAT Area</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Venue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Titchfield</td>
<td>Thursday 1 October</td>
<td>Ranvilles Infant School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portchester</td>
<td>Tuesday 6 October</td>
<td>Portchester Parish Hall</td>
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<tr>
<td>Western Wards</td>
<td>Wednesday 14 October</td>
<td>Whiteley Community Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fareham South-West</td>
<td>Tuesday 27 October</td>
<td>West End Chapel, St Anne’s Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crofton</td>
<td>Tuesday 17 November</td>
<td>Stubbington Baptist Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fareham North-East</td>
<td>Wednesday 25 November</td>
<td>Ashcroft Arts Centre</td>
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</tbody>
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For further information on CATs or how to apply for funding please visit: www.fareham.gov.uk/cats, email: cats@fareham.gov.uk or tel: 01329 236100.
30 x 5 Keeps you alive!

The new recommendation for adults!

Your body needs to remain active, especially in this day and age, when our lifestyles are often stressful and sedentary. It takes just 30 minutes physical activity, five days a week to help you become fitter, healthier and happier and able to cope with everyday stresses and strains.

Doing 30 minutes of exercise, doesn’t have to be done all in one go, you can break it into more manageable chunks like 2 x 15 minutes or 3 x 10 minutes each day. When carrying out your daily exercise it should be done at moderate intensity, you’ll know your work-out has been worth it as your feel a slight rise in your heart and breathing rate and your body will feel slightly warmer.

The important thing to remember is to start from where you are now and to build up your strength; everyone’s physical capabilities are different.

To help you and your family become more active and get involved with local sporting/exercise opportunities please visit these websites: www.sporthampshireiow.co.uk, www.fareham.gov.uk and www.nhs.uk/Change4Life

For more information contact the Community Development or Sports Development Team, tel: 01329 236100.

Summer events for young people

These two events are being brought to you as part of Fareham Borough Council’s successful bid to the Big Lottery Fund under the Children’s Play Initiative. They are about providing the young adults of Fareham (aged 13 to 19) with the opportunity to participate in local outdoor events and to learn new skills.

Lazy Summer Afternoon Festival

Thursday 30 July 2009, 2 to 7pm
Park Lane Recreation Ground, Fareham
13 to 19 year olds Refreshments on sale
FREE: • music fusion • inflatables
• skateboard tuition • workshops
• Youth Council • circus skills
• health development team

Surf & Turf

FREE Summer Event
Thursday 27 August, 2 to 7pm
Salthorns Park, Hill Head
13 to 19 year olds

For more information please contact the Community Development Team, tel: 01329 236100
Countdown...

to the opening of the new
Queen Alexandra Hospital

The new state-of-the-art Queen Alexandra Hospital will open this summer, offering patients world-class facilities in a safe, caring and inspiring environment.

Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust believes that having one of the most modern hospitals in the country will help achieve their aim of providing patients with the best care, by the best people, in the best hospital.

► 1400 patient beds
► More single bedrooms
► En-suite facilities
► Larger spaces between beds
► Latest medical technology
► Enhanced visitor and relative facilities
► Increased parking spaces
► Disabled parking at entrances

In this supplement...
► Images of the interior and exterior
► Infection prevention & control
► Nursing staff taking the lead
► Car parking

Best Care, Best People, Best Hospital

www.porthosp.nhs.uk
023 9228 6000
Award winning infection prevention and control

Over the past three years Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust has achieved an 80 per cent reduction in MRSA cases and a 50 per cent drop in C. difficile cases.

In February this year, Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust was judged as amongst the best in the country and won an award for its improvement in combating healthcare-acquired infections.

To continue the success in infection reduction, the new Queen Alexandra Hospital has been designed with infection prevention and control as a priority.

A third of the beds in the newly built part of the hospital will be in single-bed rooms with en-suite facilities and the remaining will be in four-bed rooms with their own shower room.

Each room will have fewer beds and the space between each bed will be 10 per cent bigger than the current standards. This will ensure that rooms will be easier to clean and provides segregation if needed.
Nursing staff taking the lead

Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust employs over 30 matrons with the responsibility of improving professional practice and patient care.

One of the matrons is leading a project making changes to wards to free up more time for nurses to care directly for patients. The opening of the new Queen Alexandra Hospital offers a great opportunity to put this ‘Releasing Time to Care’ programme into practice.

‘Releasing Time to Care’ looks at empowering staff to make changes on wards, particularly improving environments and layout, to free up more time for nursing staff to spend with each patient.

What do matrons do?

► Lead by example, showing other nurses the high standards of care NHS patients can expect
► Make sure patients get quality care, by taking responsibility for driving up standards and leading work to improve professional practice
► Ensure patients’ nutritional needs are met, by ensuring patients get the right meals, at the right time, and that they are able to eat them
► Prevent healthcare associated infection, by ensuring control measures are properly applied by all staff
► Improve the ward for patients, by overseeing spending of ward budgets
► Empower nurses, by enabling them to undertake a wider range of clinical responsibilities to speed up patient care
► Make sure patients are treated with respect, by making sure their privacy and dignity are protected
► Resolve problems for patients and relatives by acting quickly to deal with problems when they happen and working closely with the Patient Advice and Liaison Service
► Ensure staffing is appropriate to patient need by working with ward sisters and charge nurses

Early trials have seen a reduction in the number of patient falls and pressure ulcers and resulted in patients spending less time in hospital, improving patient care and patient experience.
Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust puts its patients first for parking.

The new Queen Alexandra Hospital will have double the amount of current patient and visitor parking spaces.

2 car parks / 664 parking spaces

There will be two public car parks at the hospital, which will both be accessible via Southampton Road, Cosham (follow signage).

An additional overflow parking facility will be in place for three months when the new hospital opens, whilst patients and visitors are getting to know the new site.

Main entrance car park

(multi-storey – split for both public and staff parking)

Follow signage to Queen Alexandra Hospital main entrance, then follow signs to the main entrance car park.

North car park

Follow signage to Queen Alexandra Hospital main entrance, then follow signs to the north car park.

Buses

Bus numbers 63 and 38/38a currently travel between Fareham and Queen Alexandra Hospital.

For the most up to date information on bus times, please contact FirstGroup plc (Fareham Branch):

T: 01329 234373
W: www.firstgroup.com/ukbus/southwest/hampshire

For more information

Main switchboard number will remain the same – 023 9228 6000
Patient and liaison service (PALS) - 0800 917 6039
www.porthosp.nhs.uk
Fareham’s draft Sustainable Community Strategy 2009-2020 sets out our vision to improve the quality of life for all the Borough’s current and future residents. What should we change or improve on to make Fareham a better place to live, work and visit, now and in the future? Which things should be done first?

The public consultation on the draft strategy started back in March and lots of you have already had your say. However, in order to give more of you a chance to comment, the deadline has been extended to the end of June.

**Sustainable communities have been defined as:**
Places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe and inclusive, well planned, built and run and offer equality of opportunity and good services for all.

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**Keeping you informed**

We’re developing a policy to improve access to information and services for all members of the community within the Borough of Fareham.

This will ensure that everyone receives information in a format and in a way that suits them. This may be an audio version; Braille; another language; or even via a text message to a mobile phone.

How can we make sure that our published information reaches everyone and how can we make it easier for people to contact us?

If you think you can help us develop our policy, whether you have special needs or not, please contact Customer Services to get involved.

Tel: 01329 236100  
Minicom: 01329 824814  
email: customerservices@fareham.gov.uk  
www.fareham.gov.uk/contactus

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Fareham’s strategy has been developed by the Local Strategic Partnership, known as networkfareham, which is a partnership of local statutory agencies, businesses, voluntary and community organisations.

You can read the full draft strategy and the Executive Summary, as well as complete an online questionnaire, by visiting www.fareham.gov.uk/consultation.

If you want a paper copy you can request it by tel: 01329 236100 or email: networkfareham@fareham.gov.uk

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Customer Service Centre tel: 01329 236100  email: customerservices@fareham.gov.uk  Website www.fareham.gov.uk
Good news for recycling

You can now recycle Yellow Pages in your blue top recycling bin! Due to changes in the composition of the directories, the paper mills we supply can now take this type of paper. As a result, a slight change has been made to the Materials Reclamation Facility (MRF), which sorts the materials and we can now collect them from your blue top bins.

If you don’t want to receive Yellow Pages, you can visit Yell.com and ask to be removed from the delivery list.

Community recycling

Do you know of a community group that would like to be involved in recycling promotion? A team of Waste and Recycling Officers is available to talk to residents, schools and community groups about the benefits of recycling and waste minimisation. With the current economic downturn it benefits everyone to make lifestyle changes which can help the environment at the same time! We’d like to hear from anyone who would be interested in working together on environmental projects. Please contact a Waste and Recycling Officer, tel: 01329 236100 for further information.

What sort of project could your group get involved in?

• Organise a textile collection at your place of work. Get everyone to bring in unwanted clothes on a set day for a one-off collection. Waste and Recycling Officers can put you in touch with a charity which will work with you to take the textiles away on the day.

• Organise a mobile phone recycling collection. There are over 50 million unwanted or unused mobile phones currently in this country. Manufacturing mobile phones uses a huge amount of the world’s natural resources. Recycled mobiles provide communications for developing countries, businesses and the public as well as helping to protect the environment. Visit http://www.bagitup.org.uk/ for details on how to run a collection.

• Run a swap shop with your community group. Swap shops are a fun and informal way for the community to bring along household items no longer needed and take home something useful for FREE. Waste and Recycling Officers can work with you to organise one in your area. It’s an excellent way to promote waste minimisation!

• Be a recycling rep in your flat. Most blocks of flats in Fareham now have recycling facilities and Waste and Recycling Officers have visited households to talk to residents about recycling. If you live in a flat, would like to learn more about recycling and work with Waste and Recycling Officers in a way that you are comfortable with, perhaps reminding neighbours what can be recycled, please contact us. By the way, if your flats do not have recycling bins yet, they should be installed in the near future.

If you have something too good to throw away and you think someone else would like it, as well as charity shops, there are a number of websites you can advertise on. As well as selling items on eBay and similar websites, you can list items you wish to discard on websites where no money is involved; the items are given away FREE. Freecycle is a web-based group that enables people to give away things they no longer need, to other people locally and is an excellent way of passing on something useful that, for example, is too big to take to a charity shop.
Improvements to the glass collection scheme

As promised in Fareham Today, we’ll be introducing new bottle banks across the Borough which will allow all coloured glass to be collected together, with a separate bank for clear glass. The collection banks will be refurbished with new signage and should be ready for you to use in August 2009.

There will also be a pilot scheme for glass collections in flats. We’ve selected an area and will be starting phase one in August so watch this space...

Recycling In Fareham

Fareham is currently recycling 43% of its household waste. The rate has increased steadily, particularly with the introduction of the alternate bin collections in September 2005. Fareham is the highest performing authority in Hampshire and in the top quartile nationally, so well done to you all!

Bin hangers are left on recycling bins by crews or Waste and Recycling Officers where residents are putting non-recyclable material in their recycling bin. This is contamination, and contamination levels have halved since we introduced this system.

Alternative recycling

Don’t forget that many items which you can’t put into your blue top bin can still be recycled. Currently the RSPCA’s Stubbington Ark is taking used postage stamps and the caps from plastic milk bottles which they can then sell on. The caps are used in the manufacture of children’s toys so this is a great way to recycle something that would otherwise be thrown away, provide toys for children in an environmentally friendly way and help raise money to care for the many animals that need re-homing. Planned improvements at the Ark include a new state of the art Vet Unit.

The bottle caps and stamps can be dropped off at the Ark or at participating schools or you can leave the stamps at the collection point in Fareham Shopping Centre next time you are in town.

For more information about fundraising for Stubbington Ark, contact Vanessa Eden, tel: 01329 666916, email: vanessaeden@rspca-solent.org.uk or visit: www.stubbingtonark.org.uk

For more information or help with reducing your waste and increasing recycling, please contact the Council, tel: 01329 236100 and ask to speak to a Waste and Recycling Officer or visit: www.fareham.gov.uk or www.recyclenow.com
A day in the life of the Benefit Visiting Officer
By Shirley Newby

I work as a Visiting Officer within the Benefits Service. My role is to support the team in the assessment of Housing and Council Tax Benefits by visiting customers who are unable to come to the Civic Offices. I assist them with the completion of claim forms in their homes and gather information which supports their claims.

I also undertake checks of claims recently paid. This is a proactive initiative by the Benefits Service to ensure people are aware of their responsibility to report changes in their circumstances promptly to us. It helps the council and customers prevent incorrect payments of Benefit. The Benefits Service currently receives over 300 new applications for either Housing or Council Tax Benefit per month and there are over 8,000 claims currently in payment.

8.00am I log onto my PC to check my emails and any messages from the previous day. I have a prepared list of who I’m visiting today, some visits are by appointment and others are allocated to me within the same area, where I need to undertake a residency check and ensure the claim is being paid correctly.

I check my camera is fully charged, familiarise myself with the claims I am due to visit, check no updates have been received at the office since the visits were arranged and update my calendar so that the rest of the team knows where I am for the day.

9.00am I make my way to my first visit of the day which has been arranged and is a new claim visit to check the circumstances of the claim. The lady had a baby two days ago but she and her husband are happy to continue with my visit. I complete my normal checks with them and record the new household member details.

9.30am I make my way to my next arranged visit which is another new claim check. Unfortunately, they advise me that an urgent matter has arisen and ask to re-book the appointment. I will rearrange the appointment when I’m back in the office and let them know. I phone my next appointment to ask if I can arrive earlier than arranged, which is agreed.

9.50am I arrive at my next appointment which is a customer care visit. This lady has unfortunately recently become widowed and is understandably upset and unsure of her entitlements to any Benefits or any other income. I help her complete a Housing/Council Tax Benefit claim and discuss the income she has. It comes to light that her income is very low so I advise her about Pension Credit and contact The Pension Service on her behalf to arrange a visit from one of their officers.

11.00am I arrive at the next arranged visit and check the circumstances of the claim. There are no changes to report so after 15 minutes I make my way to an address where a visit is required but no pre-arranged appointment has been made.

11.30am I arrive at the next address and ask if it’s convenient to call unannounced. The customer, who has impaired hearing, agrees to proceed with the visit and I assist them with the completion of a claim form. I also explain to them the rules about claiming Benefit and their duty to keep the Benefits team informed about changes in their circumstances whilst they are in receipt of Benefit.

12.30pm I arrive back at the office and go to lunch.

1.30pm I catch up on the emails received throughout the morning. Some emails require a response; others involve further reading such as procedure changes or legislation changes.

2.30pm I listen to any messages received on the answerphone and deal with those, then deal with any messages or requests left for me by the Benefits Assessment Team or Telephone Team.

3.00pm I update the records of the claims I’ve visited today on the Benefits processing system and ensure that any irregularities or changes are corrected.

4.00pm I have a request to visit a disabled customer to collect evidence of their income to support their claim for Benefit. As the only convenient time available to the customer is 4.15 pm, my day in the office ends and I ensure that the answerphone is on and make my way to my last visit of the day. I go straight home once this is completed.

If you think you may be entitled to Benefit or need to advise of any changes in circumstances, tel: 01329 236100.
The right parking to suit your shopping needs

Did you know there are over 2,000 car parking spaces for the town centre shops? Whether you want to pay more to park as close to the shops as possible or if you’d rather park a little further away, pay less and stroll into town; we’ve got the parking to suit you:

• If you choose to park close to the shops, then you need a short stay car park but you can only park there for a maximum of 5 hours. The charges range from 90p for one hour up to £4.50 for 5 hours. It’s FREE to park daily after 6pm. Sundays and public holidays cost just £1.50 for the whole day.

• To park right next to the shops, use the central short stay Market Quay car park. You can only park there for up to 5 hours and charges are from £1.30 an hour. Again, it’s FREE to park after 6pm. Sundays and public holidays cost just £1.50 for the whole day.

• Just a short stroll away from the shops, you’ll find the long stay car parks (coloured blue on the map). Up to 5 hours parking is £2.80 or a whole day charge is just £3.50. It’s FREE to park after 6pm daily and FREE all day on Sundays and public holidays.

• For a really quick pop into town, there are also over 100 FREE on street car parking spaces around the town centre where you can park for up to 40 minutes. Or for just 70p for up to an hour, park in the long stay Lysses car park for High Street, and Holy Trinity Church and The Gillies long stay car parks for West Street Speciality Shopping.

For more information on parking in Fareham Town Centre visit: www.fareham.gov.uk and look under ‘P’ on the A to Z.

Forthcoming events

Saturday 20 June
After last year’s successful debut, Rock ‘n’ Roll Reunion II will return to the town centre from 9am to 3pm. There will be a display of pre-1972 motorcycles, plus live music from the 60s performed by The Cheese Doctors from 10am. Dance routines will be demonstrated throughout the day by local dance groups Jiveasy, Jiveriot and the Timestep School of Dance.

Saturday 11 July
Enjoy music and fun at the Rainbow Centre LIVE Festival. There’ll be fun for all the family including around 30 stands and displays, live bands and dance groups.

Saturday 12 September
See a wide selection of vehicles from yesteryear on display at Bygone Fareham courtesy of the South Hants Vehicle Preservation Society.
Planning for a new community

The South East Plan requires the Council to plan for a new community of up to 10,000 dwellings to the north of Fareham, in what is known as a Strategic Development Area (SDA). This new community will be different from anything seen so far in South Hampshire and will not be just another housing estate.

The SDA will create a new community of over 20,000 people. The main objective is to ensure that it is as sustainable and self-contained as possible. This means there will be a variety of different house and flat types provided for both purchase and rent, to meet the needs of the whole community from the very young to the elderly including up to 40% of the new dwellings being affordable housing.

There will be a range of facilities within easy walking distance to support the new community. This will include:

- Employment opportunities with 121,000 square metres of new employment floorspace being created
- Health care
- Primary and secondary education
- A range of shops and community facilities
- Open space, including sports facilities, informal recreation, parks and natural green space

For access to facilities not provided within the SDA and for those people who work elsewhere in the local area, enhanced walking and cycling routes will be developed. A Rapid Bus Transport system will also provide high quality public transport links to Fareham Town Centre and Portsmouth.

The new community will be laid out and designed to meet the highest standards of design, and will be expected to make an innovative contribution towards tackling climate change through energy efficient buildings and the use of renewable energy.

Planning for the future
To bring forward the development as part of the Local Development Framework, we’re preparing a policy in our Core Strategy which will set out the vision for the SDA, its boundaries and a set of development principles which will ensure that the new community meets the high standards expected of it.

The actual detail of the proposed new community will be contained in an Area Action Plan and Masterplan for the SDA due to commence later this summer. This will give greater clarity over where the different land uses will be located on the site and the mix of housing types and tenures.

A Community Liaison Group has been set up with members of local residents’ associations, societies, organisations and representatives from Fareham Borough Council, Hampshire County Council and Winchester City Council to decide on the vision for the new community. This will set out what type of place it is we’re trying to create and what will be its relationship with Fareham and the adjoining settlements.

Before the policy in the Core Strategy can be finalised, we’re consulting on a number of key questions. The questionnaire’s available at www.fareham.gov.uk together with details of how to respond; or copies can be found at the council offices or in libraries.

What’s vital at this stage of preparing the plans for this exciting new development, is to hear your views on these important questions which will help to shape our planning policies for the new community.

The full Core Strategy development plan document will be the subject of formal consultation in the autumn. The consultation will be about whether the plan, its policies and proposals are in accord with national and regional policy and other strategies such as the Fareham Sustainable Strategy. For further details on the Core Strategy visit www.fareham.gov.uk

Thank you for taking the time to help us plan for this challenging but exciting task of creating a new sustainable community.

The photographs above and below show some of the proposed SDA
Did you know that...

Fareham has one of the biggest cycling clubs in Hampshire.

Founded in 1927, the Fareham Wheelers Cycling Club (FWCC) is a long established and popular cycling club which has been part of our community for many years.

Fareham Wheelers is a traditional cycling club, and caters for all standards of cycling. Whether you’re a once-a-month Sunday afternoon cyclist or a competitive racer, there is something for everyone. Some are there to simply get in shape and improve their level of fitness, while others are there to compete in races and chase the chequered flag.

Over the years the club’s membership has grown from strength to strength and to date, has almost 150 members from all walks of life. Look out for the club colours, which are orange, blue and white!

In keeping with the times, the club has an active website, a great social scene and a positive attitude towards cycling altogether. Fareham Wheelers also helps and supports initiatives lead by Fareham Borough Council and both are keen to raise the awareness and promote safer cycling for everyone, in line with the Government’s National Cycling Strategy.

This year’s Round the Harbours cycle ride, taking place in aid of the British Heart Foundation, is on Sunday 7 June. This 32 mile leisurely ride takes in fantastic views and includes two ferry crossings. For more information, please visit: www.bhf.org.uk/roundtheharbours

Another date for your diary is Saturday 13 June, as this sees the start of Bike Week 2009. For more information visit: www.bikeweek.org.uk
Contact your Councillors

Key: • Conservative  • Liberal Democrat
For email addresses, @ is followed by fareham.gov.uk

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Titchfield Ward

Park Gate Ward

Sarisbury Ward

Locks Heath Ward

Stubbington Ward

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Titchfield Ward

Titchfield Common Ward

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Gosport plus
Stubbington
& Hill Head

Fareham Town

Sarisbury

Warsash

Titchfield

Crofton

Portchester

COUNTY COUNCILLORS (County Elections will be held on 4 June. After this date, visit www.hants.gov.uk for latest information)

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CEO

Customer Service Centre tel: 01329 236100 email: customerservices@fareham.gov.uk Website www.fareham.gov.uk

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### JUNE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Ticket Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fri 12</td>
<td>19:00</td>
<td>SNAP Dance Club</td>
<td>£6 in advance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed 17</td>
<td>14:30</td>
<td>We’ll Meet Again</td>
<td>£11 (Over 60s £9, 1 in 10 FREE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri 19</td>
<td>19:30</td>
<td>Richard Digance</td>
<td>£15.50 (£14.50 Leisure Card)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat 20</td>
<td>19:30</td>
<td>Pendyrus Male Voice Choir</td>
<td>£14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun 21</td>
<td>15:00 &amp; 18:30</td>
<td>Toppers Theatre School</td>
<td>£9.50 (U16s/Over 60s £8.50) / For tickets tel: 023 9252 5669</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri 26</td>
<td>19:30</td>
<td>Homeward Bound - Tribute to Simon &amp; Garfunkel</td>
<td>£15.50 (£14.50 Leisure Card)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun 28</td>
<td>19:30</td>
<td>Dance Divas - Divalicious</td>
<td>£10 (U16s/Over 60s £8.50, family of 4 £33)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### JULY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Ticket Price</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sat 4</td>
<td>19:30</td>
<td>Havant Symphony Orchestra</td>
<td>£16.50, £14, £11 &amp; £6.50 (U16s £1, students ½ price)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat 11</td>
<td>19:30</td>
<td>Body Rox Dance Jamm 2009</td>
<td>£13 (U16s/Over 60s £10) / For tickets tel: 07972 510013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed 15 - Sat 18</td>
<td>19:30</td>
<td>South Downe Musical Society presents Jekyll and Hyde</td>
<td>All tickets £10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri 24</td>
<td>19:30</td>
<td>C’mon Everybody</td>
<td>£15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tue 28</td>
<td>19:30</td>
<td>Lady Boys of Bangkok</td>
<td>£17.50 (£16.50 Leisure Card)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed 29</td>
<td>13:00 &amp; 15:30</td>
<td>Noddy in Toyland</td>
<td>£9.50 (Supersaver 4 tickets £36)</td>
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### AUGUST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wed 5 -</td>
<td>19:30</td>
<td>STP Productions presents Footloose</td>
<td>£12 (U16s/Over 60s £10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat 8</td>
<td>matinée 14:30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thu 13</td>
<td>19:30</td>
<td>Solid Gold Country Legends</td>
<td>£16 (U16s/Over 60s £15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun 16</td>
<td>15:00</td>
<td>Royal Marines Association Band</td>
<td>£15.50, £13.50, £12.50</td>
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</table>

### SEPTEMBER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Ticket Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fri 11</td>
<td>19:00</td>
<td>SNAP Dance Club</td>
<td>£6 in advance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun 13</td>
<td>17:00</td>
<td>Ray McVay’s Glenn Miller Orchestra</td>
<td>£15 (£14 Leisure Card)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thu 17</td>
<td>19:30</td>
<td>Jet Harris</td>
<td>£18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tue 22 -</td>
<td>19:30</td>
<td>Fareham Musical Society presents Hello Dolly</td>
<td>£12 &amp; £10, (U16s/Over 60s £10.50 &amp; £8.50) Tue only all tickets £9.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat 26</td>
<td>Sat matinée 14:30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat 27</td>
<td>19:00</td>
<td>Scottish Tattoo</td>
<td>£15 (£14 Leisure Card/parties 10+)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Something to celebrate?**

Fareham’s Ferneham Hall is here to make sure your dinner dance delights, your party’s perfect and the only blues on your wedding day are worn by the bride. We offer two rooms which can cater for parties from 20 to 250 and our experienced customer service staff will guide you through your celebration so all you have to do is enjoy yourself.

**Call now on 01329 824864 and get ready to party!**

Ferneham Hall is also a popular venue for meetings, training days, exhibitions and theatrical productions.