Hart’s future on show near you

THE draft plan for the future development of Hart District until 2028 goes on show in Fleet, Yateley and Hook this month.

The Hart Core Strategy ‘Preferred Approach’ is now being consulted upon and everyone in the district is being urged to give us their views.

Why we need to have it

More new homes are needed across the country and Hart is no exception. The population is growing, the birth rate is higher than the death rate and more people are living alone for longer.

The Council is currently bound by the housing target in the South East Plan, which for Hart is 220 homes a year. The Government intends to abolish this Plan but it will still require adequate numbers of new homes to be built. The Council therefore believes it is best to carry on planning for 220 each year, which is actually a lot less than have been built here in past decades.

Our special centre pages article in this issue, ‘Planning for Hart’s future development’, tells you about the key proposals in the Plan, including where, when and how change will take place. When it is finished, the Core Strategy will be the key document within Hart’s Local Development Framework (LDF), which will guide future development and change in Hart.

Three public exhibitions will be held this month where Council planners will be available to answer questions from residents on the Core Strategy ‘Preferred Approach’ and supporting documents. The exhibitions are:

• Friday September 9 – Monteagle Hall, Yateley
  12 noon to 8pm
• Saturday September 10 - Hart Shopping Centre, Fleet
  10am– 5pm
• Friday September 16 - Elizabeth Hall, Hook
  12noon to 8pm

All of the consultation documents are available to view from the link on the home page of the Hart website www.hart.gov.uk.

Details of how to respond are set out both in our centrefold article and on the Hart website.

Hard copies of all these documents are also available to view at the Civic Offices, the libraries in Fleet, Odiham and Yateley, and the mobile library service. If you would like to buy a copy of any of the documents, full details can be found on the Hart website.

Full details on pages 9-12
Funds flow in to Fleet Pond

by Adam Green
Grounds and Countryside Manager

FLEET Pond, the largest freshwater lake in Hampshire and easily visible from the main train line between Hart and London, is to benefit from £342,000 in extra money from the Water Framework Directive to improve water quality.

In a co-ordinated bid the Environment Agency gained £200,000 worth of funding and Natural England £142,000 with the possibility of further funds in the coming years.

As many of you are aware, much has been going on at Fleet Pond over the years to try to rectify the issues with the siltation of the lake and the effect it has had on the wildlife of the Nature Reserve.


However, one thing has always been missing and that has been the funding as vast sums totalling many hundreds of thousands pounds are needed to even start us on our way. We have now seen a massive step forward in gaining funds to help realise our aims and ambitions for this much loved Nature Reserve. Recent successes through Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) and Water Framework Directive (WFD) Funding will give a massive boost to the delivery of a phased series of lake restoration activities.

But why is this important? Cressida Wheelwright from Natural England explains: “Fleet Pond makes up part of the 48 hectare Fleet Pond Site of Special Scientific Interest. The SSSI has been in poor condition for some time, partly because of a build up of silt. A scheme is in place to improve the condition of the SSSI, and although this is an excellent step forward there is more work to be done.

“As well as the pond itself, the surrounding land embraces many rare habitats including heathland, wet woodland, reedbeds and marsh. Because of this variety visitors can look out for 180 different species of birds, 26 types of butterfly, 21 species of dragonfly and 400 wild flowers, many rare and some of which are nationally or internationally important!

“The complex problems for the pond have meant that no one organisation was able to instigate the much needed improvements. The Higher Level Environmental Stewardship (HLS) funding agreement, gathers the support and involvement of key partners to work together to improve the condition of the SSSI.”

Matthew Johns from Johns Associates project manages the restoration for the Partnership.

He says: “The funding from both areas has seen a great move forward in enabling the key activities planned for the Pond.”

Some of the key issues limiting the condition of the SSSI will soon start being addressed. These include:

● Small-scale dredging of the lake to restore its depth in targeted areas
● Creation of a new stream channel to take some of the higher flow from the Gelvert Stream, through areas of wet woodland, around part of the eastern side of the lake. This is aimed at reducing the input of silty water at Sandy Bay, providing features such as ponds, scrapes and backwaters to trap sediment and to create new wetland habitat within the woodland.

● Re-use of dredged sediment to create islands that will:
● control water entering Fleet Pond
● limit sediment input to the lake shore near Sandy Bay
● create new lake shore water habitat
● create new areas of reedbed and fringing habitat
● create new submerged plant habitat for fish and invertebrates

Works proposed for this year and next will be the first step towards delivering a full lake restoration masterplan, in accordance with detailed proposals that will be agreed by the Project Steering group. The evolving masterplan will also incorporate the output of a stakeholder consultation exercise to ensure wider long-term objectives can be met.

Jim Story from the Fleet Pond Society reminds us that there is still much to do:

“The Fleet Pond Society’s Clearwater Campaign aims to raise awareness and funds towards a variety of measures to reverse the Pond’s decline and to improve the Reserve for the benefit of the local community.

“Although we are pleased to gain these extra funds much more is still needed to cover the costs of designing projects through to major sums for dredging and environmental tasks. The Clearwater Campaign aims to provide funds for those much needed areas not included in any other funding stream and, importantly, would include projects of direct benefit to local people and visitors.

“This will include improved seating areas, a variety of new information boards, better footpaths and other public facilities. The Fleet Pond Society wants to preserve the Pond for our children, grandchildren and way beyond.”

If you want to donate or are just interested in what the Society is doing, please visit the Fleet Pond Society website for full information on the Clearwater Campaign.

There is also an extremely informative set of FAQs regarding the ongoing problems facing the Pond.

● New bridges for Fleet Pond – see page 4
Grazing trial to improve heaths

HEATHLAND is a rare and protected habitat, of which the UK has lost 90% in the last century. Britain in fact holds about 20% of the whole world’s lowland heathland. Hazeley Heath is one of the largest areas in the region being classified as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a registered common. It is also within the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area.

In order to restore and protect heathland species, Hart District Council is undertaking a heathland restoration programme. As part of this, with funding from Natural England and the STAG Trust Enriching Nature project, a grazing trial is running over a five year period. Amongst the management ‘tools’ for the heathland, grazing is one of the oldest and most effective.

Grazing animals, cattle in this case, help to control the growth of scrub that would otherwise swamp the open heathland. The specialist heathland flora present will have the chance to flourish without being shaded out by birch and pine scrub.

This in turn protects the wild creatures that rely on the heathland plants for their survival. Grazing on grasses, heather and gorse helps to make attractive conditions for ground nestling birds, butterflies and plant life as well as making the desired mosaic of micro-habitats essential for maintaining the richness and diversity of the flora and fauna.

Temporary electric fencing was erected in April around the two trial plots, one in the north (in Mattingley parish) and one in the south (in Hartley Wintney parish). Within the Council owned land there is a ten hectare site that is currently being grazed by four Friesian steers. Whilst they are not traditionally used for heathland grazing, they appear to be doing a good job on controlling the Molina grass and nibbling the growing tops of the young birch. Cattle are less selective grazers than horses or sheep and the tongue is used to pull vegetation into their mouths, leaving a tussocky appearance behind.

This generalised feeding behaviour is a valuable way of maintaining species diversity over the heathland.

The cattle went onto site later than anticipated this year because the particularly dry spring meant the heath was slow to green up, but the wetter weather since has encouraged vigorous growth of all the plants.

Since the cattle have been put on to the heath the trial has been running smoothly. There was one incident of fencing being cut before the cattle were introduced, but there has been no deliberate vandalism as there was last year. The majority of the public seem to be more accepting of the trial now, with people often commenting that it is good to see the cattle back.

Purple Loosestrife at Elvetham Heath pond

FOR the second year in a row Elvetham Heath Local Nature Reserve in Fleet has been awarded the prestigious Green Flag award for being one of the best sites to visit in the UK.

Elvetham Heath provides the perfect location for families. This valuable wildlife reserve and recreational space has been recognised as one of the country’s best green spaces with a prestigious Green Flag Award.

The nature reserve and open spaces get plenty of visitors and the site is very popular with local residents and visitors alike. The award was given for being well managed and offering many experiences in one place, including a playing area managed by Elvetham Heath parish council.

Green Flag Awards recognise and reward the best parks and open spaces in the country and Elvetham Heath stood out after impressing the judges with its excellent use of green space, well-maintained facilities and high standard of safety and security.

Only green spaces that are free to enter and open to the public are eligible to win an award through the scheme, which is run by environmental charities Keep Britain Tidy, BTCV and

Elvetham Heath scores a Green Flag double

GET this”, declared: “I am delighted to see that Elvetham Heath Reserve has gained this award again. Good green space provision is a valuable part of all our lives, especially for our children, who we hope will be able to play safely and grow to respect the areas and wildlife around them. The ranger team has done a fabulous job.”

Duke Banfield, the countryside ranger for Elvetham Heath’s local nature reserve, reports a very successful year for most wildlife, from huge numbers of frogs let in fear of being trodden on, to one of the biggest success stories, the Southern Marsh Orchid, which has already increased from just four specimens last year. It is showing signs of spreading too with a single individual discovered flowering in a mown area 200 yards away from the original site.

Dragonflies have also been plentiful, taking advantage of the temporary pools created around the reserve for just this purpose. The Beautiful Demoiselle is one of our largest and as its name suggests, most beautiful damselflies on the reserve, taking advantage of the slow moving stream that runs through the alder woodland. This has been opened to the sunlight, creating a serene area already favoured by deer and a singing nightingale.

Significant work ahead in wildlife areas

W ELL, we had summer in spring and April showers in June and July. Flowers held off blooming until later on, grasses seeded early and some trees, particularly oaks put on a second flush of leaves in July once we had had a bit of rain.

Butterflies were short on numbers and variety early summer but were prolific in July and then decided to flower and there was enough water around for them to drink.

There have been some great wildlife finds over the summer. Dormice have been found to be living on West Green Common after a number of years of cop equivalence there (see story p5) and a rare fungii that lives on other fungii had been found on Odiham Common, the first recording of it anywhere in the UK and only the third in Europe.

Various wildlife surveys will continue into the winter so fingers crossed for some more exciting things.

There will be lots of significant work happening to important wildlife areas in the district over the winter. Dredging and pond restoration works will commence at Fleet Pond, woodland enhancement works take place at Odiham Common and the wildlife trust in partnership with the MOD will be restoring heathland at Pyestock.

Autumn is a great time to see wildlife and to forage for nuts and berries. The Countryside Service service is running a few bat walks and fungi walks (details at www.hart.gov.uk) and the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust has a number of events on to celebrate 50 years as a Wildlife Trust (details on its web site).

Oak trees should look great and interesting this autumn with their second flush of leaves giving a two tone effect as autumn sets in. Let’s hope for a winter with not so much snow and disruption.

Enjoy getting out into the great outdoors that surrounds you.

See you soon – Steve
Ashwells Copse gets a facelift

A NEW facelift has been given to Ashwell’s Copse, off Griffin Way South in Hook that has both helped wildlife and reduced unsocial behaviour.

Extensive works were undertaken last winter to open up this much neglected woodland by coppicing the hazel stails, and thinning out young trees. Removing old remnants of fly tipping and garden waste and repairing old bridges has helped to make it more enjoyable to visit.

There were some local concerns about the removal of large holly trees with the misconception that they provided added security. In reality it provided cover for anti-social behaviour, which has since greatly reduced.

The removal of the holly and hazel coppice provided much needed light for ground flora, such as Bluebells, Lesser Celandine, Wood Anemone and Wood Sorrel, for which this copse was once known. New information signs have also been installed to help the visitor find out about the site and its wildlife.

Duke Banfield the site ranger says: “All in all it’s been a very rewarding project, I’m glad to report we had a wondrous display especially with Bluebells and Wood Anemone and I can’t wait until next year when the floral display will be guaranteed to lift everyone’s spirits.”

New bridge gives easy access to nature reserve

VISITORS to the Fleet Pond Nature Reserve were very happy to see three new bridges added to the network of footpaths at the pond last spring.

Particularly welcome was the construction of the long awaited bridge across ‘The Flash’, alongside Fleet Railway Station car park. This new bridge provides a level access route into the Nature Reserve for all visitors. Before it was put in, the only access from the station was via steps. Now everyone can easily access the pond, including the mobility impaired.

The other two bridges are replacements of older structures. The Carnival and Brookly bridges are now wider, which will allow a far easier circumnavigation of the Pond via the footpath for members of the public with mobility scooters or double buggies.

Funding for this ambitious project was achieved through several sources, including a Fleet Pond Society bid to the Rushmoor Environmental Fund and an accrual of Local Government Section 106 funds gained from new developments in the Fleet and Church Crookham area.

Funds also came from the Fleet Pond Society’s Clearwater Campaign, which was established last year to raise funds to restore the pond and create the best possible amenity for wildlife and people.

The Clearwater Campaign is a partnership between the Fleet Pond Society, Hart District Council, Natural England, and the Environmental Agency.

Part of its aim is to fund a substantial restoration programme of the Pond itself. This also includes projects to benefit people by providing more seating, more and better information boards and improving the footpaths.

Ground and parks changes on the way

GROUNDS maintenance for roadside verges, water features, shrubberies and open spaces in Hart is to be administered in conjunction with Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council from October 1.

Cllr Sara Kinnell, Hart’s Cabinet Member for Leisure and Environmental Promotion, says: “Basingstoke is to deliver the grounds maintenance service for both local authorities. The contact phone number will remain the same and there will not be any reduction in standards.”

On the same day parish councils across Hart will take responsibility for maintaining parks and play areas in their respective areas. Cllr Kinnell advises anyone wishing to raise an issue about public parks or play areas to approach the parish council.

THE ART OF LIVING IS TO DIE YOUNG: BUT AS LATE AS POSSIBLE

• Awareness raising and campaigning
• Research, training, courses, conferences
• FREE newspaper – “there’s more to LIFE”
• Promoting active retirement
  i) Pre-retirement Seminars
  ii) Annual Golf Challenge
  iii) Writers’ competition
  iv) Activity centres and days
  v) Holidays
  vi) Home of the OPAL project
  vii) UK online Computer Centres
• INFORMATION AND ADVICE – FREE phone 08000 328 7154
• DAY CARE – sixteen day care centres across the County
• FOOT CARE SERVICE – PHONE 01329 842481
• AID CALL (Community Alarms), Home Insurance, Motor Insurance and Breakdown Cover, Travel Insurance, Funeral Plan, Energy Services – Phone 0800 328 7154

Yateley Manor School

A local Co-Educational Prep School for ages 3 - 13

Yateley Manor has a long and successful history of educating girls and boys from the age of 3 to 13. Innovative, enthusiastic and committed teachers are at the heart of our learning community and they provide the framework for your child’s educational, cultural and social development. Nurtured in a warm, friendly and safe environment, with limited class sizes, children are given new experiences to explore, building confidence and stimulating a desire to learn.

A full programme enriches our educational experience giving children the opportunity to reach their full potential. Chess is an important part of Yateley Manor’s programme and our results are second to none. There are many other activities to try, including dance, ballet, horse riding, biathlon and archery.

The school has impressive facilities including an indoor swimming pool, a spacious sports hall, with indoor cricket nets, football, netball and basketball facilities, complemented by a gymnasium and sports pitches. Imaginatively equipped play areas give children the freedom to unwind and play creatively.

In a community that embraces a breadth of cultures centred on Christian values, where all relationships are based upon respect, children learn to appreciate the need to be courteous, considerate and to use common sense. At the same time they are encouraged to be creative and courageous as they develop into confident individuals, with a strong foundation for a happy and balanced life. Pupils only achieve this once they have been given the tools and the self-belief. The Yateley Manor experience does just that.
A HAZEL dormouse was recently discovered at West Green Common, Hartley Wintney where Hart’s Countryside Service has been trying over the past ten years to get the woodland back into a hazel coppice cycle for the benefit of wildlife. A local group for children called Fleet Wildlife Watch, run by local volunteers Heather Hickman, Karen Charlesworth and Vicky Harrison discovered the adult hazel dormouse in a nesting tube in newly cut hazel coppice! This is the first record of hazel dormice using the site, and Hart’s countryside rangers are overjoyed. The Wildlife Watch group put out the nesting tubes last autumn to see if they could find any dormice and they are hoping that more will be discovered using the tubes.

Hazel dormice are said to be a very charismatic species. They are nocturnal and arboreal, spending most of their active months in the treetops feeding on nectar, flowers, berries, nuts and some insects. They also hibernate, gorging themselves on hazel nuts in the autumn, fattening themselves up to last the cold winter months. Over the last century the hazel dormouse has declined in both numbers and distribution, making it a protected species by law.

Recent surveys suggest they have become extinct in about half of their former haunts. Hazel dormice are sensitive to weather and climate, both directly and indirectly, through their specialised feeding requirements.

They are particularly affected by habitat deterioration and fragmentation and also by inappropriate habitat management. For these reasons, they are highly vulnerable to local extinction.

It is not only the dormice that benefit; coppice management favours a wide range of woodland wildlife. After cutting, the increased light levels allow existing woodland-floor vegetation to grow vigorously. Often brambles grow around the stools, encouraging insects, or various small mammals, that can use the brambles as protection from larger predators. The open area is then colonised by other creatures such as birds and butterflies.

Hart Countryside Service’s thanks go to Mark Hazel, who does the coppicing at West Green Common and Heather Hickman, who provided, placed and checked the dormouse nesting tubes.

West Green Common historically was wood pasture, providing grazing for domestic livestock and a harvest of branches from the open-grown woodland. Traditional woodland management technique where trees that are cut to ground level then sprout vigorous new growth. After a number of years the new growth can be harvested and used for felling, hurdle making and a variety of crafts.

Typically, a coppiced woodland is harvested in sections or coups, on rotation. In this way, a crop is available each year somewhere in the woodland. Coppicing has the effect of providing a rich variety of habitats, as the woodland always has a range of different-aged coppice growing in it, which is beneficial for biodiversity.

The plan is to bring the rest of the Common under a coppice regime, even doing a trial area of Hornbeam coppice.

Sections of blackthorn that have collapsed under heavy snow in recent times will be cleared on the edges of some of the southern meadows and parts of the meadows that have been encroached by scrub will be cleared and should revert to meadow after a summer or two’s growth. Some areas west of London Road were treated in this way last winter and are recovering well.

An area of coppice at the Pothbridge end of the Common will also be worked this winter and three small ponds, one off Bagwell Lane, one at Whitehall and one next to the B3016 towards Pothridge will be cleared of encroaching trees and vegetation and de-silted. If opportunities present themselves during these works to halve more veteran trees then these will be done as part of the above works.

Several oak trees that were hazard last autumn / winter have responded very well so far – putting on lots of new growth where previously they were shaded.

**Guided walks**

HART District Council’s Countryside Service runs a variety of walks at various sites within the district. Whether you are interested in wildlife, conservation and your local countryside or maybe you are just in need of a good walk, you will find something for both you and your friends and family to enjoy.

**Tuesday September 13**

Bat walk Elvetham Heath Nature Reserve 7pm
By the village pond, Elvetham Heath, just past Morrison’s supermarket. (Grid ref. for meeting point SU 801554). Join Ranger Duke Banfield, on an evening bat walk to find out more about bats and which ones are using your nature reserve after dark.

**September Bird walk at Fleet Pond**
Date & details to be confirmed.

**September Bat walk Fleet Pond – 7pm**
Date & details to be confirmed.

Join the Fleet pond ranger to find out more about bats and which of them are using your reserve after dark.

**Saturday October 15**

Fungi walk Elvetham Heath LNR – 10am
By the village pond, Elvetham Heath, just past Morrison’s supermarket. (Grid ref. for meeting point SU 801554). Join Duke Banfield, Elvetham Heath Ranger, on a walk at Elvetham Heath Local Nature Reserve to find out more about our local mushrooms and toadstools (fungi). Please note this walk is aimed at beginners and we will not be picking or removing any fungi from the site.

**Saturday October 22**

Fungi Walk Odiham Common SSSI – 10am.
As a full fungi survey is carried out this year on the Common why not join Ranger Steve to see what it has started to reveal. Meet by the duckponds at Coll Hill Wharf, Old London Road, Odiham. Walk will take approx. 2.5 hours.

There will be a charge for all these walks of £2 per adult and £1 per child. Payable on the day.

Please note walks may be cancelled at short notice due to bad weather. Under 16 year olds should be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Please wear good outdoor footwear and bring warm waterproof clothing.

For more information about the walks please contact the Countryside Rangers on 01252 623443, or via email on countryside@hart.gov.uk

**Tackling birch scrub and widening paths on common**

The main aspect of work this autumn and winter under the Odiham Common management plan is to tackle the birch scrub in the north-east segment, widening the rides and paths that pass through it and creating a clearing for woodcock.

The main ride going south from this area to Bagwell Lane will also be widened to enhance its biodiversity value and in the long run to link the open areas to the northwest with those south of Bagwell Lane.
Join in our out of school activities

HART and Frogmore Leisure Centres offer an exciting selection of after school activities which can be enjoyed by children aged five to 16.

Activities not only include term time sports courses but racket sports courts are available after school for badminton, squash and table tennis. The swimming pool at Hart is also open until 4pm from Tuesday to Friday.

Activities across both sites include gymnastics, trampolining, badminton, archery, squash, fencing, a variety of martial arts disciplines, ballet, jazz, basketball, football and swimming.

Tell us about your celebrations

HART’S Leisure Service is co-ordinating a list of events which will be taking place during 2012 to celebrate events such as the Olympics or the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee.

If your club or organisation is planning to organise a celebratory event next year we would like to know about it. Our Leisure Development team wants to make sure you get the support you need in terms of any branding requirements, advertising or simply advice on licensing or road closures.

To tell us about your event please visit www.threesixfive.org.uk, download a form and return it to: Leisure Services, Hart District Council, Civic Offices, Hartington Way, Fleet, Hampshire GU51 4AE.

Alternatively email us at leisuredevelopment@hart.gov.uk and we will send you a form.

Once we have received the completed form we will ensure that your event is featured in any advertising that we produce. This will include both Hart News and our website.

Please return your application form by January 6 2012. If you have any queries please don’t hesitate to call the Leisure team on 01252 774138.

Activities for mums and dads

WHETHER your children are just starting school or heading back after the summer break we’ve got something at our leisure centres to suit you.

If you enjoy a day time workout we offer a wide variety of classes as well as two state of the art gyms and casual fitness classes, both centres also offer a fantastic selection of courses in sports such as squash, swimming, judo, trampolining, aikido, fencing, archery, karate and badminton. If you’re looking to return to sport we’ll have something for you.

For a limited time why not try out the facilities without signing up to a membership and get ten sessions for the price of eight. Try swimming, aerobics classes and the gym from just £3 a session.

Hampshire Games success

THE Hampshire Games, a multi-sport event for ordinary young people across the Hampshire and the Isle of Wight Sports Partnership was again a smash success this summer.

The event is divided into three sections: The Youth Games for secondary school pupils, the Mini-Games for primary schools and the parallel games for young people in special schools.

The games are not designed for the sporting elite – competitors have plenty of opportunities to compete in their chosen sport.

Hart District Council has had a good showing at these events for the past two years and those young competitors who attend always have a great day.

The development work around the games is undertaken to encourage participation and establish new playing opportunities for the district. The Hampshire Parallel Youth Games plays a significant part in the development and shaping of disability sport in Hart.

In June Hart Leisure Centre hosted the New Age Kurling for the Parallel Games with more than 120 competitors taking part. Hart teams also competed in the Youth Games in swimming, hockey and badminton achieving fifth (swimming), fourth (hockey) and second and fourth (badminton).

Hart’s vice chairman, Cllr Chris Axam said it was great to see so many people making use of the facilities available at Hart Leisure Centre.

Kevin Wallace, Leisure Development Officer at Hart, said of the Games: ’This is the second year Hart has been involved and once again we have had some fantastic results.’
New affordable homes

HART'S Chairman, Cllr John Kennett praised Sentinel Housing Association and Barratt Homes for their efforts in providing affordable housing at the recent opening of St Mary’s Park in Dilly Lane, Hartley.

The official completion of Sentinel’s first phase of 33 homes at St Mary’s Park was being celebrated last year and a fore-situation was improving with 78 new cast of 211 for the current year.

“Housing in this area,” Nurse said: “We’re delighted to be able to help ease the need for affordable housing.”

The development is helping to tackle a shortage of affordable housing in the area, which has more than 2,000 people listed on Hart District Council’s housing register. The chairman said the situation was improving with 78 new homes completed last year and a forecast of 211 for the current year.

Sentinel Chief Executive Martin Nurse said: “We’re delighted to be able to help ease the need for affordable housing in this area.”

Mr Nurse said high property prices in Hampshire meant it took many times the average salary to get a mortgage, making home ownership a distant dream for many local people.

“Coupled with about 1,500 families and individuals actively registered on the housing register these new homes will make a much needed difference to those on lower incomes,” he added.

The new homes are supported by a £3m investment from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and are part of a programme expected to top 500 new homes across the local area.

The new estate is designed with security in mind and homes are built using traditional construction methods to help reduce carbon emissions. Residents will also benefit from “green” technology helping to save money on their energy bills. Solar panels are fitted where the orientation of rooflines is suitable and homes not suitable for solar are equipped with a system that controls the temperature inside the home, keeping it warm in winter and cool in summer.

Councillor Chris Butler, Hart’s Cabinet Member for Housing and Health added: “We are delighted with the quality of the new properties being provided by Sentinel in this estate. This development will provide top quality sustainable housing for Hart residents in a beautiful setting with easy access to local facilities. Our partnership with Sentinel is invaluable in meeting the housing needs of the people of Hart, and we look forward to working with them to deliver further projects in the future.”

St Mary’s Park is one of four new social housing developments in Hart this year by Sentinel, providing a total of 177 affordable homes across the district.

Save money and keep warm

INSULATE Hampshire is the new area based insulation scheme to be delivered by Hart District Council and Hampshire County Council.

The scheme is open to everyone and will help protect people against the cold, cut household fuel bills and reduce carbon dioxide emissions as well as create new jobs in our local economy.

With loft insulation at £99 and cavity wall insulation at £75 for the first 5,000 suitable homes to sign up to the scheme and £99 thereafter, the scheme is expected to improve 20,000 Hampshire households.

Some people in certain circumstances will also benefit from completely free home insulation, meaning that local residents could cut their household bills by £300 a year, saving 1.5 tonnes of CO2.

The scheme will also offer house-holders the opportunity to find out more about solar photovoltaic (electricity generating) panels for homes, which would include information on the Government Feed in Tariff which now pays households for generating their own electricity with the potential to earn an income and save a third on electricity bills.

Householders will also be offered the opportunity to access a range of local community services and referrals to other initiatives as part of the scheme.

To register your interest contact the Insulate Hampshire team on 0800 952 0037.

Safety checks on electric blankets

Every year about 1,000 fires are caused by faulty electric blankets, killing around 20 people and injuring 250. Elderly people are particularly vulnerable.

In the last decade more than 10,000 blankets have been checked in Hampshire, with an average of 43 per cent failing the safety checks.

Blankets checked last year were either too old, worn out, had poor wiring, broken controls or offered no protection against overheating.

Electric blankets should be checked every year after the guarantee period and replaced if they are too expensive.

This year blankets will be checked at Fleet Fire Station on Wednesday October 12. If you would like your electric blanket checked, contact Hampshire County Council Trading Standards on 01962 833358 to book your appointment.

Fantastic opportunity
to own a shared ownership house

to the prestigious new St Mary’s Park
development in HartleyWintry

Home work pays off for former teachers’ houses

EIGHT empty properties in Yateley and Fleet have been brought back into use to provide much-needed family accommodation for local people on the Hart housing register.

The outdated former teachers’ homes in Monteagle Lane, Yateley, and Velmead Road, Fleet, have been modernised by Sentinel Housing Association as part of a £1.3m project, and let to locals.

Sentinel bought the properties from Hampshire County Council, with the help of additional funding of £180,000 from Hart District Council and £270,000 from the Homes & Communities Agency.

Around £30,000 per home was spent on new kitchens, bathrooms, flooring, doors and windows to bring them up to standard.

Ward councillor Chris Axam added: “I was pleased to have had the opportunity to review the refurbishment of a property in Velmead Road as part of our efforts to increase the affordable housing stock in Hart.

“They have been refurbished to a very high standard and will make good modern family homes.”

Hampshire County Council Trading Standards on 01962 833358 to book your appointment.
**Cracking down on benefit fraudsters**

NOTHING annoys members of the public more than benefit fraud when people take public money intended for the genuinely needy.

Hart District Council’s fraud team is engaged in a continuous battle against the fraudsters.

Benefit fraud includes those who make false claims and give incorrect information in order to obtain benefit to which they are not entitled. It also covers people who fail to report changes in their circumstances, which would affect the amount of the benefit they receive.

Hart Council takes benefit fraud very seriously. Upon receipt of an application form, all the information provided by the customer is thoroughly checked, verified and processed.

The verification checks include cross-referencing income/savings against bank statements, data from the Department of Work and Pensions, HM Revenue and Customs and various other sources.

The fraud team works closely with the Jobcentre Plus team investigating information received from whatever source and takes appropriate action where necessary.

Recoverable payments identified last year totalled almost £50,000 – comprising £23,342 in housing benefit, £22,655 in income support and £3,604 in Council Tax Benefit.

Sanctions against fraudsters include penalties issued by the Council, official cautions and prosecutions in court. In the last 12 months the Council has successfully prosecuted five claimants for benefit fraud with an 18 month suspended prison sentence and 250 hours of community service being an example of the penalties that the court has imposed.

Tell Us

Anyone with information can provide it either anonymously or personal by either:

- Ringing the council during office hours on 01252 774262/67
- Ringing the Jobcentre Plus/Local Authority Benefit Fraud hotline on 0800 328 6340
- Emailing fraud@hart.gov.uk

All referrals are considered and reports are kept in confidence.

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**Tour gives insight into rural housing**

Parish and ward councillors from across the district joined members from Basingstoke and Test Valley on a tour of rural exception housing sites in Hampshire, giving them the chance to look at the setting and design of new homes on recently completed schemes.

Local residents and parish councillors shared their experiences of being involved in the developments.

Chris Buchan-Hepburn from the housing association, Roger Chung from the building contractor and the Rural Housing Enabler were available to answer questions.

Sandra Hawke, who chairs Hampshire Alliance for Rural Affordable Housing (HARAH) said: “These events are very valuable in ‘showcasing’ what we do . . . a look and see tour is a picture worth a thousand words!”

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**Specially adapted homes for independent living**

Are you looking for specialised housing to enable you to live independently?

Hart District Council has a number of sites being developed over the next few years that include specially adapted properties to enable people to live independently.

These properties are built to be fully accessible for wheelchair users, and some contain shower rooms and other specialist adaptations.

To ensure that we can best meet specialised housing needs now and in the future we are asking any people who feel that they may be suitable for this type of accommodation to contact us and register their interest.

When these properties are close to being completed they will be advertised through our Choice Based Lettings scheme (www.harthomes.org.uk).

If you have any questions regarding these properties or would like to apply to join the Housing Register, please email housing.services@hart.gov.uk or call us on 01252 774420.
The Core Strategy ‘Preferred Approach’ is a draft of the key document for future development in Hart District. When it is finished it will be the main planning document for guiding and managing new development and change in Hart up to 2028.

This article summarises the most important issues and proposals in the document. If you would like to find out more about the Core Strategy ‘Preferred Approach’ and other Local Development Framework (LDF) documents that are being consulted upon, full details are available on the Hart website by following the link on the home page: www.hart.gov.uk

What’s its purpose?
The purpose of the Core Strategy ‘Preferred Approach’ is to assert where new housing and employment will go, as well as protecting what is most valued in the district. When it is finalised it will also identify what services, facilities and infrastructure such as schools, highways, public transport, health centres and leisure facilities are needed and when and how they should be delivered.

How has it been prepared?
Preparing something like this takes several years as it has to be informed by a large number of studies, which are available to view on the Hart website. The ‘preferred approach’ has been drafted after the Council has considered all the evidence provided by the studies.

What are the key issues?
The Council has identified in the Core Strategy a number of key issues that it thinks need to be addressed including:
- Protecting biodiversity, habitats and species
- Addressing climate change
- The need for new homes, including affordable housing and housing for specific needs
- Sufficient employment land for offices and industry
- The renewal of Hart’s larger town and village centres
- The impact of new development on infrastructure
- The viability of rural communities and the local rural economy
- Reducing congestion
- Good design and the impact of development on the character of Hart’s settlements and countryside
- Managing flood risk and sustainable water supplies.

Why have some places been proposed for development?
The Council has looked at a number of options for the future development of Hart, before deciding on the strategy set out in the ‘Key Diagram’ overleaf. The ‘preferred approach’ generally seeks to use opportunities for making better use of land within existing settlements, but this will not be sufficient to meet the needs of the district up to 2028. Therefore, ‘greenfield’ releases around some of Hart’s larger settlements such as Fleet and Hook will be necessary.

Why is Hart consulting?
The Core Strategy needs to reflect the views of local people, organisations and groups, as well as those of the Council. We are very keen to hear from as many people as possible before preparing a final draft version next year and then submitting it to the Government. A Planning Inspector will then hold a public examination before recommending if the plan should be approved. In 2013 it would then partly replace the current local plan against which all planning applications are assessed.

How do I respond to the consultation?
RESPONSE forms for the Core Strategy and the other LDF consultation documents are available to print on the Hart website. Hard copies will be available at the Civic Offices and Hart’s libraries. We will accept other written responses as well.

All responses must be received by 5pm Friday October 7.

If you have any general questions on the Core Strategy ‘Preferred Approach’ and the Local Development Framework, council officers will also be happy to respond through the email address below.

Responses to the consultation can be made either through emailing the Hart Planning Policy team planningpolicy@hart.gov.uk or writing to us at:

LDF Consultation
Planning Policy Team
Hart District Council
Civic Offices
Harlington Way
Fleet
GU51 4AE
Where, when and how much development?

The Key Diagram on the right suggests where and how much proposed development will be located in Hart. It is proposed that the majority of development, more than half of that needed, will be placed in Hook and Fleet and Church Crookham. This will be delivered through a combination of ‘strategic locations’ (marked by a star on the diagram) and making better use of land in both town and village centres and some existing employment sites. It is proposed that the four ‘strategic locations’ in West Fleet, Fleet town centre, North East Hook and Guillemont Park in Hawley, will be delivered between 2013 and 2023.

The fifth strategic location on the ‘key diagram’ is at the former Queen Elizabeth Barracks in Church Crookham, which is a new residential district recently granted planning permission for 872 new homes with associated community facilities and a significant new area of sports/public open space.

Hook will see a new residential district to the north-east of the village. This will provide:
- 100 new homes including affordable housing and homes for the elderly
- New green open space, sports pitches and allotments
- An indoor sports and recreation facility
- A community hub for shops and services
- Local highway and cycle path improvements

There will also be improvements to the village centre, including the redevelopment of some employment land south of the railway.

THE Guillermont Park employment site in Hawley is a strategic location. The aim is to create a mixed-use neighbourhood in Hart, which will effectively become part of the settlement of Farnborough in neighbouring Rushmoor. This will be achieved through:
- About 130 new homes on mixed tenure and size
- New small-scale business units
- New open space accessible to both site residents and neighbouring communities
- Improved bus/cycling links to Farnborough town centre and also to the business/employment locations around Farnborough Airport, Hawley Lane, and Pyestock

In RURAL AREAS the vision is for a ‘living and working’ countryside, with new housing and economic development on a scale that respects the rural landscape and character of villages. It is proposed that rural settlements in Hart will accommodate 350 new dwellings in the plan period. Commercial development appropriate to its context, scale and purpose may be allowed in the rural areas where it is essential to support rural enterprise and business.

FLEET and CHURCH CROOKHAM will continue to be a suburban town with a renewed town centre and an expanded range of shops and facilities. Some 1040 new homes will be delivered, mostly at West Fleet and Fleet town centre.

West Fleet will provide:
- 250 new homes, including affordable housing, on land adjacent to the Edenbrook site currently being built on Hitchins Lane, which will deliver the replacement leisure centre with improved sporting facilities, car parking and adventure play areas for young people. This will allow the future expansion of Calthorpe Park School.
- 450 new homes, including affordable housing, at Grove Farm, which will deliver the future expansion of Calthorpe Park School onto the current Hart Leisure Centre site, new playing fields on Grove Farm and land for a future primary school
- An extension to the Hitchins Lane country park
- New cycle routes, footpaths and highway improvements
- Public transport links and funding for additional parking at Fleet railway station

In Fleet town centre the area north of Fleet Road, from Reading Road to Church Road will be the focus of development. Key proposals include:
- Gurkha Square redeveloped into a new, inclusive public open space
- The Civic Offices relocated and the Harlington Centre and library redeveloped
- New shops, including a supermarket and additional town centre car parking
- It is proposed that, as currently planned, the areas of offices between Fleet Road, Kings Road and Albert Street will be redeveloped for residential and/or mixed-use. The redevelopment of Fleet town centre will provide at least 100 new homes.

HARLEY, DABBY GREEN, FROGMORE and BLACKWATER are particularly constrained from development and so will remain essentially unchanged. However, as highlighted on the ‘key diagram’, the centres of Blackwater and Yateley are proposed to be regenerated and enhanced. In total, 100 new homes are proposed in Yateley, Froghmore and Darby Green up to 2028.

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How will the key proposals be delivered?

Housing

SOME 4,840 new homes are planned to be delivered in Hart between 2006 and 2028. Up to April 2010, 660 new homes had already been built and a further 1,740 already have either planning permission or are already allocated for housing in the current Plan.

This leaves a balance of 2,440 new dwellings to be planned for in the Core Strategy. Approximately 60% of this housing should be delivered through four ‘strategic locations’.

The ‘preferred approach’ also includes a number of policies for meeting local housing needs, including affordable housing, managing housing development and providing sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

Infrastructure

THE phasing of development will be closely related to the provision of adequate infrastructure. The Council will be preparing an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), which will set out the key infrastructure needed, how much it will cost and when and where it will be delivered.

The proposed ‘strategic locations’ will provide key items of infrastructure such as improved transport networks, a replacement leisure centre, increased capacity at schools and ‘green’ infrastructure.

Environment

HART contains numerous protected habitats, the largest of which is part of the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area (SPA), one of the South East’s most important natural assets.

The SPA supports important populations of vulnerable ground-nesting birds including the Dartford Warbler, Nightjar and Woodlark. Hart’s Core Strategy must address the protection of the Thames Basin Heath SPA, and therefore includes policies for protecting the SPA and general biodiversity. Hart also has a significant number of important watercourses including the Basingstoke Canal, Fleet Pond and the Blackwater, Hart and Whitewater rivers.

The rivers all have significant floodplains and other parts of Hart experience surface water flooding due to poor land drainage and soil conditions. Future development in Hart will have to address these issues where necessary.

Town Centres and Employment

HART is close to a number of larger town centres such as Basingstoke, Reading and Camberley which provide both good access to shops and services for Hart residents and significant competition for Hart’s town centres.

The ‘preferred approach’ is to focus new retail development in Fleet town centre, which has the most potential to expand and diversify. Larger employment sites will also be protected for commercial use, except those proposed to be redeveloped as a ‘strategic location’.

The Council also has a long-term aim for a ‘Living and Working’ countryside where people have the opportunity to both live and work in rural areas through encouraging rural businesses and affordable housing.

What other planning documents are being consulted on?

THERE are several other planning documents being consulted on, including:

● Core Strategy ‘Sustainability Appraisal’ – which ensures that the principles of sustainable development are incorporated in the document

● Statement of Community Involvement – which outlines how Hart proposes to consult with public on the Local Development Framework in the future

● Fleet Vision’ – a background document which provides additional information on the proposals to regenerate Fleet Town Centre

Full details of these supporting LDF documents are available to view on the Hart website and Hart welcomes comments from the public on them.
A charity helping homeless young people has a new home itself.

The new building in Crimea Road, Aldershot is owned by Sentinel Housing Association but is to be run by Step by Step, a local charity that has helped homeless 16 to 25-year-olds for the last two decades.

Its grand opening is on October 11.

Previously known as the Emmaus Projects, Step by Step has operated from a number of premises in Aldershot town centre.

The new building, which will accommodate 30 young clients, training facilities plus all staff, has been supported financially by Hart, Rushmoor and Hampshire councils, Sentinel Housing and funds raised by the charity itself.

The building provides additional capacity for clients, single rather than shared bedrooms, smart and pleasant surroundings and the staff have the right tools to do the job. The new building is all about Step by Step becoming better at helping clients help themselves.

When young people arrive at Step by Step they are mostly unemployed, with low self esteem, sometimes with drug and alcohol issues and they are in need of a structured and supportive environment to help them adjust and face their problems.

With the help of staff who are on duty 24 hours a day, their key worker and the support of other clients, 75-80% stabilise and progress.

To find out more look at the website www.stepbystep.org.uk.

You can contact the fundraising department on 01252 346107.

A charity helping homeless young people has a new home itself.

Members of the Safer Hart Partnership which organised the Think Safe event

Tackling the causes of anti-social behaviour

AS one of Hart’s anti-social behaviour officers the focus of Sammy Hexter-Andrews’ role is educating our young people not only about anti-social behaviour but also about the harm caused by substance misuse, which is so often a contributory factor.

Sammy works closely with Hart’s secondary schools to provide off-curriculum days. For these days, an entire year group is taken off timetabled lessons to attend interactive workshops provided by a variety of agencies.

This innovative programme provides young people with the opportunity to: get first-hand accounts of life in prison and the impact of a criminal record; meet young people who have found themselves homeless as a result of poor choices; get career advice and dating advice for healthy relationships and self-esteem.

As a former staff nurse Sammy has in depth understanding of alcohol related illness and injuries which she is able to share with students.

“I also work with youngsters referred to me because of their alcohol or cannabis use. I get them to look at the reasons they are using and how this behaviour affects not only them but also their families,” she adds.

Sammy is now linking with local colleges of further education to continue the programme with older students.

Sammy also works with parents to encourage them to learn more about the effects that drinking at an early age can have on their children.

She told Hart News: "If alcohol was invented tomorrow it would be classified as a Class A drug because of its effect on individuals and our communities. It’s not my role to tell people what to do but it is my job to provide information, advice and support.

“Alcohol has become so entrenched in our culture that its use is accepted and even seen as a rite of passage. We need to challenge this and the most effective way to do that is through education, enabling people to make informed choices.”

Summer Campaign

The Community Safety team, together with the police, promote the anti-social behaviour summer campaign. They spoke to more than 6500 students in the district about what was acceptable behaviour and the consequences of their actions. They also advertised summer holiday activities.

The summer campaign of 2010 yielded a 16 per cent reduction in anti-social behaviour – it is hoped this will be even better this year.

Halloween and Guy Fawkes Night

Soon Hallowe’en and Guy Fawkes Night will once again be on us and before they arrive school pupils will again be warned about anti-social behaviour.

Statistics show that the campaigns do work. Two years ago only Fleet schools were visited and there were no reported incidents in the town – but where the team had not been there were reports. Last year all five schools were visited – and there were no reported incidents at all.

For more information on the work done by Sammy and the Community Safety team visit www.saferhart.co.uk.

The Safer Hart Partnership is available to talk to community groups and other organisations. Anyone who feels a group could benefit from learning about community safety, anti-social behaviour, drugs and alcohol or the projects run by the team should email community-safety-team@hart.gov.uk or ring 01252 774229. To find out more about the team’s work visit www.saferhart.co.uk

A fun day with serious messages

YOUNG people from schools all across Hart district took part in this year’s ‘Think Safe’ event, organised by the ‘Safer Hart’ Partnership.

More than 600 pupils experienced a range of fun and educational activities held at St John Ambulance centre in Farnborough. Organisations taking part this year were Hart District Council, Hampshire County Council, Hampshire Constabulary, Hampshire Fire & Rescue Service, GaSafe and the Red Cross.

Things the children learnt included how anti-social behaviour impacts their communities, what to do if approached by a stranger and the dangers of the road.

Each young person was given an information pack reinforcing the messages learnt and the highest scoring group of children, from Westfields Junior School, were rewarded with a special trip to Rushmoor Fire Station. ‘Safer Hart’ Partnership Officer Richard Denham, the event organiser. said: “The event was a great success and we have had a lot of positive feedback from teachers and students alike.

“Although the day was fun for the children, there are a lot of serious and vital messages they took away with them”. Think Safe is due to return in 2012 with even more schools hoping to take part.

The Safer Hart Partnership organises events to help educate young people about substance misuse
Hart Chairman supports RAF charity

THIS year's Hart Council Chairman, Cllr Chris Axam, has chosen the RAF Benevolent Fund as his main charity to support during his year of office. RAF Odiham, the main base for Chinook helicopters, falls within his electoral ward of Long Sutton and is close to his home in South Warrington.

Cllr Axam says that discussions with the Station Commander highlighted the fact that the RAFBF, which is the main charity supporting airmen, women and their dependents, still had great needs but had seen fund raising level off as contributions flowed to higher profile service charities.

Another charity, Minding the Garden, has been nominated by his Vice Chairman, Cllr Chris Axam of Fleet. Run by Hart Voluntary Action and using volunteers it provides a vital gardening service for Hart's elderly and disabled residents, who may be finding it hard to maintain their own gardens for themselves. It also offers gardening services to any Hart resident at competitive rates.

Just say it once

When you need health and social care support, different professionals often ask you for the same information. This wastes time – yours and theirs. Why not:

Social care support
Different Telephone parking
Which Telephone parking

Eversley village shop named best in county

Eversley has the best village shop in Hampshire – and that’s official. The newly revitalised Eversley Centre Stores took the award from Hampshire, the county magazine at a gala dinner in Basingstoke.

The stores had been open for about 40 years and under the same management for 28 of them.

Last year Eversley parish councillor John Hartle became the new leaseholder and successfully applied for a £200,000 Hampshire County Council/SEEDA grant under the Village Community Grant Scheme.

The shop was then gutted and transformed with new flooring, lighting, racking and shelving. It is now run by John and his partner Gillian Lewis.

It now sells a wide variety of items including freshly baked bread, local cakes, milk, fresh fruit and vegetables supplied daily from Covent Garden, meat from a local butcher and home cooked ham. It also now has an alcohol licence and features an array of real ales from local breweries.

Mrs Morag Lamb, the previous owner and still the postmistress, says: "John and Gill have done a fantastic job bringing new life into an old store. It takes a very special person to succeed in this business – you need a love of people, an interest in all aspects of the village and a real commitment. John and Gill ticked all the boxes.”

John has lived opposite the shop for 20 years but never imagined that one day he would be running it.

"One day I went to buy a pint of milk and came back with a shop,” he told Hart News.

Youngsters enjoyed learning new skills at special coaching sessions

Record breaking season for Soccer at Six

Soccer at Six returned to Hart this summer, bigger and better than ever before.

Soccer at Six is a project run between Aldershot Town FC's Community Trust and the ‘Safer Hart’ partnership. For 17 weeks over the summer, FA qualified Aldershot Town coaches taught young people from as young as five to as old as sixteen football skills.

Each weekday evening groups of young people were able to take part in venues across Fleet, Yateley, Odiham and Hartley Wintney.

The third year of Soccer at Six in Hart proved more popular than ever before, with a record breaking 67 young people taking part in the first Friday evening in Basingbourne Park, Fleet.

Soccer at Six will return next year. Visit www.saferhart.co.uk for more information.

Private sewers to be transferred

FROM October 1 property owners will no longer be responsible for private sewers and lateral drains. New legislation will transfer responsibility for these pipes to Thames Water.

At present property owners are responsible for private sewers and drains, which are sections of sewer pipe or drain shared with another person’s property, or running through another person’s land.

These owners are often unaware of their responsibility for the pipes until they face a repair bill, causing confusion and leading to disputes between neighbours.

After the private sewer transfer there will only be public sewers (owned and maintained by the sewerage companies) and private drains (the responsibility of property owners).

Property owners will still be responsible for the length of drain that takes waste water away from their property up to its boundary or to where it becomes a public sewer.

The Government estimates the transfer could increase customers’ bills by between £3 and £14 a year.

To protect you against much larger costs of clearing blockages and making repairs yourself, Private pumping stations will transfer by October 2016.

Privately-owned septic tanks and cesspits and their connecting pipework, large multi-occupier commercial sites (i.e. hospital, caravan park or industrial estate), or other systems which do not connect to the public sewer will not be transferred to the water company.

For further information go to www.thameswater.co.uk and click on private sewers.

TV switchover

THE switchover to digital TV for North Hampshire will take place on February 8 and 22 next year.

A help scheme is available that will provide practical support for older people and those with disabilities.

The scheme provides a package to convert one television set to digital. Visit www.helpscheme.co.uk for more information.

A help scheme bus will be visiting the district on October 17. The bus will be in the Church Road car park in Fleet from 10am to 4pm.

Advice about the digital switchover will be available to anyone with concerns.
New food hygiene rating scheme is on the way

HART District Council will soon be changing from the successful Hampshire-wide safe2eat ‘scores on the doors’ scheme to the new national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme.

Hart has been successfully operating safe2eat for more than three years. It has been very popular with business and members of the public alike, but due to the recent development of a national scheme Hart has decided to transfer from safe2eat in November.

Having a single scheme operating in England, Wales and Northern Ireland will help to ensure both consistency for businesses and clarity for consumers across local authority boundaries.

The national scheme was developed collaboratively between local authorities, Local Government Regulation, the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, consumers, the food industry, the Better Regulation Executive and the Local Better Regulation Office.

Like the safe2eat scheme, it will help consumers choose where to eat out or shop for food by giving them information about the hygiene standards found in food premises at inspections. This should encourage businesses to improve their standards.

Restaurants, takeaways, cafés, sandwich shops, pubs, hotels, supermarkets and other retail food outlets, as well as other businesses where consumers can eat or buy food, will be given a hygiene rating as part of the scheme.

There are six hygiene ratings on a simple numerical scale ranging from ‘0’ (urgent improvement necessary) at the bottom to ‘5’ (very good) at the top. When the scheme is launched consumers will be able to access these ratings at food.gov.uk/ratings and businesses will be encouraged to display stickers and certificates showing the rating at their premises.

Inspectors make sure standards stay high

HART’s food safety officers are responsible for monitoring the standards of food hygiene in more than 700 food premises throughout the district ranging from childminders and newsagents through to larger scale manufacturing premises.

Officers also deal with investigations of infectious disease, complaints against food premises such as poor hygiene, contamination of food and infestations. They also undertake food hygiene training, make presentations to schools and other local organisations and undertake advisory visits to food premises.

In a typical year inspectors will inspect more than 300 food premises, deal with over 80 food complaints and investigate around 200 notifications of food poisoning. In the very worst instances the food safety service will take formal action against those premises which put the health of the public at risk or continually flout the law. Enforcement options available to food safety officers include formal closure and prosecution of food business operators.

Recently the former owner of the Organic Farm Shop at Holshot Farm in Reading Road, Heckfield, Mr Roger David was ordered to pay a total of £165 when he pleaded guilty at Aldershot Magistrates’ Court to two offences of failing to implement and maintain a food safety management system under the Food Hygiene Regulations to control and monitor food safety. Hart District Council’s Environmental Health Manager, Nick Steevens said: “The food safety service prides itself on offering free and impartial advice to food businesses to ensure that food offered to the residents of Hart does not cause illness. The standards of hygiene in food premises across Hart are generally very good, but where poor standards are found this department will not hesitate to take further action.”

If you wish to make a complaint regarding the standards of hygiene in a particular premises or an area a food business operator that would like advice of food safety, please contact the Environmental Health Department on 01252 774421 or at eh@hart.gov.uk

Give a rescue dog a dinner for Christmas

DUE to the great success of last year’s “Give a Rescue Dog a Dinner for Christmas” Hart is running the campaign again this year.

The rescue centre that is used by Hart to re-home some of its dogs is self funding and greatly appreciates any help towards the upkeep of these dogs. Donations of food can be left at participating pet shops, parish council offices, vets and the Civic Offices in Fleet.

In 2010/2011 the dog warden collected 113 stray dogs, of which 81 were returned to their owners, six were re-homed direct to new owners and 26 were re-homed through a rescue centre.

As always, the dog warden service is seeking potential owners for stray dogs, which are all microchipped and neutered before being given a new home. If you are interested in giving a dog a loving home, please call Lynn Byfield, dog warden on 01252 774421.

Lynn says: “September and October is the time of year where fleas are most active so please remember to give your dogs and cats their flea treatment”.

Don’t forget FREE biodegradable poo bags are available from either the Civic Offices or from your local parish council.
Outsourcing refuse collections means big savings for Hart council tax payers

By Cllr Stephen Parker, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for the Environment

"OK, so the Council is outsourcing waste," I hear you say. "What does that mean to me?"

In the first place, not a lot. The contract requires the contractor to replicate the existing service. Blue and black bins are to be collected every alternate week as now, glass will be collected more often than now and if you have signed up to the green waste service it will run unchanged.

The collection day may change as the contractor optimises rounds, taking advantage of the benefits of the joint contract with Basingstoke and Deane, but the service will otherwise continue seamlessly.

The contractor who won the rigorously conducted tender is Veolia Environmental Services Ltd., which is well known to Hart as the partner in Project Integra, the pan-Hampshire partnership which deals with all our recycling and energy recovery, and is better known to Basingstoke as its current waste collection contractor. We can be confident in the quality of service that it will deliver.

"So why do it, then?"

Because it saves Hart, and thus its council tax payers, a lot of money through operational savings, capital repayments no longer needed and rental income from the council depot. In a full year we will save something like £350,000.

At a time when all councils are having to make savings just to make ends meet it is like a five per cent increase in revenue without having to put a penny on council tax. We will still have to ensure that Hart is as efficient as possible, for its own sake.

Glass and Flytipping improvements

There are two service improvements which at time of writing we have already been able to make.

Firstly the contractor wishes for reasons of efficiency to collect glass fortnightly at the same time as dry recyclables in the blue bin.

The second is something we have wanted to do for a long time, but budget have got in the way. The savings from waste outsourcing will enable us to do more about the parasites of society who fly tip.

We will have the funding to gather evidence against these people, and secure convictions. So let this be a warning to any fly tippers out there. You may think you are getting away with it, but your time is coming, and soon.

The Background

Over the past five years, Hart District Council has significantly reduced the cost of providing key services by either restructuring them, providing that service in partnership with another Council or outsourcing it.

The Council has been assessing different options to maintain the high standard of the refuse service whilst reducing its cost.

Hart was part of a group of seven other local authorities in Hampshire who were hoping to let a joint contract to collect refuse across the seven council boundaries.

Unfortunately, the group was just too big and the needs of the different councils too diverse to make it work.

So Hart looked at reducing the cost of the service by outsourcing jointly with just one other council leading to the new joint contract with neighbouring Basingstoke and Deane.

The fact that the contract is jointly held between the two councils has allowed the contractor to be more efficient in the way the refuse is collected and the savings from this have been passed on to both councils.

The two councils also have a joint team of officers who will manage the contract and implement measures to improve recycling across the combined areas.

Recycling – let’s get it sorted!

It’s really important to only put the right things in your recycling bin. Sorting out the wrong items involves extra costs, uses more energy and can sometimes prevent the right items being recycled.

Please remember to only put the following in your recycling bin:

- food tins, drink cans & aerosols
- plastic bottles
- paper
- cardboard

Don’t forget you can now recycle your Yellow Pages and empty aerosols too.

Please place your recycling clean and loose in the bin provided – no carrier bags or block sacks.

For more information, call 01252 622122 or visit www.hart.gov.uk
Pupils dress down to raise money for charity

HAMPSHIRE schools took part in a dress-down day with a difference to raise money for charities as part of National Recycle Week (June 20-26).

Instead of bringing in money to wear casual dress, pupils and staff were asked for a donation of one or more items of clothing, textiles or shoes.

The Hart school which collected the highest tonnage of textiles per head was Tavistock Infants in Fleet with 457 kgs from 176 pupils. They earned themselves a trophy and a bench made from recycled plastic bottles for the school grounds.

Hart District Council decided this year to work with local schools to provide much needed support for the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Air Ambulance. Five schools took part and around two tonnes of textiles, was collected. The material is being sold or recycled to generate much needed funding to keep the air ambulance flying.

It’s estimated that around 14,000 tonnes of textiles were thrown away in Hampshire last year. It’s very easy to recycle your unwanted clothes and textiles.

There is a good network of textile recycling banks across Hampshire and by donating unwanted clothes and shoes you will help charities to raise vital funds for their work whilst reducing the amount of waste being sent for disposal.

To find your nearest textile recycling bank, visit: www.recycleforhampshire.org.uk.

Impact of climate change on local wildlife

by Paul Howe, Bio-diversity Officer

The effects of climate change in Hart are not as dramatic as shrinking glaciers, expanding deserts or the destruction of coral reefs. In our district the effects may be more subtle but they are relevant none the less.

Average temperatures in the UK have increased by around one degree Celsius since the 1980s, while surface sea temperatures have increased by 0.7 degrees Celsius over the same period. These trends are predicted to continue but the level of future changes is dependent on the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. These changes are a reminder to us all that we need to consider our usage of fossil fuels in order to prevent more damage and that we need to plan for climate change adaptation.

Biodiversity is affected by climate change in a number of ways, such as changes in abundance and distribution which leads to new ecological communities developing. The timing of seasonal events such as insect breeding and plant-flowering can also change which will have consequences for other species which depend on the timing of these events.

This has consequences for migratory birds such as warblers, as migration distances may increase as breeding grounds move north while wintering areas remain in the same place.

Being predominantly cold-blooded, invertebrate distribution is often limited by climate and when warming occurs species distributions can change. The long-winged conehead, (a species of cricket), was very restricted in terms of its UK distribution until the 1980s, being confined to the south coast. Since then a period of northwards population expansion has occurred. It is now relatively common in Hart, being found at Fleet Pond, Elvetham and Hazeley Heaths and Odhiam Common.

The small red-eyed damselfly is the first “new” species of dragonfly to colonize the UK since records began around 300 years ago. Traditionally a species of southern Europe and northern Africa, as the climate warmed it spread further north and in 1999 appeared in southern England. By 2002 it was a breeding resident and was spreading north and east. This species is found at Turner’s Pond on Elvetham Heath within Hart but is likely to become more widespread in the future.

One of the most striking of the new bird arrivals in the district attributed to climate change is the little egret. This unmistakable, small, white heron was almost unknown in the UK before 1950. Then a gradual colonisation occurred and one bird was recorded at Fleet Pond in 1982. Since that time egrets have become a much more common sight at sites such as Fleet Pond and the Blackwater Valley.

While some new species have already arrived – with more likely in the future – others are likely to be lost as a result of the changing climate. In some cases it is possible that there will be long term changes in plant communities, including our woodlands.

Drier, warmer conditions may have a detrimental effect on areas of wetter heathland and wet, acid grassland. The European declining marsh fritillary was found in the acid grassland along the M3 corridor in the district but has subsequently become locally extinct. There are a number of likely factors for this, but climate change may have played a role. Under warmer and drier climate scenarios it is unlikely this habitat would ever be re-colonised by marsh fritillaries.
How the Council works – councillors and staff

MANY people get confused about the different roles of elected councillors and the staff the council employs.

The main difference is that councillors, (as seen in our gallery on the opposite page), are elected by the public, whereas staff are employed by the council itself. Broadly speaking councillors make the decisions, and set the policy direction for the council. It is then the job of the staff to carry those decisions out.

In practice, councillors and staff work closely together, particularly when developing new policies. Staff often have particular professional skills or knowledge which they use to advise councillors on the best decisions to take.

Another significant difference between councillors and staff is that councillors usually are members of a political party, (although they don’t have to be), and are elected to represent their communities. The staff, particularly those at more senior levels, are not allowed to let their political views influence the advice they give; they are required to be politically neutral.

Information on registering to vote

FORMS to register to vote in Hart for the 12 months starting in December have just been issued to all homes in the district.

Whilst the forms look similar to those used in previous years, a significant policy change means that electors must take care to ensure that their “opt out” choices for the edited register are renewed for the coming year.

The 2011 forms are still pre printed with the current electors’ names and nationalities. However legal advice means that we can no longer pre-print the previous year’s choice that an elector made about “opting out” of appearing in the edited register.

The edited register is the version that is sold to marketing companies and then used for any purpose.

This means that you must be careful to check with all electors whether they wish to “opt out” and ensure that their choice for this year is re-registered via the phone, web service or recorded on the form.

Use the web or phone to change your “opt out” or to reconfirm. It’s quick, easy, safe and secure and saves your Council Tax.

The web service allows you to delete previous residents, reconfirm or change your opt out status, request a postal vote application, update nationality details or confirm there are no changes to the pre-printed information.

There is also a phone service which allows you to reconfirm or change your opt out status, request a postal vote application or confirm no changes to the pre printed information.

If any other details need changing or you need to register for the first time – simply amend the form, cross out the previous electors, make sure your details and options are recorded, then sign the form and post it back.

More details of the changes as well as phone numbers and web addresses are enclosed with your personalised form. Please respond to the form before October 15.
Meet your local councillors

Hart District Council

THE Conservatives now hold 20 of the 35 seats on Hart and exercise control. There are 10 Liberal Democrat councillors and five from Community Campaign (Hart). Cabinet Portfolio holders are:

Leader of the Council: Cllr Ken Crookes
Environment and Deputy Leader: Cllr Stephen Parker
Planning and Regulation: Cllr Richard Appleton
Housing and Health: Cllr Chris Butler
Leisure and Recreation: Cllr Sara Kinnell.
Community Safety: Cllr Nippy Singh

Cabinet is the main executive decision making body and meets once each month. All councillors are free to attend and engage in the debate and members of the public are welcome to attend.

Leaders of the political groups on Hart District Council are:
Conservative Ken Crookes; Liberal Democrat David Neighbour; Community Campaign (Hart) James Radley

The district is covered by two parliamentary constituencies: North East Hampshire held by James Arbuthnot MP and Aldershot held by Gerald Howarth MP, both Conservatives.

Hart has 21 parish/town councils:
Blackwater & Hawley; Bramshill; Church Crookham; Crondall; Crookham Village; Dogmersfield; Eversley; Ewhurst; Fleet Town; Greywell; Hartley Wintney; Heckfield; Hook; Long Sutton; Mattingley; Odiham; Rotherwick; South Warnborough; Winchfield and Yateley.

You can email councillors at firstname.surname@hart.gov.uk
The Sixth Form College
Farnborough

Prospect Avenue Farnborough GU14 8JX 01252 688200
www.farnborough.ac.uk

Principal: Simon Jarvis

One of Britain's top sixth form colleges. The best teaching in the country, according to her Majesty's Chief Inspector in her report, Why Colleges Succeed: "In the College with the best teaching grades, 91% of teaching is good or better and no teaching is less than satisfactory... The College's one corporate objective which pervades all aspects of its work is to improve students' achievement". In 2007, following its latest Ofsted inspection when every area inspected was graded as outstanding, the College received notification of its formal designation as 'an outstanding college'.

College students win Target 2.0 Bank of England Challenge Trophy
The College's team of Robert Gregg, Clare Dooley, Nikii Hawes and Benjamin Thomas, ably supported by Andrew Harris, triumphed at the 11th national final of the competition sponsored by The Times called Target 2.0, held at the Bank of England's headquarters in Threadneedle Street, London.

The challenge started with teams across the country competing in regional and area heats which produced the six finalists.

"Outstanding"
The Deputy Governor of the Bank of England, Charles Bean, presented the winners with the Challenge Trophy and a cheque for the College. Speaking at the presentation, the Deputy Governor, who chaired the judging panel, said: "This year, 289 teams took part in the competition and it is a great achievement to have made the final."

This is extraordinary praise for an extraordinary achievement by extraordinary students at the College.

College partnership with Ghana thrives
Twenty students have recently returned from a 10 day excursion to Ghana to visit the College's partnership school, the Presbyterian Secondary Technical School in Aburi, as well as visiting other areas of the country. The students found the trip a life changing experience and gained a greater appreciation of living and working with people with a culture so different to their own.

The expedition reinforced the importance and value of the Ghana Link partnership with the school in Aburi.

College students met the school's new headmaster, Rev Samuel Munyuvhutum, during the visit and heard his enthusiasm for the continuation of the partnership which has been running for over 5 years. "There is a great deal that both the College and our School can learn from one another following the visit we are sure that the link will continue to gain strength over the years ahead".

Parents and students in Year 11 are welcome to attend the

AUTUMN OPEN EVENINGS
for entry in September 2012
Wednesday 9 November 2011
Thursday 10 November 2011
3.30 pm - 9.00 pm

the sixth form college with the university feel

A Charitable Corporation providing courses in Further Education

Study in one of Britain's top sixth form colleges

Learn, Enjoy, Achieve

Ofsted recognises yet more best practice at the College - Mathematics teaching is an example of excellence

Her Majesty's Inspectorate has recognised the exemplary work undertaken in our Mathematics department by sharing best practice across the sector. Mr Perry Horner was delighted to visit what she describes as "one of the top performing sixth form colleges in the country."

She observed: "There are many ways in which teachers help students who are struggling with mathematics. For example, the majority of students are attending the extra curriculum support sessions, and providing excellent teaching and additional support when necessary, are all vital. But often, what students need is to see someone else do the maths and explain it. This is exactly what they do at The Sixth Form College, Farnborough."

Music at Farnborough has never been more vibrant, more colourful and more exciting than in the past year. From snowy Christmas celebrations in the glorious surroundings of Guildford Cathedral and chamber music in Victorian recital rooms to jazz in the Cellar Bar, concert tours of Germany and visits from internationally acclaimed artists. The College's incredibly talented and dedicated musicians have delighted packed audiences with a rich variety of music performed with a skill and artistry comparable to any university department.

Choral highlights have included Faure's Requiem, Mozart's Vespers and Handel's Dettingen Te Deum whilst the Orchestra have performed a Mozart piano concerto and works by Shostakovich and Arvo Pärt. This year's Opera Project produced an incredibly moving Dido and Aeneas which stunned all those privileged enough to witness it.

Chamber music has been a notable feature of the Scholarship programme. The Big Band and Sixth Sense have once again wowed audiences with energetic and passionate concerts, while smaller ensembles, Barbershop and the "Folk Folk" have appeared in our informal evening concerts. In summary, some 20 major public performances have taken place during the year and this does not include the "Music at the Prospects" series or our weekly lunchtime concerts. Where else could you find so much music in one place?