

Welcome to the March edition of my e-Focus in which I update local residents on news items, council meetings and planning applications in the Alamein ward. As before if you no longer wish to receive these e-Focus newsletters please email len.gates@andover.co.uk and I will remove you address from the circulation list.

February saw the council's annual budget meeting when council tax was frozen thanks to a grant equivalent to a 2½% increase from the coalition government. While this is good news I felt that more could have been done to reduce the burden on local council tax payers. Residents of Andover still pay an Andover levy for "services provided to the town by the borough." These services of course are often used by residents from outside the town and the same services are provided to Romsey without charge. On top of this Andover pays the lions share of Test Valley's income already through council tax, business rates and rent from the industrial estates. It is time this unfair charge on Andover tax payers was abolished.

Further savings could be made by cutting the number of borough councillors, many of them semi-professional politicians earning more than the average pensioner while only needing to attend one meeting every six months. Reducing the current fifteen to ten or less could save Andover between £30,000 and £50,000 per year.

Work has now started on the long awaited improvements to the Enham arch roundabout. When finished there will be three lanes around the roundabout and lights controlling the traffic. I am advised this will solve all the congestion problems in the area. Also starting this month is work which will eventually see Icknield Way closed to through traffic and improved traffic calming on Viking Way. I will be monitoring progress to ensure any changes are in the best interests of local residents.

On the subject of traffic, a recent meeting of the Roman Way Forum heard about plans for traffic management in the area. Residents also had the opportunity to quiz officials about road repairs. Thank you to everyone who attended. It was well worthwhile although spoiled by the negative and aggressive attitudes of representatives of the county council. I will continue to press them to give the best service possible to local residents. There will be another Forum meeting on Saturday 26th March at 3:00 pm. All local residents are welcome.

Good news for residents of Augusta Park - new dog bins will soon be installed along the open space on Smannell Road. I have also asked council officers to follow up on several missing bollards and faulty street lights in the area. And in Kingsway Gardens work is progressing on the long overdue refurbishment of Atholl Court and King Arthur's Hall. I have asked for the footpaths around the area to be repaired as the existing surface is unacceptable and dangerous.

And finally after nearly four years work I can report the project to bring broadband to Little London and Smannell is nearing completion. I and the rest of the project team have had several meetings with the providers, parish council and council officers recently. Full details of the new service will be available shortly.



Cllr Len Gates, Alamein ward, Test Valley Borough Council

<http://lengates.mycouncillor.org.uk/>

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

There was just one planning application submitted and validated in February. If you wish to see more details or comment on this or any previous application go to <http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=9883>

11/00408/FULLN 43 Swallowfields Andover SP10 5PL

Erection of conservatory at rear

THIS MONTH'S BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETINGS

Test Valley council meetings this month are as follows. Members of the public are welcome to attend all meetings of the council. To view the agenda of the meeting, go to <http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=201>

08.03.11	Licensing Committee	Council chamber, Duttons Road, Romsey	17:30
10.03.11	Northern Area Planning Committee	Conference Room 1, Beech Hurst, Andover	17:30
16.03.11	Cabinet	Conference Room 1, Beech Hurst, Andover	17:30
17.03.11	Audit Committee	Council chamber, Duttons Road, Romsey	17:30
22.03.11	Planning Control Committee	Council chamber, Duttons Road, Romsey	17:30
23.03.11	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Council chamber, Duttons Road, Romsey	17:30
31.03.11	Northern Area Planning Committee	Conference Room 1, Beech Hurst, Andover	17:30

NEXT PARISH COUNCIL, OTHER MEETINGS and EVENTS:

Smannell Parish Council	Mon 7 Mar 19:15	Smannell & Enham School, Smannell
Enham Alamein Parish Council	Wed 9 Mar 19:15	Enham Shop, Enham Alamein
Alamein Community Association	Tue 22 Feb 18:15	King Arthur's Hall, King Arthur's Way, Andover
Andover Town Council	Thu 10 Mar 19:00	Guildhall, High Street Andover
Roman Way Forum	Sat 26 Mar 15:00	Church centre, Smannell Road, Andover

ELECTIONS IN MAY

Borough council elections take place on May 5th. On the same day a referendum will be held on plans to establish a fairer system of voting in this country. If you haven't registered to vote yet it's not too late visit <http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk> or contact me for more details.

If you wish to comment on, or need any further information about, any of the issues mentioned in this newsletter or any other local issue, please contact me on -
Email: len.gates@andover.co.uk or Phone: 01264 356759 or 07793 607190