



Ringwood Town News

'Greenways' 71 Christchurch Road,
Ringwood, BH24 1DH
Town Mayor: Cllr D Cracknell
Deputy Town Mayor: Cllr N Chard

Tel: 01425 473883
Email: Town.Council@ringwood.gov.uk
Website: www.ringwood.gov.uk

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Welcome to Ringwood Town News

INTRODUCTION BY TOWN MAYOR

Welcome to the early spring edition of Town News. It brings you up to date with things that have happened since the last newsletter.

As everyone knows, I am a great supporter of young people. The Town Plan is about Ringwood's future. 25% of our residents are young people but importantly they are 100% of our future. Therefore the Town Plan must be aimed at providing them with a good future, the things we had - the chance to buy or rent a house, a good well paid job in the town, good roads and a good environment. Ringwood's future is not about simply retaining what the retired, or nearly retired want and like, that is being selfish - but about providing the best we can for the residents of the future. We are trustees of the future of our young people - let us be responsible and visionary trustees.

Cllr Danny Cracknell
Town Mayor

COUNCILLORS WANTED

Elections for 5 District and 14 Town Councillors for Ringwood will take place on Thursday 3 May 2007. Nominations for both close at noon on Wednesday 4 April 2007. If you are interested in standing for the District Council visit the District Council's website at www.newforest.gov.uk or contact the District on 023 8028 5445.

If you would like to be a Town Councillor then contact the Town Council on 01425 473883 or visit our website for more information.

THE FURLONG

Much has been said about a possible development in the south west corner of the Furlong Car Park. As reported previously, the Town Council has made no formal decision in support or against any proposals. The Town Council's position is quite simple. It wishes to see all of the development possibilities, including one that provides for no new development, (the status quo) before it makes a decision. Only then will the Town Council have before it the full facts and figures and be able to judge whether any of them will bring benefits to the town. The Council has said from the start that it is imperative that the traditional market town feel of the town is preserved. It also said that it

is important that all residents have the opportunity of commenting on any proposals before final decisions are made.

The Town Council is delighted that the District Council has accepted all of our pre-conditions and is working closely with us and consultants on the preparation of proposals on which we will be seeking your views. No decisions will be made until the consultant's report has been published and you have had an opportunity to comment. That is an undertaking given by the Town Council at the beginning of the exercise and it is one which will be maintained by your current Councillors.

PUBLIC TOILETS

The Town Council had hoped that the District Council would solve the problems of the public toilets in the Furlong Car Park by demolition and rebuild. However, because of the review mentioned above the Town Council understands the District Council's reluctance to spend over £250,000 on new toilets at this stage. In the circumstances, the Town Council is pleased that the District Council has accepted that the condition of the existing toilets is unsatisfactory and a refurbishment scheme will be undertaken this spring. Work is expected to start by April and whilst the exterior of the building will not change, except for repainting, the internal refurbishment should bring a massive improvement in the facilities available for residents.



FAIRTRADE

On 20th January, Ringwood became the first town in the New Forest to obtain Fairtrade accreditation. Congratulations to everyone who helped but particularly to students at Ringwood School who first brought this initiative to the Town Council and who worked with Councillors, business people, and Churches Together to produce the evidence to meet the Fairtrade Foundation's criteria. Now that the town has Fairtrade status there is much to do to carry this through for the long term. The group that worked so hard for accreditation will continue to meet to develop Fairtrade. Anyone who wants to be involved is invited to contact the Town Council.

FESTIVAL

Don't forget, the Festival this year will be held between 7th and 14th July. This is an ideal opportunity for all groups in the town to pitch a stall in the Market Place to advertise themselves and get new members. There will be a week of varied events beginning on Saturday 7th with It's a Knock Out on the Bickerley and culminating on Saturday 14th with an exciting field gun run through the Market Place. If you want to pitch a stall or get involved in helping with the Festival, then ring Lyn Wickens on 01425 473883 during normal office hours.



CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

Last year we departed from normal practice by dispensing with the Christmas tree in the Market Place. Instead we provided LED lights in the deciduous trees. Responses from residents suggest that most of you liked the new display. The Town Council is already planning for Christmas 2007 and is working with the Chamber of Trade and Commerce on the project. We would, however, like to have much more involvement of the community in our Working Party. If you are interested in being involved then please contact our office.

TWINNING

Did you know that Ringwood is twinned with Pont Audemer? The twinning links and visits were arranged by a voluntary group who were interested in establishing and maintaining links with our French twin town. Unfortunately, membership of the Twinning Committee dwindled over the years and it is not now functioning. Several Town Councillors are interested in re-establishing the twinning link. They and the Town Council are, however, very aware that twinning should be about relationships between people of the two towns rather than the two town's Councils. We would very much like to hear from anyone who is interested in re-establishing the twinning link between ourselves and Pont Audemer. Whilst the Town Council is very supportive of the re-establishment of the twinning link, the real benefits will be obtained from those who take part. It is therefore unlikely that public funds will be allocated to develop the twinning link or meet travelling costs of people taking part in twinning visits.

THE HEALTHCHECK AND TOWN PLAN

We have had an excellent response to the Love It,

Hate It, I Wish survey. We have had responses from 1,957 people, of which 1,326 were from young people under the age of 20. This represents 14.36% of the population of Ringwood. The most striking comparison was how the loves, hates and desires of all age groups were very similar. We have worked hard to make sure that our young people are heard because they represent the future of our town. For our town to continue to be a thriving place, it is clear that our young people must be able to live and work here in the future—that they have the opportunity to make good lives for themselves. Set against a background of climate change and high house prices, this provides us all with many challenges. Your replies are being analysed and whilst we will give you more information in a later edition of the Town News, a very brief synopsis is set out below.

We were not surprised that top of your list of things you like about Ringwood were character, closeness to the New Forest and the sense of community. Those you disliked were parking in the High Street, A31 problems and traffic congestion. Those you wanted were a community centre/theatre/cinema, youth club/meeting place, and sports facilities, pedestrianisation of the High Street and access to the river.

The Town Plan process has already produced a good result. Some of you identified the need for a Taxi Shelter and Sainsbury's have offered to fund one. New Forest District Council have already been contacted, the site has been viewed and the design of a shelter will be decided upon very shortly. We are also working on suggestions for new signage and hope to be able to report progress on this shortly.



THE BICKERLEY

Tenders have been invited for tree works at the Pocket Park end of the Bickerley. Once some trees have been removed we will start installing new footpaths, trees and wild flowers to improve the area and give access to the Millstream.

CONTACT US

Remember if you wish to raise anything with the Council, write to us, send us an email, or telephone us where the enquiry is relatively straightforward.