



Ringwood Town Council News

CURRENT ACTIVITIES

Town Plan – Vision for the Future (The Love It, Hate It Consultation)

The first round of the major public consultations has been completed. A draft Town Plan is being finalised for publication early in the New Year. It incorporates everything you have told us that is both good and bad about the town and how you want the town to develop. Our future policies and schemes will be based on the Town Plan.

Vandalism and Anti-Social Behaviour

There is much in the press about vandalism and anti-social behaviour. These incidents are higher than experienced previously. We have been working with the Police and other agencies to try to deal with these problems which are not easy to solve.



Official opening of the teen drop-in centre in the former tennis pavilion at Carver's recreation ground in Ringwood. Pictured are left to right Jenny and Phil Crutchlow, Mayor Brian Terry and Goff Beck.

We have been involved in initiatives at the Bickerley and on Carvers Recreation Ground. In the latter case we have provided a Drop In centre for young people on Friday evenings in the former tennis pavilion. The pavilion has been refurbished and we are grateful to Ringwood Carnival for a donation of £1,000 towards furnishings etc and the voluntary labour for redecorating and refurbishment works. Jenny and Phil Crutchlow are running the Drop In, as they did the former Drop In centre at Belindas, totally free of charge. We hope that the young people of the town find the facility very useful and that it will provide them with somewhere to meet on Friday evenings.



Ash Grove Play Area

Consultation has begun on the future of Ash Grove Play Area, above. There is overwhelming support for refurbishment and the Council will be working with residents and young people to develop new play facilities by 2008.

Street Lighting

Hampshire County Council is the street lighting authority but every year we bid for new lights in the town and offer a financial contribution to encourage the County to accept our suggestions. This year we have requested improved lights in Kings Arms Row.

One scheme that we have always looked at but have never been able to afford is the provision of lights across Carvers Recreation Ground from Southampton Road. The County Council has now agreed to allocate up to £10,000 to enable us to provide these lights. We have placed the order and expect the lights to be installed in the New Year.

INTRODUCTION BY TOWN MAYOR

Welcome to the Christmas edition of town's Newsletter, which we are delighted is being published in the *Avon Advertiser* and hope you find the new delivery arrangement satisfactory. The *Town News* will be published four times a year in the *Avon Advertiser* for at least the next two years.

We have had a very busy time in the last year providing services and also representing residents' views to both the District and County Councils. Sometimes they take our views on board, but sometimes they do not. We will continue to represent the views of everyone in the town and make Ringwood the best town in which one can live, work and play. But please remember that those who regularly speak at public meetings and write innumerable letters to the press do not always represent the view of the majority of our residents. What we have to do is balance those views with those given to us privately.

Our offices will be closed over the Christmas period from 24th December, re-opening on 2nd January. Messages on our ansaphone will be checked during that period. May I on behalf of the Council wish you a very happy Christmas and New Year.

Mayor of Ringwood Councillor Brian Terry



Signage Project Group

You told us in the Town Plan consultation that signage in and around the town should be improved. A Signage Project Group was established to find ways to deal with the problems identified. This Group is community led and includes representatives from the Chamber of Trade, Ringwood Society, the Parish Church and the Town Council. Proposals for an improvement in pedestrian signage have been prepared which are currently being looked at by Hampshire County Council. A new town centre map has been commissioned which will be included on five map boards in the Furlong Car Park. The Group is also working with the Highways Agency and Hampshire County Council to upgrade the signs on the entrances to the town.

Festival

Councillor Danny Cracknell has led the Festival Committee for the past 10 years and with his small group of volunteers, has delivered superb events for the whole of that period. The Festival has got bigger and bigger but unfortunately, the volunteer support has not grown. The Festival Committee is now looking for new volunteers to take over and keep the Festival going. The Town Council will continue to give its support which, next year, will incorporate the British Pedal Car Grand Prix. The Festival will be staged over a two or three day period instead of the eight/nine day period of the past couple of years. If you would like to put something back into the community and can spare time over the next twelve months to help organise the Festival and a little time over the Festival weekend, then please contact the Town Council as soon as possible.

Sports Facilities

As we have reported previously Ringwood is the most underprivileged town in the whole of the New Forest for sports facilities for young and old alike. In order to remedy this we are trying to develop additional facilities at Long Lane and are reviewing a schedule of requirements to make sure that all of the sports that are short of space or need new facilities can be accommodated. We had contacted a number of clubs previously and now have an idea of the facilities needed. However, if you take part in sport or are involved in a particular sport please contact us, as we would want you to be involved in the development of plans for new facilities.

Your Involvement in the Council

This year we have introduced better facilities to enable every member of

the public to speak at Committee meetings. You can now come along to speak immediately before a particular Committee meeting on any matter under the control of that Committee. You can also speak on any item on an agenda on which a decision is to be made. If you want more details about the schemes, please contact us.

We have also initiated a further link-up with Ringwood School. Under this new scheme, the school has appointed two young people as Student Advisors

as soon as we possibly can. Secondly, agreement has been reached with Hampshire County Council for the provision of a footpath from Strides Lane to link up with the existing footpath on the Bickerley. Because of funding difficulties, this work will have to be carried out in stages. The first stage will be defining the road boundary by the installation of new kerbing which should be carried out early next year.



Christmas Lights

The Town Council has invested a lot of money in Christmas lights over the past three years and we hope that you find the new lighting attractive and that it improves the atmosphere in the town during the

Christmas period. This year we have installed lights in five trees in the Churchyard. Please let us know whether you think we should do more or whether we have done just about enough and should leave the rest to be provided by shops and retail outlets.

Graffiti

We are all concerned about graffiti. There is unfortunately a misconception about what the Town or District Councils can do about graffiti. Many people think the Town or the District Council should simply send its workmen out and clean it off. It is not that easy. We have no power to clean graffiti off private properties. We can and do clean it off Council premises. Removal from private premises is the responsibility of the owner of the property, but we cannot force them to do it. If you see graffiti on Council property then please let us know. Any on other premises should be reported to the Police. This is because graffiti often includes a "tag" which enables the Police to identify the culprits.

South West Corner of The Furlong

Much has been said and written about the District Council's Consultation on possible future uses of the southwest corner of the Furlong. Many people have commented publicly that the town

should be left as it is. Others have told us that we need to move forward. In our Love It, Hate It Consultation 78% of the public said you wanted to see new community facilities comprising a theatre, cinema and dancehall. That will cost between two and three million pounds which we cannot afford. Nearly 50% said they wanted some new and different shops. Option 1 could allow both of those requests to be met without an increase in your Council Tax.

Those against change tell us that no-one wants it. Most councillors would like to see the town stay as it is, but that is simply because most councillors are at or coming up to retirement age. It is natural for those in that age group to want things to stay the same. But as councillors we have a much wider responsibility. Our job is to be the guardians of the town and to make sure that our town remains at least as economically viable as it is today. Only Options 1 and 2 will achieve that. Option 1 also provides significant community facilities.

We supported Option 1 because you told us that you wanted new community facilities and new shops. Over the years professional consultants have said that to survive Ringwood as with other towns in the district needs to progress and needs additional shops to attract people, a view supported at the meeting by the Chamber of Trade. We were also interested to hear from the District Council that contrary to statements

NFDC Consultation on Core Strategy

The Town Council has responded to the District Council Consultation on its Planning Policies for the District for the next 20 years. The District says that by 2026, "the towns and villages will provide for the social, economic and community needs of all residents, securing healthy, fulfilled and safe lifestyles". We have looked at the document and how the District intends to achieve this statement. Regrettably we do not believe that the policies will meet those objectives in three key areas.

It is proposed that there should be only 25 new houses or flats built in the town each year for the next 20 years. There are already 1,000 people on the Council waiting list and even if every one of these 25 houses a year (total 510) is allocated to people on the waiting list, 500 of people will still be waiting for accommodation in 20 years, and that takes no account of others added to the waiting list during that time. In reality this means house prices will continue to rise. People will come into the town from outside or our children or grandchildren will only be able to afford to buy with the help of significant financial assistance from their parents and grandparents. That will force young people out of the town once they leave school. We do not believe that is fair and we have called on the District Council to reconsider its proposals and allow a more realistic number of small houses and flats to be built each year. We do not need to build hundreds of houses but if the town is to provide for our young people 25 houses a year is insufficient.

The District Council also acknowledges that there is an over reliance on low paid jobs and this problem should be overcome by the conversion of farm buildings and the development of a local economy, based on small businesses. It is not proposing the allocation of any significant areas of additional land for employment purposes. This will not provide sufficient well paid jobs for residents and we have urged the District Council to have another look at its Employment Policies to attract to the town, good quality high value jobs in the finance/banking and IT sector to the town.

Many years ago there was a proposal for a relief road to take traffic from the A31 to the Christchurch Road, but it has now been removed from the plans. We have asked the District to reinstate this as it will help to alleviate problems on the A31 and in the town centre.

Green Belt

Lastly, we have commented to the District Council on the phrase "Green Belt". The Government's Policy Guidance says, "the quality of the landscape is not relevant to the inclusion of land within a Green Belt or to its continued protection". The main purpose of the Green Belt is to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas and to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another. The Town Council totally supports that principle. It also supports the fact that land to the north, east and west of the town is protected because those areas do have special characteristics, for example being areas of Special Scientific Interest or Outstanding Natural Beauty, and therefore should be protected. Other areas designated as Green Belt have no such special characteristics. A limited redrawing of the Green Belt boundary to allow new low cost housing to be constructed for rent and sale would not cause urban sprawl or lead to Ringwood merging into Sopley, Bransgore, Verwood or Ferndown. We have therefore asked the District Council to have another look at the Green Belt boundaries to see whether we can allow some limited development which will give our children and grandchildren an opportunity to live in the town in which they grew up.

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.

- 'Greenways', 71 Christchurch Road, Ringwood, BH24 1DH
- Email: town.council@ringwood.gov.uk
- Telephone: 01425 473883

Our next Newsletter will be published in April 2008.

RINGWOOD'S TOWN COUNCILLORS

Ward	Name	Address	Tel No.	Description
East	Jeremy HERON	2 Dene Close, Poulner, Ringwood, BH24 1TB	07801 473131	Conservative
	Mark STEELE	160a Burley Road, Bransgore, Christchurch, BH23 8DB	05600 492280	Conservative
North	Nigel CLARKE	53 Fairlie, Ringwood, BH24 1TR	01425 480988	Conservative
	Christine FORD	12 Cunningham Close, Ringwood, BH24 1XW	01425 477235	
	Brian TERRY	19 Stillwater Park, N Poulner Rd, Ringwood, BH24 3JY	01425 477953	Conservative
	Jacqueline TERRY	19 Stillwater Park, N Poulner Rd, Ringwood, BH24 3JY	01425 477953	
	Peter CHAMBERS	5 Wren Close, Ringwood, BH24 3LH	01425 471291	Liberal Democrat
	Mia URWIN	Hunters Lodge, 154 Southampton Rd, Ringwood, BH24 1JF	01425 474366	
South	Neville CHARD	22 Glenives Close, St Ives, Ringwood, BH24 2PD	01425 470258	Independent
	Don COLE	Meadow View, Bickerley, Ringwood, BH24 1EJ	Conservative	
	Daniel CRACKNELL	25 Fairlie Park, Ringwood, BH24 1TU	01425 475337	Independent
	Steve RIPPON-SWAINE	22 Manor Road, Ringwood, BH24 1RA	01425 477131	
	Malcolm DALY	3 Riverside, Bickerley, Ringwood, BH24 1EJ	01425 473434	Conservative
	Angela WISEMAN	'Crowfields' Long Lane, Upper Kingston, Ringwood, BH24 3BX	01425 477607	