

A brief look at the impact of alcohol on Ringwood (1/9/06-1/9/07):

Introduction: Assault, Criminal Damage, then Rowdy and Nuisance, hot spot maps for 1/9/06-1/9/07 are presented, then the same are shown for offenders definitely under the influence of alcohol .

Methodology: Using Business Objects and reported date between 1/9/06 and 1/09/07, all offences were obtained for the New Forest. All records that are recorded as involving substance misuse drink were used. Then keyword searches were done using “in drink”, “Drunk”, “beer”, “lager”, “vodka”, “cider”, “alcohol”, “drinking”, and “whisky”.

Methodological Criticisms: It is important to bear in mind that the Substance Used indicator is rarely used, so is not a very good measure. Secondly this doesn't show how many incidents in these areas were alcohol induced, e.g. damage to cars/ play areas later on. Further it doesn't include the list of C12s – which is where police have stopped at a park and probably confiscated alcohol.

Effect of Alcohol

The Australian government estimates that ‘40% of violent crime; 78% of assaults and 88% of criminal damage cases are committed while the offender is under the influence of alcohol’. (http://www.alcoholinfo.nsw.gov.au/alcohol_summit_03/links/public_safety)

It is not just researchers who draw the link between drinking and offending. Offenders themselves draw the same link, between one third and 46% felt that alcohol use and criminal behaviour were linked, with the vast majority falling into the category “alcohol use causes crime” (<http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/toolkits/ar020204.htm>)

Assaults:

Firstly the substance used box in RMS police system is sparsely filled in, so it is best taken as a dip sample measure rather than an overview. However it is evident that generally the alcohol data shows the same patterns as the non-alcohol data. This combined with the research above showing the strong effect of alcohol on assaults, suggests the impact of alcohol on our crime figures. Domestic incidents have been removed, but it still evident that many of our assaults are happening all over Ringwood, although with more in the town centre. Yes many do happen in the town centres, but so to do they happen elsewhere in public, on streets, in parks, in school grounds after school, and during school as the maps illustrate. Now this is not to suggest that a DPPO would strongly curtail these, because it may well be that some of the drinking etc. happens legitimately at home and in pubs, but it is likely to have a positive impact.

Figure 1 – Assaults in Ringwood per 100m square (1/9/6-1/9/7)

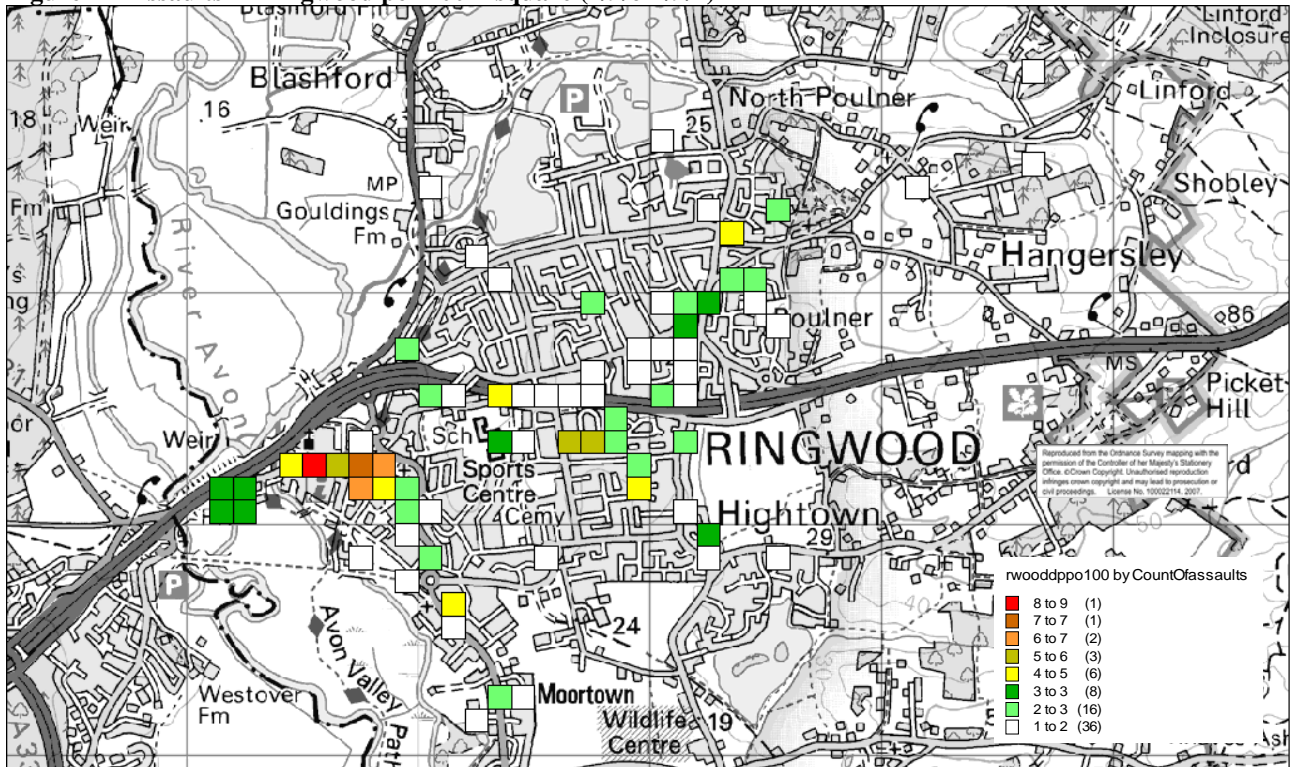


Figure 2 – Alcohol related Assaults in Ringwood per 100m square (1/9/6-1/9/7)

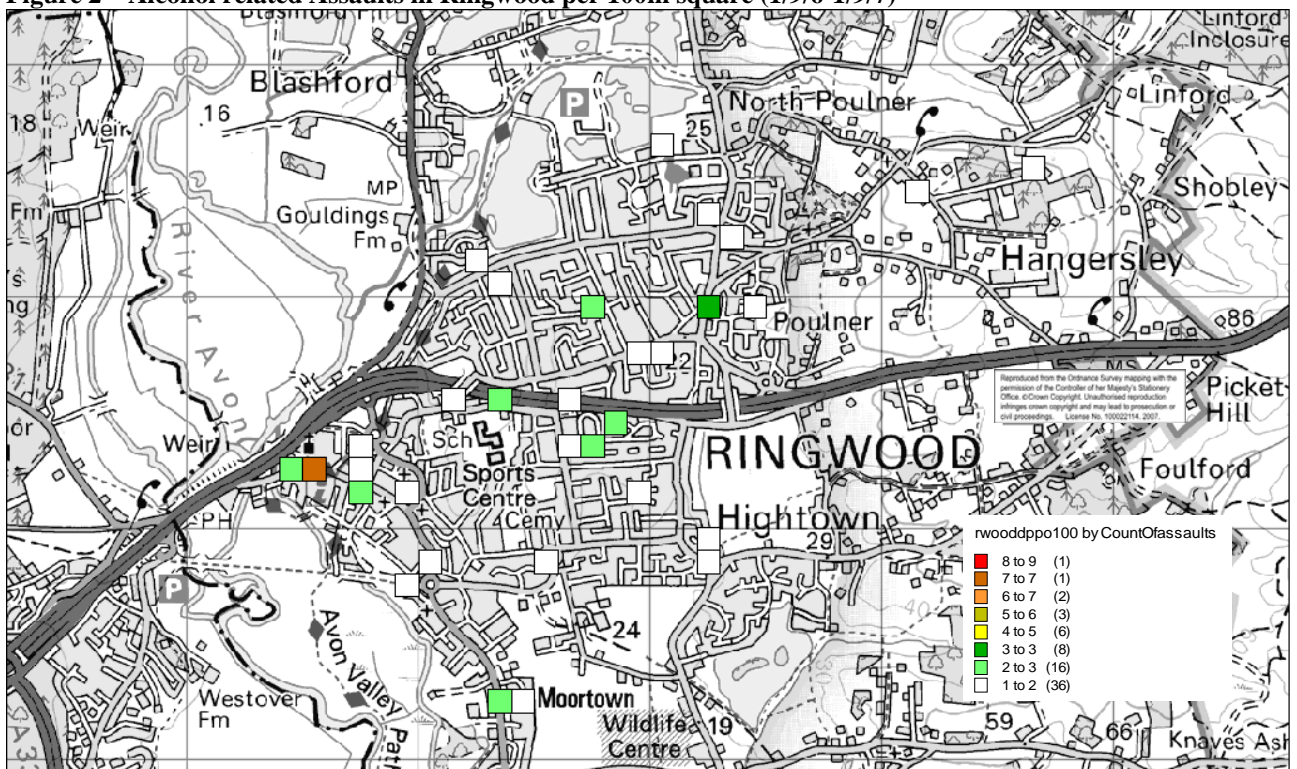


Figure 3 – Criminal Damage in Ringwood per 100m square (1/9/6-1/9/7)

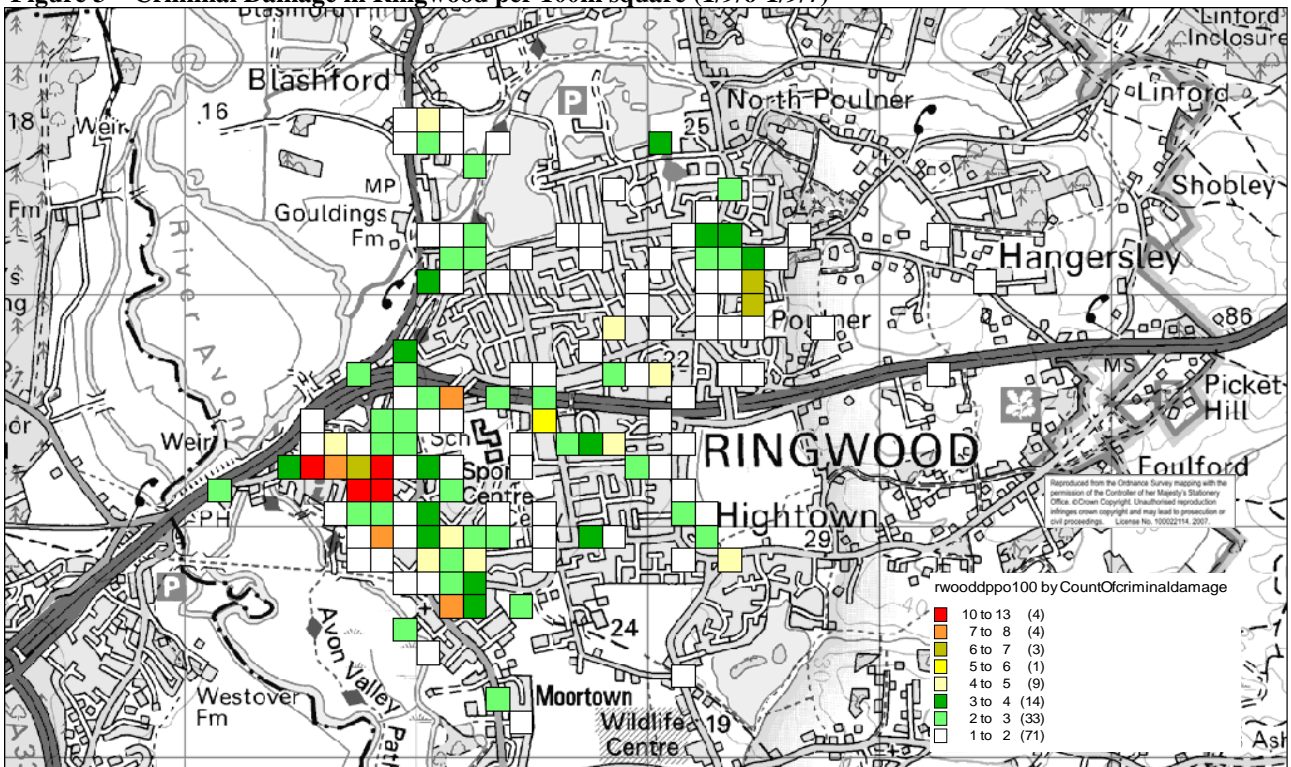
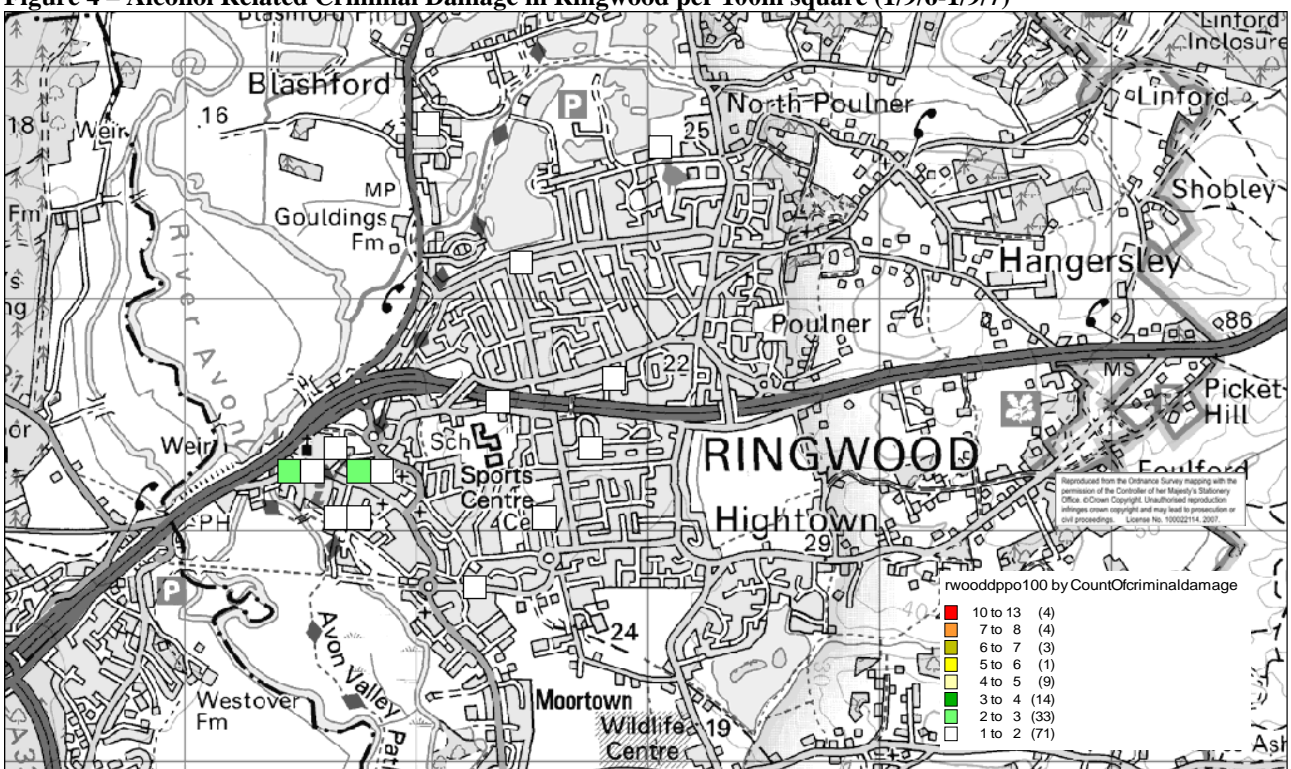


Figure 4 – Alcohol Related Criminal Damage in Ringwood per 100m square (1/9/6-1/9/7)



Criminal Damage:

The key points to note from the preceding maps are as follows. Firstly the substance used box in RMS police system is sparsely filled in, so it is best taken as a dip sample measure rather than an overview. The alcohol data shows similar patterns to the non-alcohol data, however it is often too

sparse, this combined with the research above showing the strong effect of alcohol on criminal damage, suggests the impact of alcohol on our crime figures.

The data is so sparse because of the nature of the offences. Usually a wing mirror is reported smashed the next day, or tyres slashed or a wall kicked in, so we are often unable to associate an offender and therefore a state of inebriation with an incident.

Domestic incidents have been removed, but it still evident that many of our criminal damages are happening all over Ringwood. Yes many do happen in the town centres, but they also happen elsewhere in public, on streets, in parks, in school grounds after school etc. Now this is not to suggest that a DPPO would strongly curtail these, because it may well be that some of the drinking etc. happens legitimately at home and in pubs, but it is likely to have a positive impact.

The following table indicates the fraction of offences for which offenders who were caught were tested and found positive (in the UK).

Percentage positive tests among arrestees held for common offence types

	Alcohol	Any Drug (excl. alcohol)
Assault	32%	61%
Robbery	75%	100 %
Criminal damage	29%	58%

Notes: Includes only those arrestees who provided a specimen and were held for the offences shown. Arrestees held for more than one offence have been coded in terms of the most serious offence using the scale published by Phillips and Brown (1998). (<http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/toolkits/ar020204.htm>)

This shows that 29% of offenders were under the influence of alcohol and 58% were under the influence of drugs. This again indicates the potential crime reduction impact of confiscation of alcohol from offenders.

Figure 5 – Rowdy and Inconsiderate in Ringwood per 100m square (1/9/6-1/9/7)

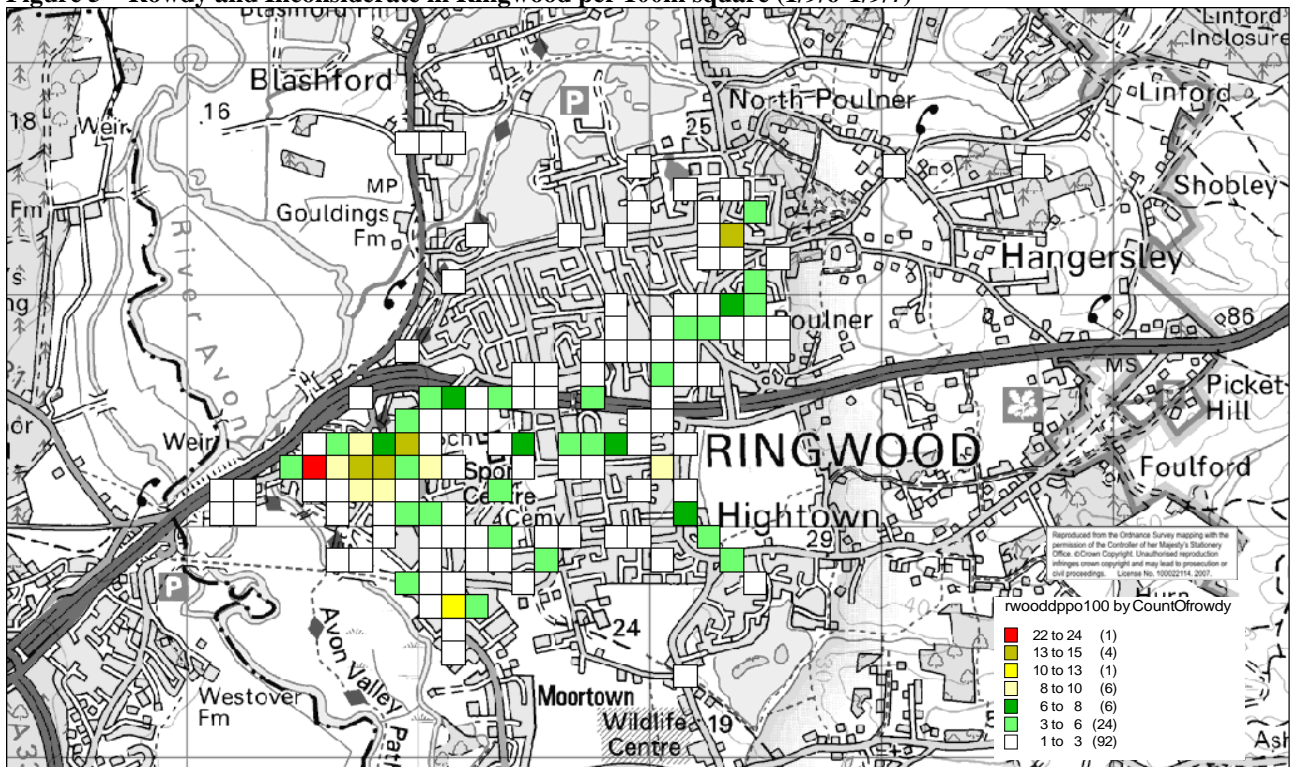
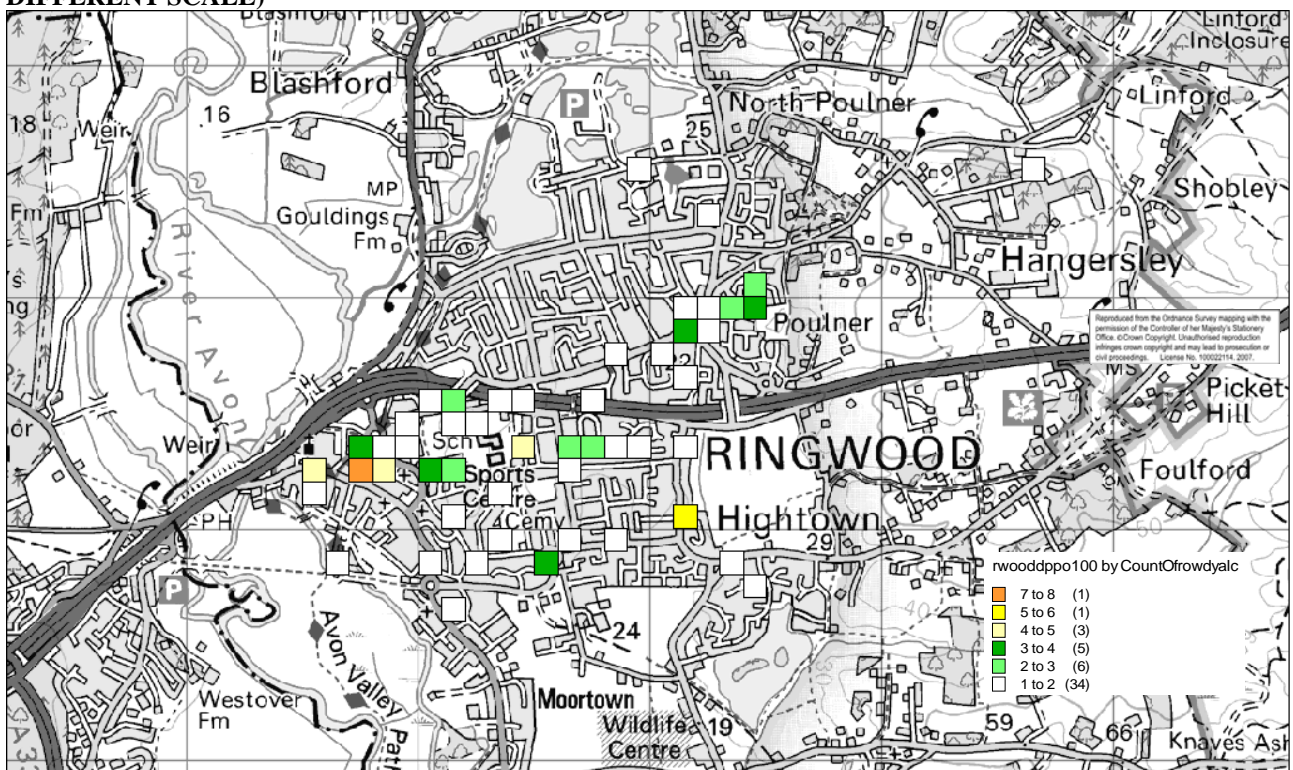


Figure 6 – Alcohol related Rowdy and Inconsiderate in Ringwood per 100m square (1/9/6-1/9/7) (NOTE DIFFERENT SCALE)



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Rowdy and Inconsiderate:

Again the maps show similar trends to the Assaults and the Criminal Damage. It is important to remember that a Rowdy and Inconsiderate call is not actually necessarily an offence, and is often a

B. Taylor – CDRP Analyst 2/10/07

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question of tolerance of locals. The Rowdy and Nuisance hot spots tend (but don't always) to correspond with the Criminal Damage ones. This also suggests that many of our Rowdy and nuisance calls are alcohol related. This again indicates the potential positive impact of a DPPO. However if the alcohol is being consumed underage, then the DPPO has little impact in that the drink could previously have been confiscated. However it does help confiscation of alcohol from groups with one member over 18 and the rest under 18.

Conclusions:

Assaults, criminal damage, public order offences and many of our rowdy and nuisance calls are affected by alcohol. This often happens in public places (parks, school grounds, streets, play areas etc.), for example currently around Carvers rec with overage drinkers.

However part of the problem of drinking is also the litter found afterwards – ie the broken glass in the play parks, and fields. It is hoped that this would be alleviated by confiscation of the alcohol.

The DPPO enables the officer/warden to make a judgement and distinguish between the quiet picnicker, the drunk and anti-social youths, and the drunk and anti-social adults. Further it is less discriminatory than current powers which only allow confiscation of alcohol from underage drinkers, rather than based on anti-social criteria (which is the logic of confiscating it).

Given the problems with overage drinking in Ringwood, it is recommended that we go for a DPPO this area. It gives officers another tool to use to combat anti-social behaviour (which is often drink related (18% of our rowdy and nuisance calls, 47.2% of our public order offences, 27% of our assaults)).

However Southampton city centre found the DPPO was very effective in terms of public reassurance and had little noticeable impact on their crime figures. They have only rolled it out citywide since May 1st, so have not conducted an evaluation of that yet.