

Annual Report from New Forest District Councillor Christine Ford

May 2007/08

In May 2007 I was re-elected Chairman on the Environment Review Panel.

In addition to chairing all panel meetings the chairman is also a member of associated sub-committees and working groups.

Currently these are: the Cemeteries Review Group; the NFDC Green Audit Board; the Waste and Recycling Sub-committee; the Public Conveniences Working Group; and the New Forest Environmental Protection Liaison Committee.

Short term groups have also included the consultation group considering the landscape restoration in the Furlong car park, following the eradication of the rat infestation.

Regarding the Furlong 'SW corner' development plans, as a member of that working party, at first I was in support of these, especially as they were to include a theatre/hall/cinema. However, as the footprint of the scheme became larger and larger I began to have severe reservations. Therefore, when the results of the public consultation became apparent I felt able to change my opinion and oppose the scheme. I spoke against it in the NFDC Cabinet and at Full Council.

This still leaves the problem of the Furlong Public Conveniences. Whatever re-build plans emerge, I hope that a radical new design will be adopted after the examples the working group members inspected in the City of Cambridge. This design has almost eliminated vandalism and inappropriate behaviour in the City's new build conveniences, thereby saving thousands of pounds and making them safe and pleasant to use.

Unfortunately since the adoption by NFDC of the Environment and Clean Neighbourhoods Act (2005) the problems of litter in our streets, public spaces, and along the A31, graffiti, dog fouling, and fly-tipping persist.

I propose to press Cabinet, through my Panel (if I am re-elected Chairman this May) to apply more rigorous enforcement of penalties for people caught perpetrating these anti social activities.

In respect of re-cycling I am aware of confusion over what items can or cannot be re-cycled. It is also time to find new markets for the processing of items which cannot at the moment be re-cycled in our County. This is in fact a County-wide problem with different approaches being made in different areas which must be tackled.

Under the same Act, I intend to explore ways to address the increasing incidents of noise and light pollution which beset our urban environment.

In support of my colleagues working in other fields of activity; I shall endorse their efforts to curb the over use of gardens for development; tackle speeding on our streets and Forest roads; to find/release more sites for affordable homes for **local people**.

At all times I shall be keeping a close eye on matters concerning Ringwood in particular, and supporting or defending our Town in all circumstances.

Cllr Christine Ford

7 May 2008