

**RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL**  
**ANNUAL REPORT 2009**  
**REPORT BY THE TOWN MAYOR**

In my first year as Town Mayor I had the very sad task of reporting on the deaths of Danny Cracknell and Malcolm Daly, two wonderful servants of the town. Their deaths overshadowed everything that I and the Town Council had done during the previous twelve months.

In this, my second year, and under Council rules, I can only serve two years at any one time, I have tried very hard to get out and about in the town and support as many local functions and events as I am possibly able to do.

I believe that the Town Mayor, as the Civic Head for the town, should be seen and should do everything he or she can to promote the town and support new ventures and initiatives at any time of the day or night. Most of the time, my wife Jacqui, who is also a Town Councillor, has been able to come with me on my official duties. It was only when I was reflecting on the year and looking back on the number of events that I had attended, that I realized how busy we had been. We have opened shops, celebrated residents' 100<sup>th</sup> Birthdays, represented the Council in my long forgotten art of golf and, of course, was heavily involved in the Festival and Pedal Car Grand Prix. In all, I attended over 100 events.

As I said last year, it is not my place to talk about the achievements of the Council. You will hear all about them from the Chairmen of our respective Committees. However, there are two items on which I would like to make a personal comment. I think my views are shared by the majority of Councillors, although as in every democracy, others have a slightly different view on some of the issues.

Firstly, the National Park. During last year, we were consulted on and, indeed, commented on the New Forest National Park's Management Plan and Local Development Framework and also its Recreation Management Strategy. Both documents sought to impose new stringent controls on the use of the Park by the public. The New Forest was designated as a National Park because of its uniqueness built up over many years as a result of the way in which local people had both developed and controlled its use. The two documents issued by the National Park Authority sought to change the very things that had made the New Forest unique. As your representatives, the Town Council responded by reminding the National Park Authority that it was introducing new management controls which were both unproven and ill considered and took little or no account of the historic practices built up over many years by the people who live here. I am pleased to say that the National Park Authority has committed itself to reviewing both of these documents, but I do urge everyone to be vigilant and just make sure that that special character of this area that made legislators deem it

sufficiently unique to receive National Park status, is not undermined by the those outsiders who think they know better than our forebears.

Secondly, I have become increasingly concerned about the way in which some people, and in particular the District and County Councils, are seeking to preserve Ringwood. Their policies seem to encourage a view that Ringwood does not need to change with the times and that its economic vitality will not be affected by the outside world. Remember, our grandparents tried to make the world better for us all, as did our parents. One of my fellow Councillors commented at a meeting recently that we are likely to be the first generation that has not looked to provide adequately for our children. By that, I believe that he meant that we were not providing housing for them, that we were not providing employment opportunities for them and that we were not improving the infrastructure generally by the construction of new roads, sewers and means of providing energy without detriment to the environment. Most of us of my generation quite naturally do not want to see change, but if we are absolutely honest, do we really want to tell our children and grandchildren that no change means no housing and no jobs for them, because holding the lid on any development in Ringwood means exactly that. It means to me that we do not value our children and grandchildren. I would never, ever, promote development of Ringwood to such an extent that it became a mini Totton or a mini Basingstoke, but we do need to be realistic and we do need to provide for our young people. The sooner my generation accept that, then the better the future for our children and grandchildren.

Finally, can I thank you for listening. I know some of the comments I have made will be, at the very least, thought provoking and I would ask you to take those thoughts away with you and consider them and consider whether we are doing the right thing for our successors.

I would like to thank all my fellow Councillors for the support they have given to me throughout the year and, particularly, to my wife Jacqui who has given me absolutely fabulous support throughout my period of office as Town Mayor.

I would like to set on record my appreciation for the contribution made by our team of Student Advisors and lastly, I must give my grateful thanks to the Town Clerk and all of the staff for their support throughout the year.

Thank you.

Cllr Brian Terry  
Town Mayor