

Friends of Ringwood Forest

Newsletter No. 15

15th March 2012

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It's been a while . . .

. . . since we told you about the latest campaign activities.

We know that some people believe the fight to change HCC's ideas for the Purple Haze site is over and that development, with the very loose assurances given last October, is a foregone conclusion.

The reality is very different and the fight for the right decision continues. In this newsletter we will tell you more and also what we have been doing recently behind the scenes.

HCC's M&WP Submission to the Secretary Of State

We only found out by chance a few days ago, and HCC assures they are going to tell everyone, that on 29th February 2012 they submitted the Minerals & Waste Plan (M&WP), with supporting evidence and a summary of their responses to the recent Soundness Consultation comments, to the Secretary of State.

Please note: Our formal Soundness response, sent to HCC on 16th December 2012, is available [online](#).

This means that HCC believes their Draft Plan is Sound and ready for the crucial Public Examination stage to be led by an independent Planning Inspector. According to [HCC's timetable](#), the Public Examination is likely to get underway in April 2012.

HCC's Submission is available [online](#).

Our Soundness comments, and HCC's responses, are included in the [Regulation 30\(e\) Consultation Statement](#). To see the main comments relating to the Purple Haze site, please go to page 69 of this statement and read on.

What's the Campaign's reaction to the HCC Submission?

While we have yet to complete a full analysis of HCC's responses to our Soundness comments, we have noted particularly that the Natural England's important and influential Soundness comments to HCC, although not condemning the Plan outright with regard to Purple Haze, are certainly not as supportive of HCC's proposals as they could be.

For this reason we issued a Press Release on 12th March 2012 which will be posted on the campaign's [News webpage](#).

The Press Release has also been forwarded to other organisations that are friends of the campaign including CTC, The Open Spaces Society and The Woodland Trust.

Once we have analysed all HCC's Submission responses relevant to the campaign, we will summarise our findings and share them with you.

What else have we been doing?

In response to your interest, we have provided some information about events around the Sunseeker Rallye and the Ribbons on the B3081 separately and later in this newsletter.

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Representatives from the Friends of Ringwood Forest (FoRF) campaign team have been meeting people who can influence the HCC Consultation outcome – a summary follows:

We recently met with the Forestry Commission and the management team of Moors Valley Country Park (MVCP) to discuss campaign matters relating to Purple Haze.

A meeting was also held with Somerley Estates where we shared our concerns over the loss of open space for local people, the significant issues we foresee for any contractor extracting minerals and the potential for future & irrecoverable damage to the Country Park.

We also explored some options for the positive development of the Purple Haze site.

Somerley Estates are now very aware of the groundswell of support amongst local residents for the campaign's aims. They can see that FoRF, an organisation totally free of direct Council involvement, and its many volunteer supporters generated tremendous backing from local people striving to overturn HCC's decisions and so Somerley Estates wish to continue talking to us.

We should therefore applaud & encourage Somerley Estates in their willingness to hear what local residents have to say about HCC's proposals and the issues relating to developing Purple Haze in Moors Valley Country Park.

Hopefully these initial meetings are just the beginning of ongoing fruitful discussions with the Forestry Commission, MVCP and Somerley Estates.

This level of bridge building is as directly attributable to every person who signed an objection letter, and/or the online petition, as it is to the efforts of the campaign team. Thank you all.

About the Sunseeker Rallye . . .

We decided not to go ahead with a publicity event for this Rallye for two main reasons – firstly, just before we asked via Facebook and the campaign Forum for help with running an event, the unexpected invitation to meet Somerley Estates arrived in response to a request sent months before and, secondly, we simply could not raise enough supporters to help as we needed 30 to 40 volunteers to make a publicity event viable.

We did, however, ask the Forestry Commission what steps are taken to protect Ringwood Forest and its flora, fauna & habitats from noise, dust & vibration during the Rallye.

We were re-assured by how much preparation work to address environmental risk is undertaken before each Rallye. Full details of the Forestry Commission response are available from the Campaign Office by emailing notoph@btinternet.com.

About the Ribbons . . .

People travelling between Verwood & Ringwood will have seen ribbons re-appear along the B3081 on the Purple Haze side of the road. The re-appearance was arranged by persons unknown to the campaign but who are assumed to be active supporters.

It was therefore with some dismay we noticed their removal yesterday (14th March 2012) by

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HCC workers – who, incidentally, risked some personal harm by doing so.

It seemed crazy that the ribbons were being removed while potentially environmentally damaging debris is left on the verges (reported to NFDC) and a considerable pile of fly tipped rubbish lingered in a car park (reported to DCC) along the route.

On contacting HCC, we were advised that the removal was in response to a single complaint that the ribbons were a danger & distraction to drivers and an accident could be caused.

HCC has been advised that the removal of the ribbons without any fore-warning is, in our opinion, just a bit ill-advised. Our concern is that it could precipitate action of a less appropriate nature and over which the campaign would have no control.

Finally –

Some “domestics” . . .

- **Constitution:** A Constitution has been adopted for FoRF and will be available shortly from our [About Us](#) webpage. It sets out how the campaign is governed and how the Committee operates.
- **Moving? Changing email address?** Please tell us about changes to postal/email addresses so we can keep in touch. Email: notoph@btinternet.com
- **Estate Agent Signs:** If you have a sign that is no longer required, please tell us so that it may be collected & recycled. Email: notoph@btinternet.com
- **Newsletter Publication:** We have moved away from weekly publication for the time being. Our aim is to publish newsletters when we have key information to share.