



Ringwood
Town Futures
Young Peoples Vision



Ringwood
Town Council



spud
YOUTH™

We must remember:

"Young people are the future inhabitants of our towns and cities, therefore it's critical their voices are heard"

Introduction



Ringwood Neighbourhood Plan

For a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) to have real local credibility, it must be prepared by the community that lives in, works in and uses the Neighbourhood.

The Ringwood Neighbourhood Plan Team wants to ensure community engagement and participation not just simple consultation. To encourage an active dialogue with the younger people of the town, the team chose to work with SPUD to run workshops and drop in sessions that would capture their concerns, ideas and thoughts.

This report is the output from those sessions.

The team was encouraged by the quality of the thinking and delighted by the fresh ideas that were put forward for the future of Ringwood.

Workshops

Giving Young People a Voice

A series of group workshops for young people were organised by charity SPUD during October 2022. Drop-in workshops took place at the Carver Clubhouse and Skatepark and at Ringwood School. In total 30 young people took part and had an opportunity to share their ideas, through a series of written, visual and mapping activities. The following report pulls together their various thoughts and ideas and identifies some of their key priorities for potential change.



Key Outcomes

What matters most...

- Green spaces
- Better lighting and lighting displays
- Skate Park facilities
- Limited shops of interest to young people
- Poor bus station area
- Nothing to do in the town centre
- The old cinema to be re-used
- Attractive public art





Love it...

What do young people love about the town and want to keep:

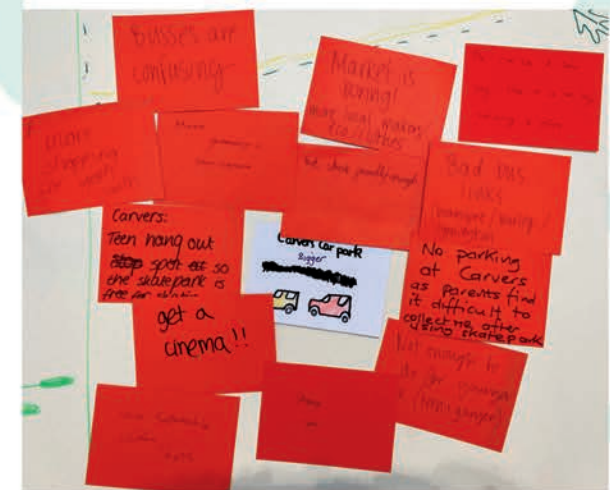
- green spaces e.g. Bickerley Common
- christmas lights
- public art e.g. acorn bench and Jubilee lamp
- Carvers skatepark



Improve it...

What do young people think could be made even better with improvements:

- picnic areas and pocket parks
- better shops especially for younger people
- landmark public art
- facilities at Carvers skatepark
- improved bus stops
- a town centre cinema
- walking and cycling routes



Loathe it...

What don't young people like about Ringwood:

- confusing buses/timetables and poor bus station area
- boring market
- poor links to other towns like Lymington
- no parking at Carvers skatepark
- no cinema
- town centre (High Street) has no greenery

Green Spaces

Young people repeatedly talked about the importance of green spaces in Ringwood. They referred to Bickerley Common, the Castleman Trail, Carvers Park and the various pocket parks around the town. These were important spaces for them to 'hang out' and enjoy themselves with friends or family.

They also wanted to see improvements to some of these areas including:

- fitness trail/equipment along the Castleman Trail. Possible low level led, solar lighting for night use.
- lighting and a toddlers skatepark at Carvers
- a covered area over the skatepark, to make it usable year round
- better entrances and attractive picnic seating in the pocket parks
- lack of greenery/green spaces in the centre of town, especially on the High Street



Bus Station

The area of the bus station/bus stops came up repeatedly in conversation. It was felt that the area was not attractive and there was nothing to do or see there. This made it feel unsafe and unwelcoming, especially at a key location in town for potential visitors.

Young people felt the area had the potential for some colour, artwork, planting and improved lighting. The back of the supermarket building was identified as a key area to improve.



Public Art

A broad range of conversations were had around public art that already existed in town or could be created. Young people quickly identified the acorn bench, Furlong horses and Jubilee lamp-post as examples.

There were some great ideas to create an art trail to guide visitors into the heart of the town using the symbolism of acorns, oak leaves and trees. This could be extended into seating designs and way-markers.

Young people like the Christmas lights, but wanted to see light and colour all year round. One suggestion was to have a canopy of illuminated art strung across the High Street, possibly with a nature theme.

It was also felt that a landmark piece of sculpture was needed to act either as a gateway or to identify the centre of the town.



Acorn Bench

Shops & Cafes

Young people understand that a local authority does not have the power to determine which shops occupy its town centre, but they felt that there was a strong case for making the High Street and Market Place more attractive areas so people want to spend time, shop and in turn attract new retail businesses.

It was felt strongly that there was little on offer for young people in the High Street and that most of the shops served an older audience. In fact most young people made it clear that they only ventured as far as Sainsburys or that the High Street was just an area they passed through on the way to somewhere else. Not a single youngster said they spent any time there.

Young people found themselves travelling to Bournemouth or Southampton for shopping and 'young people friendly' cafes, but again mentioned the often prohibitive cost of public transport.



Old Cinema

Out of all the buildings in the Town Centre, the 'old cinema' on Market Street was mentioned repeatedly. Many young people said they'd love to have a cinema back in town, especially as public transport was so expensive to get to cinemas at neighbouring towns such as Bournemouth.

They also understood that sustaining a cinema in town could be difficult and suggested that the building could also have alternative uses, such as soft play, bouncy castle, party venue, cafe and that films be shown just at weekends.

The young people were also keen that the building be renovated to improve the look of the street. It could be illuminated for different holidays such as Christmas and Halloween to make an eye-catching focal point.



Youth Space

There was a lot of conversation around a space for young people to 'hang out' and spend time with friends. Some of this linked back to the Carver clubhouse. Youngsters were not looking for a programmed youth club, but rather an informal space where they could meet, spend time with friends, buy a drink and snacks. The requirements for a space like this varied from it being fun and having music, to also having quiet spaces to read and relax.

The idea of cooking facilities came up to - with young people saying they wanted to be able to cook properly and learn how to cook - not simply a meal pinged in a microwave.

Any development of a new youth space needs the input of young people from the start to gather a clear understanding of what they want, rather than make assumptions such as putting a table tennis table in.



What Next

Sharing young peoples ideas

The map on the following page pulls together many of the young peoples ideas and presents them in a visually cohesive and stimulating way. The map was created during the workshops with young people and illustrated by artist and local resident Daisy Kate. The map and report will be shared with the Ringwood Town Council, Ringwood School and online at:

www.spud.org.uk/spudyouthringwood

These ideas will be used to shape the vision of Ringwood in the Neighbourhood Plan, they will be shared with the whole of town. The Ringwood Neighbourhood Plan Team will provide feedback to those who took part and plans to continued to work with the young people of Ringwood to further develop some of the ideas.





Get Involved

To find out more about the Ringwood Neighbourhood Plan and next steps get in touch at:

Email

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Neighbourhood Plan Website

www.ringwoodnp.org.uk

spudYOUTH Website

www.spud.org.uk/spudyouthringwood

Report created by SPUD C.I.O: www.spud.org.uk

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