

BOROUGHBRIDGE MAYOR'S DIARY
Councillor Craggs' Weekly Diary

11 March 2011

As Betty and I snatched a few days holiday in the Emerald Isle during the last week in February, there was nothing to report in the Diary, so in order to give a measure of protection to the world's rain forests I saved a few column inches of newsprint!

Although we were based in the Derry area of Northern Ireland we did have a couple of excursions into the Republic and were struck by the number of new and partly finished -and really very nice- houses which were up for sale, apparently at very low prices; a potent sign of the way the economic crisis has hit the Republic and a powerful reminder of the dangers of a "boom and bust" method of government.

Whilst on the subject of cutbacks, it is now obvious that despite being granted a 12 month reprieve by County in order for willing communities to take over the running of their local libraries whilst enjoying assistance and guidance from professional staff, if we wish to keep our library open in Boroughbridge we will have to take the initiative - "run it or lose it", as simple as that. We are at last beginning to receive some details of current running costs from the County library service, and in the next week or so the Town Council will be calling a meeting of the steering group to discuss our next step; we will try to have a senior member of the library service in attendance. I realise that many people (including the writer) would like to see "no change" in the way the service is run, but I am afraid we are stuck with this reduction in County services, along with many more. It does occur to me, however, that those of us who are having to run our own libraries voluntarily would feel happier about doing so if some of the "big town" libraries cut their professional staff back to the tune of a single employee, recruited some volunteer helpers and redeployed the "freed" professional staff to help out communities like Boroughbridge, Pateley Bridge and the other threatened libraries. Too simple? Maybe.

In my recent Diary I berated inconsiderate dog owners for not clearing up after their pets' bodily functions, and praised the Primary School children for their support and concern in putting an end to this dangerous and offensive practise. I am pleased to say that the Borough Council's Area Environmental Officer has taken up the cause very strongly and is working with the Primary School children. In a recent letter Mr. Lee writes

"I have noted in a recent Ackrill's newspaper the article from the Town Council (Mayor's Diary) concerning local children taking on an active role in encouraging responsible dog ownership through a dog fouling poster competition.

As the lead officer for the Dog Warden Service may I thank yourselves and the children on undertaking such a campaign, as from our experience a locally inspired initiative tends to have greater local effect than a National or Local Authority inspired campaign."

Mr. Lee states in a further e mail that a series of enforcement patrols have taken place recently, and one offender has already received and paid a £50-00 fixed penalty fine; increased signage has been put in place, and a leaflet drop has been made to some 150 homes.

Another quote: - "Our message to the general public is that we are patrolling, we will take enforcement action against anyone failing to pick up, but the action of catching is very difficult so we need as much accurate and up to date information as possible so we can target our patrols as effectively as possible". If you have evidence of dog fouling, and if possible can "name names", contact Mr Lee's department on 01423 556637 or email environmentalprotection@harrogate.gov.uk .Your name will NOT be made known.

Finally, we have received an appeal for help from the Mayoress of Ripon, Denise Bolland. Denise is involved in the Ripon CVS Family Support Project, which is another victim of financial cutbacks; as it is due to lose its £16,000 annual funding at the end of March. The service provides invaluable help for families struggling with the effects of poor housing,

badly paid or no jobs and the like, and covers the communities of Boroughbridge, Pateley Bridge and surrounding villages. Our own Community Care in Boroughbridge receives financial and other help from Ripon CVS, so if you can help by way of financial donation or fund raising, please contact the CVS team on 01765 603631, info@riponcvvs.co.uk . Business owners wishing to help, please contact Stuart Martin on 07811 390448.

As our way of showing support, the Mayoral "teams" will be making a bucket collection in Ripon on market day one Thursday in March (yet to be decided), so be warned!