



# DAILY ECHO DorsetECHO

## Bill eager to put country to rights

SINGER-songwriter and political activist Billy Bragg believes there is a hole in the doughnut of Britishness.

He is trying to plug this hole by defining British values and formulating these into a Bill of Rights which would define the freedoms and principles on which our society is based.

The Dorset-based singer said: "What we need is a document capable of protecting the rights of the individual in the face of an ever more powerful state, while at the same time defining those values which unite us in our diversity.

"I believe that the only way to formulate the principles on which we base our society is to hold public consultation in the form of a series of citizens' assemblies."

The first of these will be in Bournemouth tonight (Wednesday).

Mr Bragg, who has recently written a book, called *The Progressive Patriot*, thinks that such a bill is particularly necessary today.

He said: "Our rights are being eroded by the war on terror. Identity cards, personal information on a single database and talk about a device in cars that tracks where you are all impinge on our freedom. We do not have a written constitution so we have little protection."

Mr Bragg thinks that while there is a lot of talk about British values it is difficult to say exactly what they are and that a written Bill of Rights would help.

He said: "We should not have to rely on the European courts to protect our civil rights."

He intends to ask students, staff and members of the public what values they think should be included.

The ideas generated will be collated at a constitutional convention and published in the form of a Declaration of Rights to be presented to the political parties.

The citizens assembly is held at **Bournemouth University** at 5pm on Wednesday in the Lees lecture theatre on the Talbot campus.

Admission is free but places should be pre-booked by emailing [billybragg@bournemouth.ac.uk](mailto:billybragg@bournemouth.ac.uk)

7:00pm Tuesday 27th February 2007

*By Lynn Morris*

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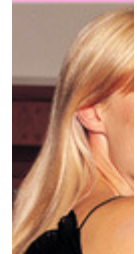
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