Royal Holloway & Runnymede Consultative Group meeting

MINUTES

Monday 1 June 2020

MS Teams Meeting

PRESENT:

Royal Holloway: David Ashton (CHAIR/ Deputy Principal (Operations), Mike Berry (Director of Estates), Marie Ennis (Chief Marketing Officer), Helen Groenendaal (Head of Student Advisory & Wellbeing, Academic Services), Sarah Ixer-Pitfield (Head of Public Relations and Media)

Royal Holloway Students’ Union: Dr Tom Flynn (Chief Executive Officer)

Councillors: Cllr Nigel King, Cllr Marisa Heath, Cllr Isabel Mullens, Cllr Nick Prescot, Cllr Japneet Sohi

Chamber of Commerce: Mark Adams

Residents’ Associations: Chris Fisher (ERA), Christine Welsh (EGVRA)

Surrey Police: Inspector Nick Pinkerton

Neighbourhood Watch: Stephen Hodgkinson

APOLOGIES:

Cllr Parshotam Sohi (Mayor of Runnymede)
Runnymede Borough Councillors: Cllr Michael Kusneraitis, Cllr Alan Alderson
Environmental Health: Aileen Baker, Daniel Bradding
Jack O’Neil, President SU, SU sabbaticals

1. Welcome & introductions

2. Minutes and actions from previous meeting (10/3/20)

The last meeting on 10 March 2020 was cancelled. The actions carried over from November 2019 were discussed within the agenda points of today’s meeting.

3. Updates on areas of mutual interest:

David Ashton updated the group on the university’s plans for returning to campus in at the start of a new academic year. He explained that the university, like many others across the UK, is expecting fewer students from overseas and that some postgraduate courses will offer September and January start dates. The university will be offering alternative dates in 2021 for graduation ceremonies for those who have graduated in summer 2020. He confirmed that the university will know more about student numbers by the autumn.
RBC:
Councillor Prescot provided an update on the actions taken by the council as they operated in emergency mode during the coronavirus outbreak. He praised the response of the local community, residents groups and those who worked to provide the local foodbank.

Councillor Heath provided an update on the progress of the CPZ and the work on a recovery plan for the borough which includes improving transport systems. Christine Welsh (EGVRA) enquired about public consultation for the CPZ to which Cllr Heath confirmed that a consultation will follow for residents to engage with. Christine Welsh requested a separate meeting with Cllr Heath to discuss the CPZ.

Councillor Sohi provided an update on the foodbank and enquired with regards to the development of Royal Holloway’s Car Park 14, the closure of Spring Rise Gate, dangerous parking in the area as the Covid-19 lockdown begins to ease.

In response to these queries: Mike Berry confirmed the application is currently on hold for Car Park 14, David Ashton confirmed that Spring Rise Gate is completely closed for the time being but it is expected that it will re-open (5am to 12.30am) in time for the start of the new academic year. Inspector Nick Pinkerton confirmed that parking is an issue caused mainly by people coming from outside of the borough to visit Virginia Water and Windsor Great Park. Student cars are not involved. He also advised that Police have visited the Fox and Hounds pub following complaints but no action is being taken.

Christine Welsh discussed that Mike Kelly is the Chair of the Englefield Green Village Forum and he or someone else had potentially been in touch with the internal communications team at Royal Holloway to provide information about the forum for staff and students in the area. Information has not yet been received by the team at Royal Holloway.

Egham Chamber of Commerce:
Mark Adams updated that it was a difficult time for local businesses but he welcomed the support from local residents. He provided an update on the following events:
- Successfully hosted a virtual Frogs Island Fair
- Discussions underway re a virtual Magna Carta Day event
- 21 June - Make Music Day - virtual event being promoted by Egham Museum and Egham Town Team
- 18 July - Classic Car Show on Egham High Street is TBC
- The French market will come back to Egham when it is safe to do so
- 12 Dec - Egham Christmas Fair on Egham High Street

EGVRA:
Christine Welsh confirmed the Englefield Green Village Fair is postponed until 5 September 2020 but it is unlikely to go ahead if social distancing regulations are in place. Christine queried the planning application for Royal Holloway’s theatre and the potential for open air performances as well as the installation of bird and bat boxes at George Eliot Hall. Mike Berry confirmed that there will not be any open air theatre performances and that bird and bat boxes are in place in the grounds of George Eliot Hall.
**Action:** Mike Berry to provide Christine with details of which trees the bird and bat boxes are located in.

ERA:
Chris Fisher enquired as to the progress of Rusham Park Student Village and David Ashton updated that the planning application has been submitted with the outcome likely in autumn 2020.

- **Surrey Police:**
  A report is provided in appendix A.

- **Royal Holloway Estates:**
  Mike Berry updated the group that the university’s capital programme is on hold due to the outbreak of coronavirus with the following exceptions:
  - The planning application for the relocation of the Handa Noh Theatre has been submitted
  - The planning application for the Rusham Park student village has been submitted with outcome expected in autumn 2020.
  The university is mainly preparing for the arrival of students on campus in September 2020 and expects to review its bus services.

- **Student wellbeing:**
  Helen Groenendaal confirmed that approximately 380 students remained on campus and were being supported during the outbreak. The Be A Good Neighbour Guide will be updated with regards to social distancing guidelines for September 2020. A report is provided in appendix B.

- **Students’ Union:**
  Tom Flynn shared the news that he will be leaving his position as Chief Executive of Royal Holloway Students’ Union in September. Max Ross and Abi Jesson will jointly share the position of interim Chief Executive until August 2021.
  Tom explained that the team were planning for the next academic year and the services they will be able to operate. At present the SU shop remains open for grocery boxes, a service that members of the local community have made use of. All other venues are closed.
  Through the PubWatch scheme, the Students’s Union aims to meet with local landlords to take a collective view on how to operate when students return and social distancing rules are in place.

4. **AOB:** There were no AOBs.

5. **Proposed date of next meeting:** Tuesday, 3 November 2020 via MS Teams.

**ACTIONS LIST**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Owner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mike Berry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix A

Update on areas of mutual interest from attendees

Surrey Police update

This report covers matters which have occurred since the last scheduled meeting on 10th March 2020. In this period we have had fourteen reports linked to the University. Six of these were drugs related and were mostly small quantity cannabis seizures. University security have been active in confiscating cannabis after reports of the smell from rooms. There have been two reports of alleged violence on campus both linked with altercations between students and security staff outside bars.

Surrey Police continue to provide a full policing service and we are maintaining staffing levels. Unfortunately, some of my officers have been assaulted and spat at, but overwhelmingly during this pandemic we have a positive engagement with the public. Runnymede Specialist Neighbourhood Team (SNT) team has been patrolling, providing advice and reassurance and requesting that residents respect the Government’s prohibitions on generally leaving the house and gathering in groups. We are also checking that non-essential shops and enterprises do not open, supporting Trading Standards and also Council Environmental Health with officers on the ground.

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant effect both on crime patterns and the work of local police officers. In Runnymede, Total Notifiable Offences (TNO) crime levels are similar to last year (up 27 reported offences), but its composition has changed. Since the beginning of the new financial year (2020 – 21) there has been a significant decline in Residential Burglaries, Vehicle Crime, Theft and Criminal Damage, but an appreciable increase in Domestic Assault and Violence. We are well aware that Domestic Abuse and Child Vulnerability often go hand in hand – even more so in our current situation with around 95% of children not in school. Isolation and lockdown can severely impact some people’s ability to report abuse to the police. Our officers will always take positive action if they suspect abuse and we are encouraging victims to report offences and Surrey Police are providing further practical support through outreach services.

We are working closely with Runnymede Borough Council and the Local Resilience Forum who are identifying vulnerable persons in the Borough. This includes both identified particularly vulnerable persons who have not responded to contacts from the NHS and also to persons on a database compiled from various local social teams. Runnymede PCSOs are visiting vulnerable households to ensure that they are able to get food and medicines and that they can access the assistance that they need. So far, we have made 346 welfare checks including some for Catalyst (who support persons with alcohol or drug problems).

For the year to date (FYTD), Total Notifiable Offences in Englefield Green are 25% up (five more offences) on the year, but in Egham Town reports are 46.9% down (45 fewer offences).

Last financial year (2019-20), overall reports to police of anti-social behaviour saw a reduction of 7.7% with 160 fewer offences reported. The number of Hate Crimes was almost static and Runnymede has the lowest level of such incidents of the three Boroughs in the Northern Division.

FYTD there have been 25 residential burglaries in Runnymede (compared to 45 in the same period last year). In Englefield Green there was one Residential Burglary to 27th April last year, and two in
Egham Town. This financial year, there have been none to date in Egham Town and three in Englefield Green. The proportion of shed and garage burglaries have increased as burglars adopt to residents being at home more often.

We are closely monitoring Hate Crime as certain extreme groups have been attempting to use social media to stir up racial and religious hatred across the country. From the 1st February, we have had six hate incidents reported in Runnymede related to Coronavirus. All were non-violent in nature, the latest occurring on 23rd March. In relation to Royal Holloway, we have had two reports of Chinese students spoken to rudely (on separate occasions) due to their ethnicity. This matches the majority of such reports, which mostly involve insulting words used in public places. In all, there have been 161 reports in Runnymede of breaches of the regulations. Most of these have been reports of local people visiting family and friends’ homes, although we have also stopped cars from as far away as Tonbridge and Southampton.

Runnymede officers continue to be very busy dealing with traffic congestion around the Great Park and the A30. We are in regular contact with Runnymede Borough Council, Surrey County Council and the Crown Estate to coordinate our actions around parking provision and enforcement. At the start of the lock-down period, the Great Park closed its car parks and Runnymede Borough Council, at the request of the police, made regulations closing the lay-bys on the A30 near the Park. The latest government guidance led to the Great Park re-opening its car parks at 50% capacity to promote social distancing and the lay-bys being reopened.

There are pre-existing plans to put further restrictions on the A30 Egham Hill as part of this year’s parking review. The proposal for Egham Hill was presented to, and approved by the members of the Runnymede Joint Committee at the meeting held at the end of November 2019 subject to a public consultation. I hope that proposals for double yellow lines on the south side may be considered in the 2021 parking review.

I am hopeful that the A30 between Wick Road and the Borough Boundary towards Windsor and Maidenhead may be de-listed as a clearway. This would allow double yellow lines to be put down and Council parking agents to ticket illegal parking. I am in active discussion with both Surrey County Council and Runnymede Borough Council about this.
Appendix B

Student Wellbeing: Community update

Helen Groenendaal, Head of Student Advisory & Wellbeing.

Community incidents reported to Royal Holloway

01 August 2019 – 27 May 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2018/19 (to 27-May-19)</th>
<th>2019/20 (to 27-May-20)</th>
<th>Year on year change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Noise Nuisance (household)</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>+ 66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking / Traffic</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refuse</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>+ 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-Social Behaviour</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>+ 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transient Noise</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>-48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>275</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>+ 21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. The number of complaints relating to reports of noise nuisance from households believed to be student properties has risen year on year. Whilst any rise in complaints is disappointing we do apportion some of the increase to heightened awareness within the local community as to how they can raise concerns; our records show a wider range of residents making contact many noting their very recent awareness of reporting channels both at the College and Runnymede Council often via ERA or EGVRA. As with the last report there a significant proportion (18%) of the noise reports have originated from one resident in Egham.

2. The major trend confirms a continuation of the decrease in reports of transient noise and we hope this is indicative of a level of ongoing behavioural change.

3. The summer edition of the Community Matters newsletter moved to digital only from the summer version and can be read online at the link below. Residents and community partners who wish to be added to the distribution list can email community@royalholloway.ac.uk to give consent to be added to the mailing list.

https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/staff/news-events/community-matters.aspx

4. Planning for student community publications and messages for the new academic year is underway and is taking account of the current pandemic. We are looking to provide guidance on the possible social distancing requirements that will be in place from September which we aim to include with the Be A Good Neighbour mail out. We are also considering what we can do to replicate or replace the community welcome visits usually made in September / October as they may not be possible with partial or full lockdown restrictions.
5. The team are currently working remotely and remain fully accessible by email for any concerns which may arise. In March student households were contacted to share reminders about the expectations of the government restrictions and how this impacted them on households locally. Through these communications we confirmed many students had chosen to return to their family homes ahead of the lockdown when learning moved online and were therefore reminded they were unable to travel back to the local area after this point.