Royal Holloway & Runnymede Consultative Group

MINUTES

Tuesday 15 June 2021
Meeting via Microsoft Teams

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: Max Ross (Joint Chief Executive Officer)

Councillors: Cllr Marisa Heath, Cllr Isabel Mullens, Cllr Japneet Sohi

Mayor of Runnymede: Cllr Elaine Gill

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

Neighbourhood Watch: Stephen Hodgkinson

Surrey Police: Inspector James Wyatt

APOLOGIES:
Chamber of Commerce: Mark Adams.
Environmental Health: Aileen Baker

1. Welcome & introductions
The group welcomed Inspector James Wyatt to the meeting.

2. Minutes and actions from the previous meeting
It was AGREED that the minutes of the last meeting on 2 March 2021, were a true and accurate record.

With regards to the actions from the last meeting on 2 March, it could not be confirmed if the action for Aileen Baker to share details of any business prosecutions for the breach of Covid-19 restrictions with councillors had been completed. This action will be carried over to the next meeting.

Helen Groenendaal confirmed that the outcome of the action in relation to the university’s complaints procedure had been included in the accompanying report: appendix C.
Chris Fisher stated complainants should be provided with further detail and expressed ongoing dissatisfaction on behalf of residents with the College’s approach. Stephen Hodgkinson thanked Royal Holloway for the change in process.

Helen Groenendaal advised that Royal Holloway’s approach to sharing information about action taken following complaints is in line with the HE sector. The community wellbeing team are active members of the HE ‘Town and Gown’ national network and regularly benchmark their processes and guidance against other universities operational processes. Further she advised that, from next academic year, Royal Holloway will share a summary of complaint types / outcome types with the forum.

3. Dr David Ashton updated on Royal Holloway’s next academic year (2021/22) and introduced Royal Holloway’s three year strategic plan.

Cllr Isabel Mullens, Cllr Japneet Sohi, Chris Fisher and Christine Welsh enquired about the increase in student numbers to 15,300 by 2030 and the impact on housing and transport. Dr Ashton confirmed the university is launching a sustainability plan in November 2021 and is investigating sustainable transport plans.

Cllr Isabel Mullens asked about a cycling route in Egham. This is the remit of RBC however, Dr David Ashton advised that the university has long campaigned for improved cycling routes and a reduction to the speed limit on Egham Hill and would support community action which called for either or both.

Cllr Isabel Mullens referenced the comparative price of HMOs compared with university accommodation. Dr David Ashton confirmed that the university offers a broad pricing range and, in clarification, there are three principle reasons why College accommodation is more beneficial and more than competitive with that of HMO’s.

- On a weekly or monthly basis Royal Holloway’s on campus accommodation is more expensive than the average HMO accommodation, however College accommodation contracts are aligned with student teaching periods. As such students in College campus accommodation can choose accommodation which is charged for a set period of weeks, whereas the average HMO contract is for 50-52 weeks, making the student effectively pay for periods when they may not require it. Over a year the College accommodation is typically competitive with or cheaper than that of a HMO.
- College accommodation costs are all inclusive, with all utilities and internet provided. HMO’s exclude these services which have to be paid for separately.
- College accommodation provides an alternative for some overseas students who may struggle to provide landlords with the surety or guarantees required for private accommodation or letting agreements.

When all three factors are taken into account, the College’s view is that its accommodation is more than competitive with HMO’s.

Dr David Ashton stated there is no change to the planned scale of the student village at Rusham Park for 1,400 study bedrooms in Phase One of the development. A subsequent Phase Two offers potential of up to 600 student bedrooms.

4. Updates on areas of mutual interest

- RBC:
Cllr Japneet Sohi noted that a revision to the development plan for Rusham Park has been submitted by the College.
She thanked Royal Holloway and Surrey Police for the prompt response to recent anti-semitism complaints.

Cllr Marisa Heath updated that the new Police Crime Commissioner for Surrey is looking into street lighting with a view to some areas returning to all night street lighting. This would be a key piece of work ahead of winter.

The Surrey climate change strategy will be available by June 2021. Dr David Ashton confirmed that Royal Holloway would like to be involved in discussions in relation to the Council’s environmental plans. Cllr Heath also expects University will take part.

The recent parking consultation only had a small number of respondents but there is now potential to change some areas of on-street parking such as Virginia Water

**Actions:**
Max Ross to provide Cllr Marisa Heath with an outline of the roads that students are most concerned about re street lighting.
Cllr Marisa Heath to send further details of the Surrey climate change strategy to the group.

**EGVRA:**
Christine Welsh outlined a repeated issue of noise complaints at a local property. Helen Groenendaal advised how the university and Environmental Health have engaged with the resident’s concerns with input from the landlord and letting agency.

Local residents meetings for the Englefield Green Village Neighbourhood Plan and Forum will commence in the autumn depending on Covid-19 restrictions.

**Action:** Helen Groenendaal to review records of the contact made with the local resident and the actions taken in the relation to the case raised

**Egham Residents’ Association:**
Chris Fisher read out letters and emails from local residents describing anti-social behaviour of students living in HMOs in the local area.

Dr David Ashton expressed his concern for local residents and advised that the university regularly reminds students of their obligations to be a good neighbour and refreshes student conduct regulations annually.

Inspector James Wyatt acknowledged there has been an increase in anti-social behaviour linked to student occupied houses in the area in last two weeks but overall a 40% reduction in all anti-social behaviour across the borough. Inspector Wyatt stated the importance of informing the Police, the university (if student related) and the council about incidents of anti-social behaviour. The Police will consider joint patrols when required. Helen Groenendaal confirmed the university’s commitment to take part in or support these patrols where invited by the Police.
**Action:** Inspector James Wyatt to provide examples of ASB and details of the ways that residents can get in touch with Surrey Police.

- **Egham Chamber of Commerce:**
  A report is provided in appendix A.

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

- **Royal Holloway – Estate development:**
  Mike Berry confirmed that there have been minor procedural adjustments to one of the drawings for Rusham Park which is why the plans have been re-submitted. He outlined plans for works on the university’s campus spine road, to take place from July to August. Piggery Gate will be used for temporary access to the site.

- **Royal Holloway – Student Wellbeing and Volunteering:**
  A report is provided in appendix C.

  In the absence of Aileen Baker from Environmental Health, Helen Groenendaal shared a report covering March to June. There have been 38 reports and no enforcement notices. Aileen Baker has been involved in local patrols over the last two weeks and reported that the Environmental Health team continued to work closely with the university and Police to respond to concerns raised about student occupied properties.

- **Royal Holloway Students’ Union:**
  Max Ross advised that the SU has provided activities in term 3 and compliance with Covid restrictions in SU venues has been exceptional. The SU is planning activities for the new term.

5. **Proposal to rotate forum meeting:**
   Further to a discussion around the proposal to rotate the meetings between locations raised by Chris Fisher in March 2021, it was confirmed that all Forum meetings will continue online for the rest of 2021. From 2022 onwards the summer term meeting (usually held in June) will be held in person/face to face each year, with the other two meetings (November and March) held online. No objections were raised.

6. **A.O.B:**
   Cllr Isabel Mullens asked where pre-promotion information for community drop-in sessions are available. Sarah Ixer-Pitfield advised information is published on the [local community pages](#) of the Royal Holloway website and in the Community Matters e-newsletter, which is intentionally shared in advance of the meeting. The dates of these meetings are also shared via emails to the forum members. The university will also include advance dates in forum meeting minutes.

   Stephen Hodgkinson asked about student behaviour with supermarket trolleys and garden maintenance. Helen Groenendaal states supermarket behaviour is included in the
university’s Be a Good Neighbour guidance as well as in refresher messaging. If specific incidents of concern are reported to the university the student household will be directly contacted to ask them to return trolleys to the supermarket.

**Action:** Max Ross will update Stephen further to the meeting with regards to engagement with landlords re responsibility for garden upkeep.

7. **The next local community drop-in session at Royal Holloway:** Tuesday, 19 October 2021 from 5-6pm.

8. **Proposed date of next Royal Holloway and Runnymede Consultative forum meeting:** Tuesday, 2 November 2021 at 6.30pm via MS Teams meeting.

**ACTIONS LIST**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Owner</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Aileen Baker to share details of any business prosecutions for the breach of Covid-19 restrictions with councillors. Carried over from March meeting.</td>
<td>Aileen Baker</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Max Ross to provide Cllr Heath an outline of the roads that students are most concerned about re street lighting.</td>
<td>Max Ross</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Cllr Heath to send further details of the Surrey climate change strategy to the group.</td>
<td>Cllr Marisa Heath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Helen Groenendaal to share with Christine Welsh details of a review of the contact made and actions taken with the local resident referenced by and to Christine Welsh.</td>
<td>Helen Groenendaal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Inspector Wyatt to provide examples of ASB and details of the ways that residents can get in touch with Surrey Police.</td>
<td>Inspector James Wyatt</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 Max Ross to update Stephen Hodgkinson with regards to landlord responsibility for garden upkeep.</td>
<td>Max Ross</td>
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Appendix A - Notes from Egham Chamber of Commerce

We are working on a number of activities that we hope will encourage footfall in the town and create a vibrant and viable town centre. We are monitoring the position closely and continue to have conversations with various agencies regarding the hosting of various events/activities.

We hosted a very successful Vegan Market in Egham High Street on 22 May.

Events planned for June and July include the following:

- Saturday 26 June - Magna Carta Day
- Saturday 3 July - St Johns Church Eco Fair
- Saturday 10 July - Vegan market (to be confirmed)
- Saturday 31 July - Classic car event

We are also....

- Empty shops - encourage businesses to set up in town and look at initiatives to make use of empty shop windows in the meantime.
- Walking tours - we are working with Egham Museum to develop walking tours for visitors to the town
- Supporting local businesses via social media platforms.
- Station Road redevelopment - we will be working with the developer and Runnymede Borough Council to ensure that retail units are occupied when the development opens, and that new street furniture etc blends with the existing High Street.
I would like to begin by wishing Inspector Nick Pinkerton a long and happy retirement, having dedicated the last five years to policing Runnymede.

My name is James Wyatt and I took over as the Borough Commander for Runnymede in May. I’ve spent the majority of my career in operational policing, initially in response across Surrey.

This was followed by working in Specialist Neighbourhood Teams across the Boroughs of Woking and Guildford.

Neighbourhood policing is something I’m really passionate about, focusing on long term problems and making a real difference alongside communities and partner agencies. I’ll be bringing this experience to Runnymede and focusing on the issues that matter to residents.

**Crime**

The figures below are all FYTD and provide a summary of crime across Runnymede in comparison with Surrey as a whole. Runnymede continues to have the lowest Total Notifiable Offences (TNO’s) on Northern Division.

**Force:**
- TNO +14.7% (1511)
- Violent DA -14.6% (-216)
- Hate Crime +44.7% (143)
- Burglary +17% (62)
- Violence +28.7% (1037)

**RM:**
- TNO: +11.1% (99)
- Violent DA -13.8% (-18)
- Hate Crime -14.3% (-5)
- Burglary +19.4% (+6)
- Violence +19.3% (+64)

The above figures show that the crime trends across Runnymede are largely the same compared to the force. We’re seeing an increase in total recorded crime based on the abnormally low levels last year due to Covid. The increase in Runnymede isn’t quite as steep as force wide and while the force has seen an increase in hate crime, Runnymede has decreased in this area.

One particular series of incidents that we've been investigating that will be of interest to this group is a series of hate crimes in relation to the Israel/Palestine conflict. These matters remain under investigation and were dealt with swiftly with a joint response by Surrey Police and Royal Holloway. Two arrests of students were made and a further student was interviewed voluntarily for their involvement.

Additional support was offered to the students due to these incidents and this involved external charities such as the Community Security Trust.

We also dealt with a male who had been seen on campus taking photographs of females and posting these images online alongside derogatory comments and making threats. Despite an early arrest the male continued this behaviour on release and he was subsequently arrested again. He has
since been remanded to court where he’s entered a guilty plea and remains in custody awaiting sentencing.

**Anti-Social Behaviour**

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) remains a priority for Runnymede SNT, recognising the impact it can have on the community. We have seen a drastic reduction in ASB across the Borough, while Covid will have played a part in increasing ASB last year, we know ASB is under reported.

FYtD Total ASB
Runnymede = -41.9% (-299)
Force = -41.3% (-3294)

Please could local residents and students be encouraged to report ASB. While this may not always lead to an immediate deployment due to competing demands, every report helps us to understand the wider ASB picture and target our patrols.

**Covid**

The demand on policing during the pandemic remains high despite some of the restrictions being eased. This year we have dealt with 363 Covid19 related incidents in Runnymede and issued 103 fines.

One incident of note we’ve dealt with is a report of a house party on Moore Grove Crescent, Egham. Officers were called to reports of a gathering at the location by members of public and found numerous people within the property. The investigation into this matter remains ongoing alongside Royal Holloway and a proportionate outcome will be reached in the near future.

Kind regards,
Inspector James Wyatt
Runnymede Borough Commander
Appendix C - Student Advisory & Wellbeing: Community update

ACTIONS FROM THE LAST MEETING (FEBRUARY 2021)

- Consider sending a follow up email to the complainant to confirm that procedures have been followed and completed.
- Consider a termly report around conduct outcomes.

The Community Wellbeing team will in future send a closure letter / email approx. one week after a complaint has been raised to confirm that the usual process have been followed and completed. This is being worked on and embedded by the new Community Support Co-ordinator who has joined the team since the last meeting.

Following ongoing discussions about the sharing of specific outcomes we have, as promised, re-discussed this with our internal Legal & Compliance team (including our Legal Counsel, Data Protection Manager and Legal Compliance & Information Officer). They have confirmed we cannot provide explicit detail of outcomes to residents. They have noted that the College has a legal obligation under the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR to protect the personal data of its staff and students. Article 4 (1) of the GDPR makes it clear that a person can be identified by more factors than just their name stating that “personal data’ means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person…in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data….”. Proving summary data (as below) is considered appropriate and we will include this in all reports going forward – as provided below.

COMMUNITY INCIDENTS REPORTED & STUDENT CONDUCT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incidents reported to Royal Holloway</th>
<th>2020 / 2021 (11-Jun-21)</th>
<th>Increase since 25 Feb</th>
<th>Egham</th>
<th>Englefield Green</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Noise Nuisance (household)</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>+ 36</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking / Traffic</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>+ 2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refuse</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>+ 2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-Social Behaviour</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>+ 8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covid-19 concerns</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>+ 5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transient Noise</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>+ 5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>221</strong></td>
<td><strong>+ 58</strong></td>
<td><strong>115</strong></td>
<td><strong>106</strong></td>
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Data recorded from 1 August 2020 to 11 June 2021

At the last meeting the reports to 25 February totalled 163. Therefore a further 58 reports have been received in the period 25 February 2021 to 11 June 2021. For reference in the same period (August 2019 – June 2020) the total number of reports were 311 (90 fewer reports this academic year).

During the final term 38 fixed penalty notices have been placed on students for evidenced breaches of our Covid-19 Code of Conduct via our Student Conduct processes. Two cases from Egham households (Moore Grove Crescent & The Crescent) are still within the misconduct processes following reports over the last three weeks.

Following an internal promotion in the spring we recruited a new Community Support Co-ordinator, Clement Jones, to the team. Many of you will know Clement from his time as SU President and his subsequent role at St John’s Church Egham as the Easter Centre Development Manager where he remains a Trustee.

Clement, along with his line manager, are in the process of responding to issues reported over the period since our exams and assessments finished and in contacting all student households named as a concern. This includes a number of concerns related to student properties in The Crescent, Egham.
which have been reported by a large group of residents to us and to the Environmental Health and Police teams. Given the concerns over the last three weeks the teams have been proactive in their direct communication to all students living in that road reinforcing our be a good neighbour expectations, noting the fixed penalty notice options we have available to us and reiterating the next step of misconduct processes if concerns are reported. We also included messaging directly to these groups on the last night of term to try to prevent any issues of concern and concentrated end of term social media messaging around this and the partnership working between the College, Council and Police.

Over the last month the community wellbeing team have been promoting our Halls to Home campaign which is targeted at students who may be considered a move from Halls of Residence into the local private rental sector. This year we have introduced a suite of videos to support content around this campaign divided into four areas and accessible via the hyperlinks on each of the first three. The content has been filmed on campus and in the local area with input from College members of the community wellbeing team and our Students’ Union sabbatical officers.

- Bridge the gap
- Boss the bills and the bins
- Be a good neighbour
- Balance the chores (and your volume)

Preparation is now fully underway for the next academic year with the team planning the welcome visits based on the expectation we will be able to complete both in-person and online visits to households. These will commence in mid-September when most students move into their private sector accommodation. A draft set of FAQs for the local community is being reviewed and is intended to go online over the summer and the Be a Good Neighbour guide is going through its annual review to refresh content. As last year this mail out in September will be accompanied by a flyer detailing the revised pandemic restrictions / expectations that will be in place for the new academic year and so will not be confirmed until much nearer the start of term.

The summer Community Matters newsletter is available online here and local residents can sign up to receive this directly by contacting the team to ask to be added to the mailing list.

**VOLUNTEERING**

From 1 – 7 June Royal Holloway Volunteering marked National Volunteers Week with a range of events taking place - from thanking volunteers & presenting awards to NHS care package building days. There were twelve award category winners announced through the week ending with the Mayor of Runnymede announcing The Mayor’s Cup for Student Volunteer of the Year. Projects, events and awareness raising which took place during the week included:

- Volunteers Week information stand in Founder’s Square;
- Donate and Reuse – for students to donated their unwanted clothes and food at the end of term with donations going to the British Heart Foundation and the Runnymede Foodbank;
- ESO Tutoring – supporting Syrian refugee families using the Royal Holloway Moves app to fundraise to provide tablets which would enable the families to take part in MS Teams support sessions;
- Community Garden session & Nature Conservation photo competition - On campus gardening session to promote the community garden on campus managed by a team of volunteers;
- NHS Care parcel packaging event – The team put together over 100 care packages for NHS workers at Ashford & St Peter’s Hospitals after raising over £900 from the Moves app in April and May.