



Royal Holloway & Runnymede Consultative Group

MINUTES

Tuesday 2 March 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 Alan Alderson, Cllr Marisa Heath, Cllr Isabel Mullens, Cllr Nick Prescott, Cllr Japneet Sohi

Environmental Health: Aileen Baker

Mayor of Runnymede: Cllr Elaine Gill

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

Neighbourhood Watch: Stephen Hodgkinson

Surrey Police: Inspector Nick Pinkerton, Sergeant Sarah White

APOLOGIES:

Councillors: Cllr Nigel King, Cllr Michael Kusneraitis
Chamber of Commerce: Mark Adams.

1. Welcome & introductions

The group thanked Inspector Nick Pinkerton for his work in the local community and for his time as a member of the Royal Holloway & Runnymede Consultative Group.
The group welcomed Sergeant Sarah White to the meeting.

2. Minutes and actions from the previous meeting

It was AGREED that the minutes of the last meeting on 3 November 2020, were a true and accurate record. All actions from the last meeting had been completed.

In discussion related to the actions from 3 November, Chris Fisher raised the issue of the Royal Holloway complaints procedures and the review of the procedure for further discussion in the group. Chris asked who was involved in the review of the procedure and if

this was an internal review of the process. Cllr Alan Alderson and Stephen Hodgkinson also requested clarity around complaint process and outcomes.

Helen Groenendaal outlined the existing process confirming that we are not able to share a full outcome of an investigation into a complaint with the complainant due to data protection. Helen advised that there was an internal review that confirmed that the College's procedures are appropriate, comply with data protection and are in line with universities across the sector. It was reiterated that every complaint is recorded and promptly followed up with the students alleged to be involved.

As a result of the review the College is committed to updating its FAQs on the website providing clear information to the local community to ensure clarity about the complaints procedures. These procedures are reviewed on an annual basis.

Actions:

- 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

3. Updates on areas of mutual interest

- **Royal Holloway:**

David Ashton provided an update on activity at the university during the Covid-19 restrictions. He confirmed that the university is awaiting further Government announcements on when students might be able to return to campus but we will continue with a blended approach. He confirmed that there will be a slow increase in staff on site but the university will continue to encourage staff to work from home over the summer. Lateral flow testing continues on campus and the PCR testing site will remain until at least September. The university has seen very low numbers of confirmed Covid cases.

Cllr Marisa Heath asked about the university's future plans. David confirmed that blended education will likely continue but it is too early to provide detail. Royal Holloway will continue to be a campus based university with a residential offering.

- **RBC:**

Cllr Nick Prescott updated on the success of the vaccination centres and the local foodbank. He thanked students for their help with the foodbank. He pointed to the positive impact of vaccinations on local confirmed Covid-19 cases. He confirmed that there has not been an update from PHE following the surge testing in the local area but cases remain low. He mentioned that the property market is changing in Egham with many HMOs being put up for sale. He confirmed the council is hoping to implement licences for quality of accommodation for HMOs.

Egham Gateway continues being built and new student blocks will be completed this autumn. There will be new commercial tenants in the town and the Everyman Cinema will be opening.

- **EGVRA:**

Christine Welsh confirmed the AGM is on 27 March. Work is progressing with the Forum following data coming in from Residents and businesses. No date for publishing the document as yet.

- **Egham Residents' Association:**

No further update from ERA.

- **Egham Chamber of Commerce:**

A report is provided in appendix A.

- **RBC Environmental Health:**

Aileen Baker stated there were only 15 noise complaints since Aug and no formal action needed. There will be two Covid marshalls patrolling for the next three months.

David Ashton added that the university also has marshalls on campus and Cllr Mullens noted that the council has also been working closely with Strodes College.

Action: Aileen to share details of any business prosecutions for the breach of Covid-19 restrictions with councillors.

- **Surrey Police:**

Inspector Nick Pinkerton thanked all of the members of the committee ahead of his departure from the role.

A report is provided in appendix B.

- **Royal Holloway – Estate development:**

Mike Berry confirmed the university is now running a single decker bus on a reduced service re Coopers Hill Lane. If there is a need for a double decker bus in the future this will be based on data for consistent use by students staying at Royal Holloway accommodation and private accommodation, primarily Hox Park. Surrey Highways have also confirmed six pedestrian signs on Coopers Hill Lane will be going forward to joint local area committee for approval.

The university is engaging with the Surrey County Council cycling infrastructure plan and is linking with Sustrans.

- **Royal Holloway – Student Wellbeing:**

A report is provided in appendix C.

- **Royal Holloway Students' Union:**

Max Ross outlined that the SU is planning activities for term three to encourage students to get to know each other following Government guidance.

Royal Holloway SU is supporting local elections on 6 May in hosting the local polling station. In addition he noted that students have been banking their activity points to provide care packages at St Peter's Hospital.

4. **Proposal to rotate forum meeting:**

Chris Fisher raised the proposal to rotate the meetings between locations.

It is proposed that all meetings will continue online for the coming year. For discussion at the next meeting, it is proposed that from 2022 onwards the summer term meeting (usually held in June) will be held in person each year, with the other two meetings (November and March) held online.

5. **A.O.B:** There were no AOBs.

6. **Proposed date of next meeting:** Tuesday 15 June for online MS Teams meeting.

ACTIONS LIST

	Action	Owner
1	Helen Groenendaal to consider the following points in relation to the university's complaints procedure: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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	Helen Groenendaal
2	Aileen Baker to share details of any business prosecutions for the breach of Covid-19 restrictions with councillors.	Aileen Baker

Appendix A - Notes from Egham Chamber of Commerce

We are busy supporting local businesses during the current lockdown and assisting them with plans etc to re-open when the situation allows.

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.

Some of the activities we are working on include:

- Hosting more fairs/markets in Egham High Street
- 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
- Literary Institute - we are working with stakeholders on the At The Lit project, developing the site into a community cultural hub.
- Town presentation - we are working with Mill1on - In action 4 Nature, looking to identify sites in town that require work to make the area more attractive to the local community and visitors to the town.
- 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.

Appendix B - Surrey Police Report – Update on areas of mutual interest from attendees

This report covers matters which have occurred since the last meeting in November 2020.

Crime:

There has been a 10% decrease in crime across the Borough. Runnymede has the fifth highest level of reported crime in Surrey to date this financial year with our nearest equivalent Borough being Woking.

Overall the number of criminal offences have declined. There has been significant reductions in Residential Burglary of 44.7% or 153 offences, theft (down 21%) and vehicle crime (down 31%).

Egham has, seen a 26% reduction in Total Notifiable offences and Englefield Green an 8.4% reduction. Currently offences in both areas are below the level of the three year rolling average.

In Runnymede, reports of violence, however, have increased by 15.2% or 234 offences. This rise in violence is not as you may think due to fighting in public or similar such incidents. These have actually declined in number (by 8 offences). It is wholly accounted for by offences which have not caused physical injury. This does not mean that they are necessarily minor as the category includes causing harassment and distress and threats to harm including those made on social media. Residential burglary remains a priority for both Runnymede and Northern Division.

Addlestone has had the greatest number of offences this financial year (41) Chertsey (34) and Egham (34) are the highest areas for offences accounting for 59% of all the burglaries on the Borough. The situation is improving, however, with a reduction of 44% in offences in Egham Town whilst Englefield Green has seen a reduction of 45%.

Our dedicated operation (Op Spearhead) which involves CID, NPT response and Neighbourhoods has continued throughout the pandemic. We have also looked at our data to see where the highest rates of increase in the winter months which is in Chertsey. As a consequence, we have put additional resources into that area in terms of both patrol activity and also prevention with DNA maker kits being issued free of charge.

We are also putting additional resources into Catalytic converter thefts. The offences can be committed within a few minutes using basic tools and have been impacting all force areas across the UK. Vehicles have often been attacked in public car parks, in hospital car parks, supermarket car parks or at car dealerships or garages. Hondas and Toyotas brands are particularly targeted, especially the hybrid models or vehicles which have high ground clearance and offer easy access to the converter. We have worked with local car park managements, but there has been a move to attack cars which are parked on roads. Dealing with catalytic converter thefts is a national initiative for the police. This involves both working with and inspecting scrap metal dealers and deploying both overt and covert resources to deter and detect the criminal gangs responsible.

Anti-Social Behaviour:

There has been a 55% rise financial year to date in Runnymede. Spelthorne has had a 62% rise and Elmbridge 76% rise. Nearly three quarters of reports fall into one of two categories. 55% of all anti-social behaviour is in the Rowdy or Inconsiderate behaviour. The next largest category is Vehicle Nuisance at 16%.

Egham and Englefield Green have relatively low levels of ASB. In terms of anti-social behaviour, this financial year Egham Town is sixth ranked and Englefield Green fourth ranked in Runnymede. The most common complaint is rowdy and inconsiderate behaviour.

Only four offences were linked to public place alcohol in Englefield Green and 6 in Egham Town. Drug offences are down in both areas, 14% in Englefield Green and 33% in Egham.

Half of all ASB in Runnymede occurs in three areas Chertsey Meades and St Annes, Addlestone Town and Thorpe and Hyde. Currently, Covid related issues account for of 37% of all reports for Rowdy and Inconsiderate Behaviour. In total, 25% of the ASB reported in Runnymede is related to Covid issues as for counting purposes it has been included in this Home Office category. This contribution varies across wards, Chertsey Meads & St Annes has the lowest Covid contribution (20.8%) and Egham Town the highest (31%)

Covid:

The number of incidents attended has climbed steadily since the Autumn. In Runnymede we are attending about 50+ incidents a month. These are largely quarantine checks for foreign travellers and reports of breaches of regulations by neighbours. We have made over safeguarding 500 visits to people's homes, assisted with the Egham surge testing and dealt with 547 Coronavirus incidents or intelligence submissions. Of these only 13 were related to reported hate crimes (1.3%).

There has been only one report related to Coronavirus quarantine check and the university. These are required when Health England cannot contact a traveller returning into the UK. In this case the subject was spoken to by officers and confirmed that she was isolating as required. The vast majority of students have not required such a visit as they have confirmed to Health England that they are self-isolating.

In November there were a number of incidents reported to police of student parties in Egham and Englefield Green. We requested that the university remind students of the "Playing your Part" principles and that person hosting such parties may be liable to a fine. The number of reports has decreased significantly.

Where people show a blatant disregard for the rules, Surrey Police will take enforcement action. In the last two weeks, we have issued one £10k Fixed Penalty Notice (Kingswood, Surrey) for a gathering which involved over 30 vehicles and one summons for holding a gathering of 30 people or more (Cobham, Surrey). Surrey Police have now issued a total of 572 Fixed Penalty Notices between the start of the lockdown on 23 March and 5 January for contravention of lockdown regulations.

In Runnymede, (to 18/01/2021) we have issued 37 Fixed Penalty Tickets (FPN) which is 28% of all such tickets issued on the Northern Division (Elmbridge, Runnymede, Spelthorne).

University related incidents:

Since 20th November to 15th February we have had 10 reported incidents in the campus. The number of incidents has significantly declined due to many students being away from campus distance learning on their course. In my report for 4th November 2019 to 2nd March 2020, for example, there were 20 reported incidents.

There were two thefts of computers from university halls.

We are working with campus Security to deal with unauthorised persons (non-students) on campus both on foot and in cars. A drunk driver detained by campus security and officers have also attended to support security to deal with persons suspected of drug dealing.

There has been one report related to drugs - a report of a male who is not a student coming into university halls and trying to sell drugs to students. We continue to work closely with security to deny drug dealers access to the university. County Lines around the country are attempting to infiltrate universities to the extent that some are financing suitable members as students. In some areas such as Bangor, Gillingham and Southampton there have been reports of attempted infiltration using false IDs and false backgrounds to use student accommodation or to use people enrolled there as runners. We received multiple reports of a person who may be a student posting racially offensive material on line. This is currently under investigation.

There have been eleven reports from Police to the Wellbeing Office about students who were vulnerable and needed support. We have a robust information sharing agreement and scheme to alert the university both to students who are vulnerable or have had mental health episodes and have been assisted by the police, have been victims of crime or have been perpetrators.

This will be my final report to the Consultative Group. My tenure as Runnymede Borough Commander ends in April after five years. As soon as I know, I will share with you the details of my successor. I wish to thank everyone for their support; I believe that we built up a strong relationship of mutual respect and cooperation that will stand us in good stead going forward.

Insp 2236 Nick Pinkerton.
Runnymede SNT

Appendix C - Community incidents reported to Royal Holloway

Community incidents reported to Royal Holloway

01 August 2020 – 25 February 2021

	2020 / 2021 (25-Feb-21)	Egham	Englefield Green
Noise Nuisance (household)	122	63	59
Parking / Traffic	4	1	3
Refuse	16	12	4
Anti-Social Behaviour	5	3	2
Covid-19 concerns	9	6	3
Transient Noise	7	3	4
	163	88	75

- At the last meeting the reports to 31 October totalled 121.
- Therefore a further 42 reports in the period 31 October 2020 to 25 February 2021.
- For reference in the same period (August 2019 – February 2020) the total number of reports were 239

Unsurprisingly it has been a very different year this year with a reduced number of students living in the Egham and Englefield Green areas during the periods of lockdown. The main work of the team has been providing a high level of support to students who have been self-isolating in their households either for symptomatic or confirmed cases of coronavirus. We have worked to maintain regular contact with students' self-isolating to check on their health and wellbeing, supported them in arranging delivery of food especially where online delivery slots have not been available, liaised with their academic departments to ensure they were supported to catch up on work missed, and delivered fresh fruit baskets to self-isolating households.

We have continued to enforce our conduct regulations where we have statutory evidence of nuisance or anti-social behaviour with warnings, fines and restrictions put in place for breaches of regulations. In addition we have fined students who are found in breach of the College Covid-19 Code of Practice – for example if there has been evidence of household mixing / lack of social distancing or breach of the rule of six (when in place). We are grateful for the continued support of the Runnymede Police and Council teams to provide the statutory evidence in these cases.

We remain unable to visit student households where there has been a complaint as we would normally do but this has been replaced by Teams meetings with the house and a community wellbeing adviser and has worked better than we'd envisaged as it's been more flexible and helpful in being able to speak to the whole house together. Next year we plan to keep both elements of this follow up process

Communications to all students, whether they are on campus, in the local area or at home, have continued to be an important aspect of our [Playing Your Part](#) campaign and with the support of the internal communications team & the Students' Union we've been able to respond with direct and proactive messaging where we have identified issues of concern relating to students living locally – both on support and conduct.

Our communications focus is now moving to support messaging when students begin to return to campus for the final term (assuming Government plans move as anticipated) and to prepare for our annual Halls to Home campaign targeted at students who may be considering a move from Halls of Residence into the private sector. We are again offering places in our halls for second and third year students and this has proved very popular again which may mean less demand for private sector housing. Added to this over 20% of our students class themselves as commuter students – travelling into campus when they need to from home addresses – and we anticipate there to be a gradual,

steady growth in this figure. One of the complexities students are facing is that the reduced campus experience this year has meant current first year students have not had the same opportunity to form friendship groups who they would normally consider renting a property with and both the university and SU are encouraging students not to rush into signing contracts or grouping together with people they don't know. The SU will be leading on events and campaigns over the next few weeks to help people come together to form successful household groups where their preference is to live locally in the private sector.

Over the spring and summer we are reviewing our online content and policies to update and refresh and to ensure we are open about our reporting and follow up processes. These will be in place for the new academic year.

The most recent Community Matters newsletters remain [accessible online](#) and for local residents to [sign up](#) to receive.

Helen Groenendaal, Head of Student Advisory & Wellbeing, Student & Academic Services