



Royal Holloway & Runnymede Consultative Group

MINUTES

Tuesday 14 November 2023

Meeting held online

Attendees

Royal Holloway: Professor Tracy Bhamra, Deputy Principal and Senior Vice-Principal (Chair); Mike Berry, Director of Estates; Helen Groenendaal, Director of Student Life, Academic Services; Jo Pinson, Director of Strategic Communications and Marketing; Sarah Ixer-Pitfield, Deputy Director of Communications and Events; Nick Pearce, Head of External Communications

Royal Holloway Students' Union: Tony Logan, CEO; Hannah Hockin, President

Councillors: Cllr Marisa Heath, Cllr Trevor Gates, Cllr Abby King, Cllr Andrea Berardi, Cllr Sian Williams, Cllr Sam Jenkins

Environmental Health: Aileen Baker

Residents' Associations: Amanda Willis, Englefield Green Village Resident's Association; Willy Burgess, Egham Residents Association

Surrey Police: Inspector Matthew Rogers

Apologies:

The Mayor, Cllr Shannon Saise-Marshall

Papers circulated ahead of the meeting:

- Royal Holloway & Runnymede Consultative Group agenda and minutes of meeting 21 March 2023
- Royal Holloway & Runnymede Consultative Group, 13 June 2023 - Civic University, Community news, Volunteering, Community and incident data
- Royal Holloway Students' Union update, June 2023

1. Welcome & introductions

The group welcomed new members Jo Pinson and Nick Pearce, Royal Holloway, Tony Logan and Hannah Hockin, Royal Holloway Students' Union and Inspector Matthew Rogers, Surrey Police. The group thanked Inspector James Wyatt for his previous contributions.

2. Minutes and actions from the previous meeting

It was agreed that the minutes of the last meeting in June 2023, were a true and accurate record. All previous actions were completed.

3. Update on RH2030s strategy development (Professor Tracy Bhamra)

Professor Tracy Bhamra reported that the University is in the early stages of developing its new strategy, RH2030s.

Consultation around the development of the strategy will commence in 2024, which will include engagement opportunities for the local community. The University will continue to update on the strategy in these meetings.

In response to a question from Cllr Jenkins about the current number of students, Professor Bhamra confirmed the University has 11,844 FTE students across its Egham and Bedford Square sites and stated that further information on any student growth targets will be provided in the new strategy.

Cllr Gates queried the University's economic impact study and references to expansion into Slough. Professor Bhamra explained that this was a continued element from the University's strategic plan 2021-24 and that conversations remain speculative.

Cllr Berardi asked whether RH2030s would include plans for Kingswood. Mike Berry confirmed that no decisions have been made about this site and any decision will be consulted in the appropriate way.

4. Receive updates on areas of mutual interest

- **RBC**

Cllr Williams updated that she is working with the Environmental Health on HMOs and waste issues following complaints. Work is ongoing with Environmental Health on reporting and escalation and penalising houses that do not correctly dispose of household waste.

Cllr Williams raised the Royal Holloway Students' Union Freshers Ball and referenced a complaint from one local resident. She asked for future consideration for printed and distributed communication (i.e. leaflet drops) ahead of the event and asked for Students' Union representatives to liaise with local councillors to assist with communication and reach to the local target audience. RHSU has provided a private apology to the resident and Tony Logan confirmed that the RHSU had responded to a total of five complaints received. He confirmed that the SU does not host a winter ball.

Cllr Williams raised the issue of cuts to local bus services and asked for more information around residents potentially using Royal Holloway buses provided for students. Mike Berry advised that we cannot actively promote the service to avoid being mistaken as a community service provision, which wouldn't be correct as this is a student bus service. However, we can look to include information on the student bus services on the local community pages of the Royal Holloway website.

ACTION: Nick Pearce to work with Mike Berry to include the bus service information on the Royal Holloway local community web pages.

Cllr Gates raised Simon's Walk residents reports of parking problems and referenced gratitude from residents for efforts, but that that patrols have been ineffective. Helen Groenendaal acknowledged the feedback outlined the measures taken to support the residents but confirmed the University needs to be careful not to commit to areas that are the responsibility of the Police and Surrey County Council. The University will continue with their agreed monitoring until December and review the situation at the end of term.

Cllr Berardi raised an Englefield Green greenhouse sponsored by Royal Holloway that was successfully installed last week. The coordinator has put out an open invitation for 29 November for an opening, which should be shared with student gardening groups.

ACTION: Cllr Berardi to share information for Helen Groenendaal to share the invitation with student gardening groups.

Cllr Gates remarked that there had been no requests for the last two local community call in sessions held by the University. Helen Groenendaal acknowledged that the University communications team have worked hard to promote the sessions, but noted the University always looks to respond to individual concerns promptly at the time of complaints and queries rather than waiting until a call-in session. Helen Groenendaal confirmed that the University would be happy to have an online call with a resident on a specific issue if requested.

- **EGVRA**

Amanda Willis requested more notice of Royal Holloway events open to the local community. Sarah Ixer-Pitfield shared the link to the local community web pages which include all upcoming event listings open to residents: www.royalholloway.ac.uk/about-us/more/local-community/events/

The latest events are also shared in the termly edition of Community Matters.

Amanda Willis raised an invite to a representative of the University's Volunteering team to write an article for the EGVRA newsletter but no response was received.

ACTION: Helen Groenendaal to follow up with the Volunteering team.

- **Egham Residents' Association**

Willy Burgess referenced the noise issue of the Fresher's Ball and endorsed a request for Students' Union to liaise with local Cllrs to advise on and communicate with local residents.

ACTION: Tony Logan to ensure the Students' Union to invite councillors to Fresher's Fairs and other relevant activities.

- **RBC Environmental Health**

Aileen Baker confirmed Environmental Health had received eight formal noise reports since start of term.

- **Surrey Police**

Inspector Rogers confirmed there hasn't been any significant increase in crimes. Types of crimes have changed, and acknowledged work Royal Holloway has undertaken with Police and benefits of this.

Police have received six student-related calls since start of term. Have completed a joint visit with council environmental health, with another scheduled for 24 November and 8 December to understand issues.

Willy Burgess mentioned a review he is holding of the effectiveness of an ERA email inbox for residents reporting of nuisances and anti-social behaviour over past two years. He wanted to know how to compare his map and timeline with the fuller public record. Helen Groenendaal mentioned that the University has worked to consolidate data between the University, Council and Police.

ACTION: Willy Burgess to contact Helen Groenendaal outside of this meeting to confirm reporting.

Royal Holloway – Estates

Mike Berry updated on live estate development projects, beginning with Rusham Park. The project is in a period of pause while the University reflects on external challenges, and the group will be updated on all updates going forward.

Chestnut Building – the University is refurbishing this building to house the Department of Health Studies, which will bring positivity to the area. Likely to be delivered April 2024.

Piggery Gate entrance – new additional means of ingress/exit to campus, and to ease traffic in and around University. Likely to be delivered in 2024.

Mike Berry referenced upcoming projects for transparency. The University has been successful in a research bid to be the lead partner for the [CoSTAR National Lab](#), which includes development of a small black box theatre on campus behind Piggery Gate.

The University is looking at potentially improving the space behind Chestnuts Building, which is currently scrub woodland to introduce a footpath with supportive CCTV, lighting etc to improve accessibility and security. Further information will be shared.

Cllr Berardi referenced another local cycle path development that has stalled, and that there is an appetite for improving local cycle connectivity. Mike Berry reinforced that the University is supportive of better pedestrian and cycling connectivity, noting its active engagement with the SCC/RBC LCWIP strategy.

Mike Berry referenced the Renters Reform Act, and that the University is exploring a potential Head Lease scheme to give landlords and students more security and stability for

accommodation, to remove a measure of the economic uncertainty that the bill could create for landlords.

Cllr Gates referenced that the council is pushing for Article 4 Direction to control number of local HMOs. Mike Berry confirmed that the University's scheme will be about trying to provide stability for landlords, not to create proliferation.

Willy Burgess referenced the potential positives in the University introducing a quality control element against unscrupulous local landlords.

Cllr Berardi referenced a council practice to reduce HMOs by 10% on every street, and welcomed anything that upheld quality and maintenance of properties.

- **Royal Holloway – Student Wellbeing and Volunteering**

See report in Appendix A.

Helen Groenendaal raised use of Community Sports at Royal Holloway, which provides access to sports facilities for local schools and volunteering opportunities for students.

Helen Groenendaal also raised an increase in issues with waste, noting these were largely focused around end of tenancy. The University have shared some social media activity on engaging students on this issue – currently 48k hits on Instagram videos.

- **Royal Holloway Students' Union**

Tony Logan acknowledged comments on the Fresher's Ball and opportunities for more local engagement.

He referenced some additional complaints around waste and noise complaints near the Packhorse pub which they will respond to and investigate.

He confirmed there are now have 142 student-led groups undertaking work on campus and within the local community. Welcome Week included 40 events to welcome new students to the campus and their new local community.

5. Community working group proposal

Cllr Gates tabled a proposal for a community working group. See Appendix B.

The group would be to address key points in greater detail in addition to the current forum meetings.

The proposal was seconded by Cllr Jenkins, Cllr Berardi, Cllr Williams and Willy Burgess.

Professor Bhamra acknowledged that any meeting of this nature would have to focus on single items to be effective. She stated that who would represent the University would be dependent on the topic.

ACTION: Cllr Gates to put forward a pilot programme proposal for two sessions to include subjects, attendees, timings and resourcing for an action list. Cllr Gates to confirm details to Professor Bhamra.

6. AOB

Helen Groenendaal raised thanks for work PCSO Carol Lawford as Community Support Officer for her historic support on behalf of University and Students' Union ahead of her retirement in December.

7. Proposed date of next group meeting: Tuesday 19 March 2024

ACTIONS LIST

	Action	Owner
1	Royal Holloway to discuss ways to promote availability of University bus services to local residents.	Mike Berry and Sarah Ixer-Pitfield
2	Royal Holloway to explore sharing invitation of local greenhouse opening	Cllr Berardi and Tracy Bhamra
3	Royal Holloway to explore ways of sharing regular updates from Royal Holloway volunteering services for EGVRA	Amanda Willis, Helen Groenendaal and Sarah Ixer-Pitfield
4	Students' Union to invite Cllrs to Freshers Fairs and other relevant activities	Tony Logan and Hannah Hockin
6	Cllr Gates to put forward a pilot programme proposal for two sessions to include subjects, attendees, timings and resourcing for an action list.	Cllr Trevor Gates
7	Royal Holloway include the bus service information on the Royal Holloway local community web pages.	Nick Pearce and Mike Berry
8	Cllr Berardi to share information with student gardening groups.	Cllr Berardi and Helen Groenendaal
9	Willy Burgess to discuss with Royal Holloway reporting data outside of this meeting.	Helen Groenendaal