

EGHAM TOWN WARD PROPOSALS

At the AGM, Mario Leo (Corporate Head of Law & Guidance at RBC) went through the current electoral review processes, which are being run by the Boundary Commission. The Parliament review is seeking a reduction in seats from 650 to 600, with any changes effected for the next general election (2022?). Their advice is to lose Thorpe ward to Spelthorne & gain Hershams East from Esher & Walton? RBC, & a large number of residents, thought that the proposals were somewhat strange as the River Thames is the natural boundary. The report is due to the government in September 2018 (& unlikely to be accepted?).

Egham (Town)



On the Borough side, review is needed because 4 of the existing 14 RBC wards had electorate voter variance of +/- 10% & one (Englefield Green East) had a 46% variance! This latter problem is caused by the change that students used to be registered as a mass by RHUL but are now registered individually (& many are at their home addresses). As regards the warding pattern across the Borough, Mario Leo admitted that there was no perfect idea or science about how to do this. The RBC approach was to consider electorate "tiles" & come up with an equal spread across the area. Unfortunately, the Egham area in the RBC submission (which was submitted by the 12th February consultation deadline) was the most affected in the Borough, with over 1,000 electorate in the southern half of the old Egham Town ward moved into the new Egham Hill/Englefield Green East (EGE) ward & a smaller number moved in from the old Egham Hythe ward - see diagram above. The AGM audience said that the RBC proposal largely ignored community boundaries in favour of numeric electoral equality, with a large area of electors outside being pushed into Egham & existing electors in the Town losing their community roots.

We, & indeed the Egham Town Councillors, have thus submitted an alternative proposal to keep the current Egham Town ward more or less as is & then reduce the EGE/Egham Hill ward to 2 councillors only - arguing that community cohesion is more important than having a RBC council size divisible by 3.

We continue to lobby the Boundary Commission & **their recommendations are now due on 8th May & residents are urged to keep an eye out for the public consultation until 16th July** - the final report is due out on 4th September & will be implemented in 2019. This means that all RBC councillors will be elected together in 2019 (with this year's RBC election only covering 12 months duration).

RUNNYMEDE PLEASURE GROUNDS



For several years, RBC have been working on plans to upgrade the tired facilities at the Runnymede Pleasure Grounds (RPG) & their latest consultation ended on 28th February. Most of the existing structures would be demolished & a new raised cafe built further back into the park - see diagram opposite. RBC have agreed to fund the improvements by a £4.8mm loan to the RPG Trust, "but only if the scheme can be self-financing. In order to achieve necessary income, there is a proposal to incorporate 4 holiday lodges" (to be managed by the Runnymede Hotel).

Some residents believe that RBC should be spending more money on "building more affordable homes, not holiday villas" & that an "unnecessary reconfiguration of a lovely area" is being planned? Building on the consultation results, a detailed project brief & specification will be prepared by RBC in early May &, if approved, the project could be completed by summer 2020?



RBC ELECTION MAY 3rd

With Cllr Alderson's RBC seat up for election this May (for a 1yr term), we can advise that Alan agreed to stand again & he was thus endorsed at our AGM on February 20th as the Runnymede Independent Residents Group (RIRG) candidate for RBC's Egham Town ward. We hope you give him your support at the ballot box on Thursday May 3rd.

Alan adds : "After 16 years as one of your Independent councillors, I have helped many residents with their local problems and I have a full understanding of how Runnymede Borough Council (RBC) works. If elected for the now changed 1 year term, I will continue to support local government policies that take into account the needs of our local community. As an Independent Councillor, supported by ERA, I will oppose national party political influences which are counter-productive at the local level of government.

Party politics are not relevant in this arena and, in my opinion, it is essential that local government is run for the benefit of local residents. So vote **Independent** on Thursday 3rd May and I will strive to ensure that your voice is heard loud and clear at RBC".



VOTE INDEPENDENT

RBC DRAFT 2030 LOCAL PLAN

RBC's consultation on their 2030 Local Plan, which "will set out the amount of development expected to come forward in the Borough over the next 15 years and where this should be located", ended on 22nd February. RBC have had a multitude of adverse responses & have advised that they "are now uploaded to the RBC Planning page on the website" - so far over 2,000 representations have been received. The sheer volume of replies, & government's recent changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), has meant that RBC will have to delay the Local Plan submission to government by 4 months until 31st July (with yet another chance of public "consultation" on the Plan & additional evidence base during May & June).

Runnymede 2030
Draft Local Plan
Consultation

We submitted a comprehensive review of the Plan, focusing on Green Belt reduction (in the Borough but not much in Egham), the lack of an Egham Town centre policy & the missing control of Houses of Multiple Occupations (HMO). In addition, we felt that unfortunately "on the issues of Heathrow Airport, the M25 & RHUL, this document has nothing to say" & that its policies on building design & Town Centre conservation areas are proving ineffective in practice.



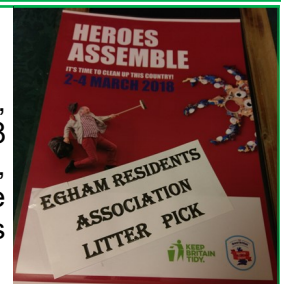
ROYAL HOLLOWAY UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

RHUL MEETING (7th March)

Further to the follow-up session last year, RHUL held their first evening meeting at the United Church to become a "dedicated forum for discussion on RHUL-related issues". During a poorly-attended meeting, discussions centred on the usual problems of landlords, litter (in gardens or bins), student communication by RHUL, residents leaving the area, late night noise & car parking. RHUL are to issue a list of key actions from the meeting for further circulation.

GREAT BRITISH SPRING CLEAN (17th March)

Welcome to Spring! Having been delayed from 3rd March due to inclement weather, our re-arranged litter pick was then hit by Arctic winds on 17th March! However, 8 brave souls turned up despite the weather & we picked Manorcrofts Playing Field, Waspe Farm car park, Walnut Tree Gardens & the area around the Library. The amount of litter was less than expected & we will need to target some new areas around the Town next year.....



MILTON PARK GRAVEL (23rd May??)

SCC have again deferred their Planning & Regulatory Committee review of the 9+ year old Hanson's application for gravel extraction at Milton Park Farm, this time until 23rd May (possibly?). There is no sense of urgency in the SCC Mineral Team & they have declined to offer any reasons for the delay.....



Reports (20th February)

Chairman

Jim Pearcey opened by welcoming around 65 members of the Association & others to the meeting and said that 2017 had been the “year of consultations”, as for example the review of Egham Gateway West, which unfortunately bit the dust after 2 attempts

On social events, these started with the coach trip to Lichfield & the National Memorial Arboretum in April & we look forward to visiting Peterborough on 14th April. Again, we thank Adrian Skelt for organising these popular trips. Next came Magna Carta Day in June, a really good day for Egham - thanks go to the Magna Carta committee, the Chamber of Commerce & especially to Cynthia Reilly for all the sterling work in organising the event. August Bank Holiday again saw our stand at the Egham Royal Show, which was very busy thanks to our loyal band of cake bakers (& the people who manned the stall over 2 days). The Barn Dance on the Saturday evening was again a great success with c.165 attending of all ages. Thanks to our continuing sponsors of P&G, Chivers Cladding & the new one of Aviation Logistics Network. The Community Fair in September was organised by Isabel Mullens & Kim Callaghan, but the latter has stood down & a replacement is required. The Quiz Night in October organised by Cynthia Reilly was a good fun evening with thanks to Seakens Solicitors for sponsoring prizes & the Red Lion for donating the wine. Unfortunately, the Carol Singing in December had to be abandoned through a lack of singers & we must thank Julian & Pamela Richardson for trying to revive this event for local charities. Lastly the Christmas Fair in the High Street also proved a great success.

On Runnymede Borough Council issues, a continued thank you to our 3 Independent Councillors (Alan Alderson, John Ashmore & David Knight) for all the time & effort they put in on our behalf.

On the Committee, thanks go to all those who helped the Association, especially to Adrian Skelt, for all the considerable time & effort he puts in both as Secretary & Newsletter Editor; to Aneesh our Treasurer, Glenda Thisdell our Membership guru, Moreton Moore on the never-ending threat of gravel extraction at Milton Park Farm, Chris Fisher for his ongoing & valuable efforts on planning & transport issues & to Stephen Williams as our new Webmaster on the new ERA website

A special thank to the Area Reps, who distribute the Newsletters, and of all those on the Committee that I haven't named. A big thank you for all the time & effort you put in to help keep Egham a great place to live & keep the flag flying for the Egham Residents Association.

Councillors

In John Ashmore's continued absence, David Knight reflected on his membership of RBC Committees on Environmental & Sustainability, the Business Advisory Group & Planning.

Alan Alderson reported on budget & finance issues & advised that no central government grants are now factored into RBC forecasts, with emphasis on future revues from property deals while on Council Tax all elements will for this year be going for the maximum permitted increase e.g. for Band D properties, RBC +£5, SCC +6% & Police +£12, giving a total of £1,807. On developments, Addlestone One - completing this summer; Egham Sports Centre - making good progress; Egham Gateway West - following the cancellation of the theatre complex, RBC are in discussion with 2 cinemas for a 4-screen cinema project.

Treasurer

Examined accounts as @ 31/12/17 were circulated at the meeting & showed that we had made a c.£500 surplus in the year, had collected c.£500 extra in subscriptions & that the Egham Royal Show & Barn Dance remained our largest non-membership income source. On the expenditure side in 2017 we saw new costs of c.£185 spent on a new, refreshed website & c.£430 to support the candidature of Chris Fisher in a commendable fight in the SCC election last May.

Guest Speaker

In a slide presentation (which is now loaded on the ERA website), Mario Leo (Corporate Head of Law & Guidance at RBC) went through the current electoral review process. On the parliamentary side, all parties had concerns about the proposal to move the Thorpe ward into Spelthorne but recommendations are not due until September. On the Runnymede side, Mario Leo went over the RBC warding proposals (see Pg 1 for details) & most of the audience was surprised to hear that the Egham area was sufficiently altered by losing the southern end of the ward & gaining part of Egham Hythe. We & our Town Councillors have submitted an alternative concept of the Town ward remaining the same & Englefield Green East ward losing a councillor. LGBCE recommendations are due in May for consultation to mid-July.



Alerts on issues that arose between Newsletters this quarter covered :

- a) 2/1 - Surrey Police Council Tax Precept
- b) 11/1 - RBC Local Plan Consultation
- c) 14/1 - RBC Local Plan Addendum
- d) 18/1 - Another Heathrow Consultation
- e) 30/1 - Runnymede Pleasure Grounds
- f) 9/2 - Police "Meet the Beat" Dates
- g) 9/2 - Charity Walk for Peace
- h) 13/2 - Flood Improvements
- i) 17/2 - Runnymede Roundabout Timing
- j) 17/2 - Great British Spring Clean (3/3)
- k) 21/2 - RHUL Meeting (7/3)
- l) 25/2 - Pleasure Grounds Reminder
- m) 1/3 - Thorpe Quiz Night (10/3)
- n) 2/3 - Spring Clean Litter Pick Deferral
- o) 20/3 - Community Safety Survey
- p) 20/3 - Water Resources Mgmt Plan
- q) 22/3 - Runnymede Pleasure Grounds Status
- r) 25/3 - Runnymede Roundabout Status
- s) 26/3 - Vicarage Road Closure (16/4)
- t) 26/3 - Egham Choral Concert (12/5)

To be sent email alerts please contact Glenda Thisdell on 07905 917440 or glenda.thisdell@hotmail.com



PETERBOROUGH COACH TRIP

Saturday 14th April

Last chance to book the few places for this year's trip to Peterborough.

Tickets are £17.50 for ERA members (or £20 for non-members)

For tickets : **Adrian SKELT** on **07956 875329**



ERA COMMITTEE

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Cynthia Reilly 07790 273225

Julian Richardson 07927 661485

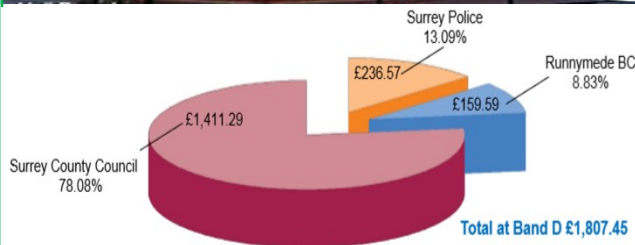
Monica Whynot 433132

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Council Tax



The Council Tax bills for 2018/19 see the largest increase for over a decade, with all chargeable elements going for the maximum permissible rise.

SCC (covering 78% of the charge - see above) said that they had "no option" but to charge an increase of 5.99%, comprising 2.99% plus a 3% rise in the county's social care precept. The SCC leader said he "deeply regretted" the tax hike & called for the government to reconsider the ending of Surrey's transitional grant.

RBC (9% of the charge) has one of the lowest tax rates in the UK & has increased by the threshold of 3% or £5 per year for Band D properties - the tax rate is so low that the difference is marginal & thus RBC went for £5.

The Police & Crime Commissioner's proposal for a maximum 5.3% (or £12 for Band D properties) increase was supported by 60% of those who responded to the public consultation on the police precept (13% of the charge).

Runnymede Borough Councillors

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John Ashmore 31 Rusham Park Av 432819

David Knight 4 The Grove 07854 843239

Surrey County Councillors

Marisa Heath 07971 666317

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