



Use your vote!



RBC ELECTION MAY 5th

With Alan Alderson standing down as a Councillor at the May election (after 20 years of invaluable service for Egham), Sam Jenkins, who currently works at Strode's, is applying for election to his seat. Sam was overwhelmingly endorsed at our AGM on February 22nd as the Runnymede Independent Residents Group (RIRG) candidate for RBC's Egham Town ward.

Sam added : I am an ERA member who lives, works and worships as a practicing Christian in Egham. As Student Engagement Officer at Strode's College, I encourage 6th form students to participate in democratic processes and active citizenship through a number of initiatives e.g. the Egham Community Covid Charter, which was displayed by many High Street businesses during the pandemic & the charter encouraged citizens, students, local traders and businesses alike to adopt Covid-safe practices for the common benefit.

If elected, I will represent a number of causes that are close to ERA members, including campaigning against Heathrow expansion, in favour of gravel protection & increased flood defences, and will fight against excessive night-time noise. I am also keen to make more younger residents aware of RBC projects, with the hope of encouraging more residents to join ERA.

"I am grateful for the hard work that has been put in over decades to make Egham Town an Independent ward, where its residents can be represented by Councillors who care about community interest, not self-interest. With your vote, I can keep Egham Town independent and protect it for future generations. I am looking forward to the start of the campaign and can't wait to get stuck in".

If you would like to support Sam as a leafleting or canvassing volunteer, please email samforeghamtown@gmail.com to be added to the rota.

NB. Don't forget : register to vote by midnight on **Thursday 14th April** (on www.gov.uk/register-to-vote)
&/or apply for a postal vote by **19th April** (on www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/how-vote-post)
&/or apply for a proxy vote by **26th April** (on www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/apply-vote-proxy)

We hope you give him your support at the ballot box on Thursday May 5th

VOTE INDEPENDENT



Promoted by Willy Burgess, 42 Crown Street, Egham, Surrey on behalf of the above candidate.

MAGNA CARTA DAY (25th June)

Magna Carta Day (MCD) is a light-hearted way of marking the sealing of the Magna Carta, which, since 15th June, 1215, is widely regarded as the foundation of democratic rights & civil liberties in England. With the Queens Platinum Jubilee weekend being held 2 - 5th June, there was an idea to advance the Egham MCD celebration this year to Saturday, 4th June (from the original planned 18th June).

However, there was some concern about the closeness of a fireworks event in the evening of 3rd June at Strode's & on the attractions of competing Windsor festivities. The problem with reverting to 18th June is that the Englefield Green Village Fair is now on that date, so the organisers are now working on **25th June for the MCD celebrations.**



2022 AGM

Reports (22nd February)

Chairman

Some 45 members of the Association attended the first physical ERA meeting in 2 years due to the pandemic. The Chairman opened by reviewing a few people that ERA knew well : Jim Pearcey - our former Chairman was in Frimley Park Hospital suffering from a blood clot on the heart; John Ashmore - who died in December & had been an RBC Councillor for 28 years & the RBC Mayor in 2001-2; and Alan Alderson - who is stepping down as an RBC Councillor this May after 20 years & had been the RBC Mayor in 2016-17.

On the Magna Square development, he noted that it was nearing completion, with Budgens now re-opened & an Everyman Cinema due to open in May. Although building height & loss of parking was a concern for the ERA, overall, the development has been for the better for Egham.

The threat of gravel raising still continues, both at Milton Park Farm (MPF) & Whitehall Farm (WF), but both of their applications have been deferred several times (MPF for 13 years & WF for over a year) & are likely to be deferred further.

On students, the continuing misbehaviour of a minority of RHUL students is a growing concern. While the ERA is not anti-student per se, it believes that more emphasis is required on RHUL management efforts, supported by RBC & the Police, & their complaints procedure.

On the Committee, he thanked them for their support during the year & wanted to specifically mention Adrian Skelt, who for his efforts as Secretary & on the Newsletter & EMail Alerts, is really a hero of the ERA, Aneesh Gupta, for his financing efforts (especially on changing our bank accounts), Glenda Thisdell, on looking after membership issues, & Stephen Pollard, who has been leading on RHUL relations. He also wanted to thank the 3 Egham RBC Councillors for their efforts over the year, especially Cllr Alderson after 20 years of invaluable service to the Town.

Treasurer

The accounts as @ 31/12/21 were circulated at the meeting & the key points were that subscriptions have kept up during the year, but we had only been able to hold a few fundraising efforts due to the pandemic (& only raised c.£250). Expenditure was greater than income (by c.£250) & ERA now had net reserves of c.£6,300, with over c.£5,500 tied up in accounts at HSBC (which, due to increased bank charges, is in progress for transfer to the Metro Bank - which has been logistically difficult to say the least!).

RBC Councillors & Candidate Adoption

The Egham Town Independent Councillors on RBC gave their summary annual reports for 2021. Alan Alderson - the "senior" Egham Councillor (first elected in 2002) was absent but the Chairman read out his final report to the AGM. Isabel Mullens - who wanted to focus her report on residents' issues e.g. tree problems around the Town & flooding issues concerning the River Thames Scheme & a proposed Egham Flood Group; RBC committees - where she stood on the Housing & Planning Committees ; and other general issues e.g. climate change, where RBC have finally agreed to go net zero by 2030 but the details of the strategy on how to get there is awaited, & on getting more residents to attend RBC meetings. Sian Williams - wanted to thank residents for their voting last year in the delayed election, which led to her being on the RBC committees on Environment & Sustainability, Overview & Scrutiny & Crime & Disorder. She has been focussing on Fairhaven issues of late & on parking concerns in the High Street & its pavements. She had also been instrumental in issuing an Anti-Social Behaviour flyer, in coordination with RBC & the Police, she also volunteered at the Runnymede Foodbank & was a founder of a local group of Boards, Cards & Dice gaming group.

With Alan Alderson standing down as a Councillor, Sam Jenkins, who is a Student Engagement Officer at Strodes, is planning to apply for his seat & has already obtained our Committee's unanimous support to stand. Sam advised that he was already involved in several Town events including the Egham Community Charter & that he lived in the High Street. He saw his main issues being on noise, the 3rd runway at Heathrow, gravel raising, the Green Belt & especially to get more young people involved in Town events. The Chairman likes Sam's enthusiasm & a motion for adoption as our Independent candidate for Egham Town was almost unanimously supported from the floor (with only 1 objection).

Guest Speaker

Friends Against Scams is a National Trading Standards Scams Team initiative, which aims to protect and prevent people from becoming victims of scams by empowering people to take a stand against scams. The team was founded in 2012 to tackle the problem of postal, telephone and doorstep scams and identifies and support those who fall victim to them. Kevin McLean, Scam Champion, Buckingham & Surrey Trading Standards, in a slide presentation went through the main postal, telephone, doorstep & online scams & pointed out the benefits of joining the free mail & telephone preference services.

For further details go to their website : <https://www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/>

CORONAVIRUS STATUS

COVID-19
Update

On 21st February the Government announced that a number of COVID-19 restrictions would end in England on 24th February. The new 'Living with COVID -19' plan moves beyond the Plan A approach outlined in the Autumn & Winter plans & takes the next steps in living with the virus. **However, the lifting of restrictions does not mean the pandemic is over. COVID-19 continues to spread & people of all ages are at risk of infection.**

With infections now rising again (due to Omicron subvariant BA.2), a Spring booster - to be administered 6 months after the previous dose - will be offered to adults aged 75 years +; residents in a care homes; & individuals aged 12 years + who are immunosuppressed or have weakened immune systems.

About 5mm people in the UK will be eligible to book the extra booster job - with the first 600,000 people being invited from 21st March. The Joint Committee on Vaccination & Immunisation has suggested further boosters will be offered to a wider group of people in the Autumn.

All remaining Covid travel restrictions have now been lifted for passengers entering the UK. As of 18th March, unvaccinated arrivals will no longer have to take tests & passenger locator forms have been scrapped. However, UK travellers are still advised to check the rules for the countries they are visiting - as many still have restrictions & testing requirements in place (& the NHS COVID Pass will still be available).



GRAVEL RAISING

The Milton Park Farm (MPF) & Whitehall Farm (WF) planning applications continue to be deferred by SCC (MPF for an unbelievable 13 years & WF for over a year) & are currently scheduled for a 27th April review (but are likely to be deferred further).

Progress has been further complicated by SCC's 4-year review of a new Minerals Plan (with the last one being out-of-date from 2011). The initial, background Issues & Options section had a consultation deadline of 7th March & the consultation material was framed by several introductory & contextual documents & included 6 main documents outlining the proposed vision, objectives & spatial strategy.

This consultation will inform the preparation of the subsequent 'Preferred Options' public consultation which is set to commence in July 2022 (until October 2022). This will include draft planning policies & proposed sites to be identified, allocated or safeguarded for future minerals management development.

RBC CLIMATE CHANGE



Improving our
climate for a
sustainable future

RBC will work towards a target of net zero carbon emissions for its own services and operations by 2030, following a unanimous vote at the Full Council meeting on 26th January. The decision places RBC alongside other councils in Surrey which have also committed to the same target.

Speaking at the meeting, Cllr Marisa Heath, chair of the RBC Environment and Sustainability Committee, said: "This is a vital issue, if we have a target - that will lead to action. We have to be revolutionary; this is the 11th hour. We need to expedite this and move forward. RBC already have a number of climate change initiatives but they will bring these initiatives together in a comprehensive strategy".

The Climate Change Strategy will set out what RBC have already accomplished & the overall direction of travel they will take to reduce their emissions. It will explain specific areas that RBC will focus on in the future to bring their emissions down further & how they will work with residents & other organisations to help & encourage them to do the same. Shortly the Council will announce its plans to create a new group where residents & businesses can hear & share ideas about what we can all change & so that everyone can play their part in preventing Climate Change.



Boundary
Commission
for England

EGHAM PARLIAMENTARY BOUNDARIES

You will recall that the Boundary Commission for England (BCE) issued its initial proposals last August for revising the Parliamentary constituencies across the country to make them more even in terms of electorates. The initial BCE proposal moved Egham Town (& Egham Hythe) out of the Weybridge & Runnymede Parliamentary constituency and added them to a new Windsor County one. Despite responses to date, including several stating that the Egham proposal was unworkable on county/community background grounds, the current BCE proposal still has Egham moved into the Windsor constituency.

The BCE launched a secondary public consultation on its initially proposed map of constituencies which closed on 4th April. The Commission received over 34,000 responses from the public during its first consultation last year & the original comments are now available to view by area, along with the proposals for constituencies, on the consultation website (bcereviews.org.uk). We repeated our objections by the deadline & the current review will conclude with their formal report and recommendations in June 2023.

Alerts on issues that arose between Newsletters this quarter covered :

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| a) 14/1 Covid Champions Briefing (14/1) | b) 16/1 Romance Scams |
| c) 21/1 Egham Library Activities | d) 21/1 Covid Champions Briefing (21/1) |
| e) 23/1 RBC Full Council (26/1) | f) 28/1 Covid Champions Briefing (28/1) |
| g) 04/2 Covid Champions Briefing (4/2) | h) 06/2 STEM Club Donations |
| i) 09/2 RHUL Platinum Jubilee Celebration | j) 11/2 Budgens Reopening |
| k) 13/2 AGM (22/2) Reminder | l) 15/2 RHUL Consultative Meeting (1/3) |
| m) 17/2 Storm Eunice | n) 17/2 SCC Minerals Plan Event (25/2) |
| o) 18/2 Covid Champions Briefing (18/2) | p) 19/2 SCC road repairs survey |
| q) 25/2 SCC Minerals Event - re-arranged | r) 25/2 Covid Champions Briefing (25/2) |
| s) 04/3 Covid Champions Briefing (4/3) | t) 08/3 BCE Parliamentary Boundary Review |
| u) 09/3 Platinum Jubilee Street Parties | v) 11/3 ASPH Patient Panel |
| x) 17/3 Community Speed Watch Group | y) 21/3 Sam Jenkins Volunteers |
| z) 22/3 Magna Carta Day moves to 25/6 | aa) 25/3 Egham Choral (2/4) |



Contact Glenda Thisdell on 07905 917440 or glendathisdell@eghamresidentsassociation.co.uk to be sent email alerts

COUNCIL TAX 2022/23



The overall Council Tax Bill is made up of three elements:

RBC Services, SCC Services, which includes, adults and children's services, schools and highways, & funding of Surrey Police.

While Runnymede has asked people in Band D to pay £4.96 more per year to fund its services (2.9% increase), SCC has increased its figure by £77.10 (4.99% increase) and Surrey's Police and Crime Commissioner has increased her requirement to fund the force by £10 per year (3.5% increase).

The Government is this year allowing borough councils to raise council tax by a maximum of £5 or two per cent, whichever is higher.

This means that the overall increase for people living in band D homes in Runnymede will be £92.27. The total bill for a band D home will be £2,101.51 for the 2022-2023 financial year, compared with £2009.24 for the previous year.

Despite the increase, Runnymede residents will pay the lowest Council Tax in Surrey for its Services.

The breakdown by Council Tax Band is as follows:

Band A - £1,401.01	Band B - £1,634.51
Band C - £1,868.01	Band D - £2,101.51
Band E - £2,558.51	Band F - £3,035.51
Band G - £3,502.52	Band H - £4,203.02

The Government have announced a £150 council tax rebate for Band A-D properties & the payment will not appear on the Council Tax bill. If you pay your Council Tax by Direct Debit, the payment will go directly into your bank. If you do not pay by Direct Debit, RBC will provide details on how to claim this payment once they have arrangements in place. This is unlikely to be before the end of April.

ERA COACH TRIP



After the advert in the Winter Newsletter, only 5 residents have contacted us about a possible Coach Trip this year. There has thus been insufficient interest to justify a booking & we will not unfortunately be arranging a trip in April.



ERA COMMITTEE

Chairman (& Planning Co-ordinator)

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Vice-Chairman

Graham Basset 07710 841510

Secretary (& Newsletter Editor)

Adrian Skelt 07956 875329

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Vacant

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