

happy new year

Egham Town Residents - Please Join or Renew Today!

Our aim remains to help make our community a better place to live. For almost 40 years, the Egham Residents Association (ERA) has focused on preserving & improving the facilities in Egham Town & championing the interests of its residents & visitors.

We know that residents can make a difference - through our past efforts on supporting local shops, organising community events, monitoring local plans (including arresting development of Mrs Caddeys Field & the prevention of gravel extraction at Milton Park Farm (for over 14 years) & Whitehall Farm), consulting with Royal Holloway, lobbying to save our Green Belt, maintaining pedestrianisation of the High Street, supporting Independent councillors (who stand for local residents rather than any political party) & of course, the ERA's founding issue in the '80s, keeping Manorcrofts Playing Fields open to the public.

Known issues that are on the ERA Committee agenda for 2023 include :

- ⇒ **combatting anti-social behaviour** (including by students) in liaison with the police, RBC & RHUL;
- ⇒ working in liaison with **our Town's key influencers** e.g. Independent RBC Councillors, SCC Councillors, Chamber of Commerce & community groups incl. the Egham Town Team;
- ⇒ **implementation of Egham Town centre improvements** through the future development of the Precinct ("Gateway East");
- ⇒ **maintaining High Street pedestrianisation** via better operation of the bollards system;
- ⇒ the never-ending saga of **gravel raising** (at Milton Park Farm & now at Whitehall Farm);
- ⇒ supporting **local groups and charities** via the Community Fair etc;
- ⇒ the ever-popular Egham Royal Show & Barn Dance, Community Fair, Magna Carta Day, Christmas Fair, annual coach day trips and other **community events - Covid-19 & other viruses permitting**;
- ⇒ watching key **local planning issues** & raising concerns with RBC, SCC planners & our MP;
- ⇒ actively seeking to **protect our local environment** e.g. flood planning & climate change issues; &
- ⇒ **producing quarterly newsletters** (N.B only this Winter issue is free to non-members).

If you care about your community, decisions that affect our Town &/or Egham continuing to be a great place to live, then your support makes the difference, so please join or renew today!

The more members we have the bigger our voice & the greater our chance of success, so please return membership form from this Newsletter or go online at our website

NB. We also have an online subscription payment option via SQUARE software from our website : www.eghamresidentsassociation.co.uk



AGM

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This is advance notice that this year's AGM will be held on

Tuesday 21st February

in the main United Church, High Street starting at 7.30pm

Guest Speaker : **National Trust Plans for Runnymede & Ankerwycke**

Rob Bishop, Property Operations Manager, National Trust

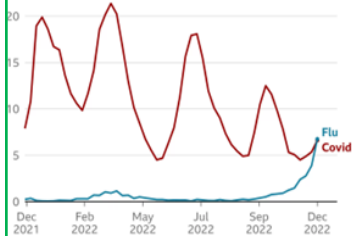


NB. Don't forget that we will be appointing a new Chairman & other Committee members at the meeting

The latest estimates suggest 1.4 million people tested positive for coronavirus in the week to 9th December - up from 1.1 million the week before.



Hospital admissions for flu surpass Covid
Weekly admission rates per 100,000 people in England



Note: Data to 11 Dec
Source: UK Health Security Agency

Infection levels are now similar to where they were at the end of September. Covid is also beginning to increase again, infecting one in 45 people, but there now appears to be a growing but wrong "view that Covid is over" among the general population.

The flu season has, however, started early, with hospital admission rates rising sharply in late December and have now overtaken admissions for Covid-19 in England - see diagram. Flu is putting more people in hospital in England than at any point since the winter of 2017-18, when there was a large wave.

PARLIAMENTARY BOUNDARIES



In November, the Boundary Commission for England (BCE) published new revised proposals for constituencies across the country and opened the third & final month-long consultation until 5th December. The Commission took into consideration over 45,000 comments sent in by the public during the previous two stages of public consultation and has changed nearly half of its initial proposals based on this feedback.

You will recall from the Summer 2021 Newsletter that the initial BCE proposal had, surprisingly, moved Egham Town (and Egham Hythe) wards out of the current Weybridge & Runnymede parliamentary constituency & added them to a new Windsor County one! In its latest consultation, however, BCE has moved Egham & Egham Hythe wards back into the Weybridge constituency but moved Englefield Green & Virginia Water into the Windsor one - unsurprisingly the latter has caused concern among the EG & VW Councillors & residents. In our response we, apart from thanking the BCE for changing its mind, have said that the argument for keeping Egham & Egham Hythe in the Runnymede constituency can also be applied to Englefield Green & Virginia Water, & that the BCE should instead be looking to remove one or two of the Weybridge wards of Elmbridge from the Runnymede constituency.

After this final consultation closed on 5th December, the Commission will analyse the responses and form its final recommendations, which will be submitted to Parliament by 1st July 2023.



GRAVEL RAISING - THE NEVER ENDING SAGA

For the umpteenth time, SCC have now delayed their long-awaited Planning & Regulatory Committee review of the gravel raising planning applications for Whitehall Farm (WF) & Milton Park Farm (MPF) until at least 26th April 2023 (if not later). As usual, no explanation has been forthcoming from SCC on the continuing delay (14yrs on MPF & nearly 18mths on WF).

The main problem is the new SCC update of the Surrey Minerals Plan to replace the old 2011 Plan, which started in November 2021 but at the moment is delayed, in its Preferred Options stage, from ending last October to starting another public consultation in June 2023. This delay means that a new Surrey Minerals Plan (& thus the future of WF & MPF?) will likely not be enacted before early 2025.

One significant issue in the town is the relationship between long term residents & students. We are always open to hear of difficulties residents are experiencing to see if we can help, but also of difficulties students have regarding noise nuisance.



If you are experiencing **noise nuisance coming from a property** (including garden/curtilage of the property) contact RBC's Environmental Health Team. Issues reported outside of working hours will be followed up the next working day. Phone: 01932 838383, email: environmentalhealth@runnymede.gov.uk or report online: <https://www.runnymede.gov.uk/nuisance-1/make-noise-complaint/2>. Environmental Health may ask residents to complete a Noise Diary, to provide evidence to support the complaint.

Transient Noise in the street should also be reported to RBC via the online ASB form <https://www.runnymede.gov.uk/community-safety/antisocial-behaviour> under the category of nuisance behaviour. These reports are received by the Council's Community Safety Coordinator - if you are in any doubt where to submit a report, use this form and the Co-ordinator will log and if appropriate disseminate to the correct department/organisation accordingly. Unfortunately, transit noise is often difficult to action by all agencies.

For **noise issues involving students**, please also report directly to Royal Holloway University London (RHUL) via community@royalholloway.ac.uk If you would like the council in investigate your noise complaint, you must email them directly via environmentalhealth@runnymede.gov.uk



COUNCILLORS CHRISTMAS UPDATE

Retreating from Council meetings for Xmas, they can reflect on some success during 2022 - not all these are headline items but all make Egham a better place to live. The opening of Magna Square certainly has been significant, a pleasant open space in which the new plants have nearly all survived the hot, dry summer. Many residents have said that the Everyman cinema & the Liberto Lounge are great additions to the town centre.

In the new year Runnymede will be refreshing many planters in the borough. They would like to get the community involved, with volunteers doing watering and weeding, and local horticultural societies may also like to be involved.

Siân Williams has been leading on the Boards, Cards & Dice club, in the Literary Institute from 1.30-3.30pm Tuesdays (look out for extended hours in the New Year). All welcome, & it's free & relatively warm! Siân is also chairing the Egham Town Team, which works with businesses & other town organisations to improve Egham High Street, including providing the Christmas lights that look so lovely.

Sam Jenkins has set up Runnymede YZ, a group for young adults in the borough who want to build new connections and friendships, help volunteer at community events and act as a source of support and advice for each other. Do get in touch with Sam if you want to join. Sam was also instrumental in getting the Council to replace the goalposts on Manorcroft field, which had been promised a year ago. He's also led on litter picks in the town.

Isabel Mullens has been successful in pushing RBC to recognise the climate emergency. Working with Labour & Lib Dem councillors, and enthusiastically supported by Egham & Englefield Green residents, who waved banners in the public gallery and asked pertinent questions of the Leader of the Council, we got the Council to formally adopt a strategy to become zero-carbon by 2030 in its own operations. Members of the public are welcome at all council meetings, and they can ask a question or get a petition presented at Full Council meetings. Isabel has also been involved in setting up an Egham Flood Resilience Group to provide information to residents living in areas prone to flooding. For further information, or to volunteer to help in a flood emergency, do get in touch with her.

There are also a number of small changes we have worked hard to get, which make Egham a better place to live. These include new bollards outside the Egham Precinct to stop illegal pavement parking; reducing the number of trolleys outside Tesco to make the Town Square more pleasant; putting pressure on the County Council to get the bollards into the High Street working (they are at least as we write this....); getting new drop kerbs in School Lane to make properties more accessible to wheelchair users; and we hope soon to see a decrease in illegal parking in the Waitrose surface car park.

If there are any issues you need advice or help with, do get in touch - our contact details are at the back of this Newsletter. Also see us outside the United Church on some Saturday mornings - further details will be advertised shortly. We look forward to seeing you at the ERA AGM on 21st February - no need to be a member to attend.

ELECTIONS & VOTING

ERA supports Independent candidates for election to represent Egham at RBC and SCC as one of its principal activities, taking the view that national Party politics hinder local government, and that Councillors should themselves be local residents, knowledgeable and concerned about the town because they live here. Thanks to all of ERA's hard work over the years, Egham has benefitted from Independent representation since 1984.



There are **three important notices for the Local Elections on Thursday 4th May 2023**: (1) Isabel Mullens, one of Egham's current Independent councillors, is up for re-election in May: the **ERA adoption meeting will be part of the AGM, on 21st February**. (2) For the election on May 4th, for the first time in UK elections **you will need photo-ID to be able to vote**; if you don't have photo-ID you'll be able to apply for a 'Voter Authority Certificate'. *[NB This is the Government's intention at the time of going to press, although moves are afoot nationally to postpone or cancel the plans.]* There will be a national information campaign in January, with details. ERA will follow this up with advice & help-sessions locally. RBC will also issue instructions. See more info in the Spring Newsletter. (3) Also, the Polling Station will be at the **Egham Youth Centre on the High Street**, close to the junction with Limes Road. The old Polling Station at Waspe Farm Car park will no longer be used (because more room is needed for the Voter-ID management).

Alerts on issues that arose between Newsletters this quarter covered :

- a) RBC Full Council (20/10)
- b) Christmas Fair Date Change (10/12)
- c) RHUL Community Matters (12/10)
- d) Bishop Nowakowski Speech (10/11)
- e) Fireworks (24/10)
- f) River Thames Scheme (30/10)
- g) SCC Bus Review (5/11)
- h) Egham Flooding (7/11)
- i) Boundary Commission Constituencies (9/11)
- j) Covid Champions Briefing (18/11)
- k) Surrey Care Trust Volunteers (22/11)
- l) Scam Alert (26/11)
- m) Fire Safety over Christmas (29/11)
- n) New Bollards (1/12)
- o) Runnymede Crime & ASB Survey (1/12)
- p) Covid Champions Briefing (1/12)
- q) Christmas Bin Collections (21/12)
- r) Police Precept 2023 (22/12)



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

CHRISTMAS FAIR

This year the Egham Christmas Fair, run by the Chamber of Commerce, was combined with a Vegan Market on a bitterly cold but dry day in the High Street on 10th December.

The footfall was down on recent levels, although it was up during the lunch break. While there were less stalls for the Christmas Fair, the overall target was c.50 stalls on the combined market/fair.

The ERA stall still made c.£50 profit, but this was substantially down from last year.

COACH TRIP

After more than 3yrs of cancelling our annual Coach Trip, we have again been considering whether to re-establish the event for April 2023? We are currently proposing not to arrange the trip for next April, as we need 35-40 participants to break even. However, if there is sufficient interest from our members, readers on continuing the event, then we shall re-consider & rebook a Coach Trip (probably to Norwich this time) - **please let the Editor know by mid-February?**



and finally...

RunnymedeDraftbusters is a service supported by Maid Energy, a local community benefit company, which facilitates volunteers to carry out assessments & provide small, free interventions to reduce draughts in people's homes. For more details see <https://www.maidenergy.coop/draughtbusters> or email runnymededraughtbusters@gmail.com.

Wanted: gardeners interested in insects and pollination

A young researcher at RHUL Biosciences is planning to study the importance of garden management, grass-mowing etc for the local insect population, including bees. Volunteer gardeners in Egham, interested in joining in, should email cllr.Isabel.Mullens@runnymede.gov.uk for info.



ERA COMMITTEE

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Vacant

Vice-Chairman

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Treasurer (& Data Protection Officer)

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Membership Secretary

Glenda Thisdell

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Webmaster

Vacant (temporarily filled by Aneesh Gupta)

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Sian Williams

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