

2024

**To all Egham Town Residents,
Best wishes from the ERA Committee for a Happy New Year!**

If you're newly arrived in Egham, we wish you a very warm welcome. Our New Year Newsletter goes to all addresses in Egham Town ward, so whether you've recently arrived or you're newly aware of ERA, you can join us as a new member for 2024; and if you're already a member, you can re-new.

2023 has seen Egham's new Magna Square facilities bedding in, with the new cinema, new cafés, bars & meeting spaces at the western end of the High Street. Despite some teething problems & with some misgivings, opinions appear mostly to be positive. As the planted areas & the trees mature, we can expect Magna Square to become an increasingly important point of focus for the town. At the other end of the High Street, the Precinct by contrast looks ever more in need of attention. When the Council gets round to it (nothing's imminent) we must do all we can to get the lessons from Magna Square incorporated. Up the hill, Royal Holloway has announced plans for significant expansion - the RH2030s Plan. We benefit greatly from having the college on our doorstep but there are also challenges, which must be managed. In 2024 we'll be engaging closely with the College's RH2030s consultations, including with RBC and SCC, and as usual with help/advice from our ERA-supported Councillors.

Enjoy the Newsletter - it comes with all best wishes for a happy and healthy New Year!

Join or Renew Today!

What ERA does and how it works:

- supporting local residents to stand as Independent candidates in the local elections
- putting RBC & SCC planning applications & policies which affect Egham under the microscope
- engaging with members through Newsletters, Email Alerts, social media & annual meetings
- individual residents act as Area Representatives; we reach every street in Egham
- attending local community events e.g. Magna Carta Day & Egham Royal Show
- organising/enabling occasional socials e.g. a summer ERA Barn Dance, street parties etc
- operating through a Committee & our Area Reps, advised by our Independent Councillors

What you get as a Member:

- A say in adoption of Independent candidates for the local elections
- A voice on your behalf at RBC - through ERA engagement & via the Councillors
- Information distributed by Email Alerts and in quarterly Newsletters
- A network of resident neighbours sharing an interest and/or concern for Egham

What it costs you: £7.50 (concessions £5); £12.50 (households) a year

The more members we have the bigger our voice & the greater our chance of success, so please

return the enclosed membership form or go online at our website



ERA Membership

NB. We also have online subscription payment via SQUARE software from our website : www.eghamresidentsassociation.co.uk/membership or

via scanning the QR code (shown here) with your phone



AGM
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

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

Tuesday 27th February

in the United Church Pastoral Centre, High Street starting at 8.00pm
followed by refreshments & accompanying music



SURREY HIGHWAYS & COMMUNITY FUNDING

**YOUR
FUND
SURREY**

Surrey County Council (SCC) makes annual funds available to individual County Councillors to be spent on highways & community projects via their Divisional allocations. The SCC Councillors for Egham Division, Rob King, & Englefield Green Division, Marisa Heath, recently provided an update on the access & availability of these various grants & budgets - as noted in the Autumn 2023 Newsletter, Egham Town currently straddles these 2 SCC Divisions. Funded improvements this year relating to Egham included :

i) Divisional Highways Capital Fund (£100k p.a.) - this is to support local structural repairs (such as re-surfacing, drainage or roundabouts) - matching funding is also available from the wider SCC's Operation Horizon for larger highways maintenance projects. This year Cllr King funded projects at the Vicarage Avenue junctions & the Glanty roundabout resurfacing. Cllr Heath advised that her 2023-24 allowance has been allocated in Englefield Green but, for 2024-25, £10k has been allocated to an Egham A30 Bypass speed Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) & both Councillors are open to further suggestions on their areas.

ii) Divisional Revenue Maintenance (£7.5k p.a.) - this is to support vegetation cutback, drainage clearance and prevention of verge parking - this year, Cllr King funded maintenance projects in Egham Hythe e.g. Stephen Close verge posts & Thorpe Lea vegetation cutback.

iii) Integrated Transport Safety (ITS) Schemes (biddable) - there is competitive funding from a collective SCC pot for schemes to improve road safety - Cllr King successfully bid for installation of the new Toucan Crossing on Vicarage Road (opposite Egham Orbit). He has also suggested that this fund category could be used to support an A30 Egham Bypass pedestrian safety measures at Hummer Road?

iv) Member Community Fund (£5k p.a.) - this covers relatively small-scale funding to benefit local people - this year both Councillors supported facilities at the Egham Royal Show.

v) Small Projects Fund (£50k one off until 2025) - this fund supports purchase of physical items - this year, Cllr King contributed towards Manorcroft School IT equipment. Both Councillors seek further ideas from Egham residents for future funding from this small projects pot.

If you have ideas for these funding opportunities, please contact Cllr Rob King on robert.king@surreycc.gov.uk or phone 07506 2374314 if you are in the Egham Division or, for the adjacent Englefield Green Division, then please also contact Cllr Marisa Heath on marisa.heath@surreycc.gov.uk or phone 07816 117404.



WHITEHALL FARM GRAVEL

Surrey County Council (SCC) issued a letter on 7th September 2021 requesting responses to their technical queries/additional information on the gravel application for Whitehall Farm (WF). After more than 2 years CEMEX have now responded with technical details & SCC announced a consultation on this information on 29th November, setting a 5th January deadline but now extended to 31st January for ERA comments.

It is important to note that these responses by CEMEX are not a re-application to SCC by them but rather just additional information & that any comments already made on the original gravel application will remain valid & thus any further comments would be considered collectively as part of an assessment of the overall application.

The details of the CEMEX responses can be found at <https://planning.surreycc.gov.uk/Planning/Display/SCC%20Ref%202021/0023#> & click on Attachments & then go down to 10 & 11/23 insertions. The experts at our Residents Against Gravel Extraction (RAGE) group are going through these details at present and RAGE & ERA will be repeating their objections on grounds of flooding, air pollution & excessive heavy goods traffic. Residents on the planned traffic routes along Vicarage Road & the Avenue have been alerted by flyers posted before Christmas. Residents along Whitehall Lane would particularly experience heavy traffic during the 18 month construction phase & have been similarly alerted. It is currently planned by SCC to take the overall WF application at their Planning & Regulatory Committee on 24th April 2024.

Please add your objections/comments on this WF information/application by sending them (with your name & address) to MWCD@surreycc.gov.uk, quoting reference SCC 2021/0023, before the 31st January.

There is growing concern about the possible approval of extraction on a site that could possibly be excluded from the next approved plan - as reported before, the current SCC Minerals Plan is over 12 years old, uses data over 15 years old & it is not planned for the new plan to go out to consultation before June 2025 at the earliest. There is thus a case for SCC to cease looking at any current or new gravel applications in the county until there is a new Minerals Plan in place - i.e. after 2026/7.

RBC COUNCILLORS CHRISTMAS UPDATE

Since May Runnymede Borough Council (RBC) has been in “No Overall Control”, with 20 Conservatives out of a total of 41 Councillors. There is also a new CEO and Deputy CEO & Independents have found that the issues that they raise are increasingly being listened to and followed up e.g. an Article 4 Direction on Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) to allow planning & management in relation to such houses. As Independents, they are ever more able to represent local people and local issues as the political balance shifts at RBC.



Cllr Sian Williams has had a lot of casework relating to the Housing Crisis and the Cost-of-Living Crisis, as well as working on accessibility issues, Community Safety, Community Action & Egham Town planning applications. Runnymede now has a Household Support fund which has been very helpful for making emergency payments for pensioners, people who work full-time & families. She has worked with Fairhaven Court residents towards achieving their Right to Manage, to give leaseholders the ability to take over the landlord’s management functions in respect of their building. Accessibility & parking issues have been key this year, especially with regard to disabled places by Waitrose. In addition, she has continued to organise The Runnymede Games Club, which has expanded to provide a social hub, and volunteer at Runnymede Food Bank.

Cllr Sam Jenkins notes that it has been a busy couple of months, helping residents with individual matters, supporting local community groups and debating policies at RBC Committees. A couple of key updates include:

- At December’s Full Council, RBC declared a Climate Emergency after several years of campaigning by the Independents and other opposition politicians. To ensure the robustness of this declaration, he tabled a Net Zero Carbon Toolkit motion which will encourage carbon reduction within future development.
- In response to an RBC consultation about how the Manorcroft Play Area can be improved, Sam co-ordinated an Accessibility Assessment of the facility with Runnymede Access Liaison Group (RALG). Many thanks to those who responded to a survey by RALG on this matter which helped to inform their recommendations, which identified a number of ways in which the play area can be improved for children with mobility and sensory needs. The report has been sent to the Open Spaces team at RBC and can also be viewed on RALG’s website: ralgcomms.wixsite.com/ralg.

If you would like to receive Sam’s monthly Jottings By Jenkins newsletter please drop Sam a line and he can add you to the distribution list (at cldr.sam.jenkins@runnymede.gov.uk)

Cllr Isabel Mullens has unfortunately been incapacitated over the past 3 months, unable to take a leading role but working with Cllrs Sam & Sian in support of common issues. She is looking forward to recovering in the New Year.



RUNNYMEDE BEAT

Join Surrey Police on **Tuesday, 16th January between 6pm & 7pm** to hear from Chief Constable, Tim De Meyer, Police and Crime Commissioner, Lisa Townsend, and your Runnymede Borough Commander to hear about current challenges, future plans and a chance for you to ask about issues affecting your community. This event will be live streamed using Facebook and include a chat function to put your questions to the studio. Instructions for how to join the meeting will be shared before the meeting date. You do not need to have a Facebook account to watch the meeting live.

Reserve your spot at : <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/policing-your-community-virtual-event-runnymede-tickets-748495228377?aff=oddtcreator>.

ERA COACH TRIP (April?)

After 3 years of cancelling our annual Coach Trip, we have again been considering whether to re-establish the event for April 2024? We are currently proposing not to arrange the trip for next April, as we need 35-40 participants to break even on the ever increasing cost for the coach & a driver. However, if there is sufficient interest from our members/readers on continuing the event, then we could re-book a Coach Trip (probably to Norwich this time). If you are interested for this year, please contact the Editor, Adrian Skelt, on 07956 875329 or e-mail : adrianskelt@eghamresidentsassociation.co.uk **by the end of February.**



Alerts on issues that arose between Newsletters this quarter covered :

- a) Level Crossing Petition (7/10)
- b) Egham Hythe Streets (16/10)
- c) Egham Charity Chair (19/10)
- d) RBC Disability Confident Leadership (20/10)
- e) Egham Christmas Fair (9/12)
- f) Manorcrofts Field Play Area Consultation (21/11)
- g) Network Rail Update (22/11)
- h) Policing in our Community (28/11)
- i) Christmas Bin Collections (1/12)
- j) Climate Emergency in Runnymede (8/12)
- k) RBC Climate Change Action Plan (12/12)
- l) Whitehall Farm HGV routes (18/12)



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



The Egham Christmas Fair, run by the Chamber of Commerce, was combined with a Vegan Market on a very windy & wet day in the High Street on 9th December. The footfall & the number of stalls were down on recent levels, especially in the morning (when it was raining!). Overall, this led to a feeling of not being that Christmassy, with no real seasonal entertainment or attractions.

Also, the takings from the ERA stall were modest (only £35 in total - down from over £50 in 2022), but thanks go to the 8 valiant ERA members who braved the weather to help out manning the stall.



Like many local voluntary organisations, our Committee would benefit from additional members, to share their ideas, energy, good counsel and/or specific skills to help ERA operate effectively. We have 10 monthly meetings on a Tuesday evening. Please consider contributing your local knowledge & enthusiasm for Egham by joining the Committee. For an informal discussion please email our Chair, Willy Burgess at chair@eghamresidentsassociation.co.uk.

Miscellaneous

- i) **National Trust (NT)** - we're developing an arrangement for liaison with the NT at Runnymede, a means for two-way 'news and views' communication between the NT and all locals who enjoy the fields, woods, ponds & river-side walks on Runnymede.
- ii) **Treewatch** - we're supporting a new group called Egham Treewatch (see Autumn 2023 Newsletter): to help Treewatch prepare a map of notable and favourite trees for launch at Magna Carta 2024, please send a brief description of your favourite Egham tree to Willy Burgess at chair@eghamresidentsassociation.co.uk.
- iii) **A30 Bypass** - a petition to SCC, for a scheme to improve safety for those crossing the A30 Egham Bypass (see Autumn 2023 Newsletter) remains to be submitted; the process is taking time.
- iv) **RBC Climate Change Action Plan** - ERA contributed to RBC discussions & will respond : to see the Plan and to make individual responses go to <https://www.runnymede.gov.uk/climate-change/draft-climate-change-action-plan-consultation/2>.

KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR THESE ITEMS DURING 2024



ERA COMMITTEE

Chair	
Willy Burgess	07864 397208
Vice-Chair	
Vacant	
Secretary (& Newsletter Editor)	
Adrian Skelt	07956 875329
Treasurer (& Data Protection Officer)	
Aneesh Gupta	07915 612291
Membership Secretary	
Glenda Thisdell	07905 917440
Planning Co-ordinator	
Vacant	
Social Media Co-ordinator	
Stephen Pollard	07949 356537
Green Issues	
Sue Holloway	07906 938041
Webmaster	
Vacant	
Other Members	
Bill Bessant	07775 333396
Brigitte Kreuger	07887 891456
Jim Pearcey	01784 432805

Local Councillors

Runnymede Borough

Sam Jenkins	(Independent)	07539 478951
Isabel Mullens	(Independent)	07562 644057
Sian Williams	(Independent)	07783 010121

Surrey County

Marisa Heath	(Conservative)	07816 117404
Robert King	(Labour)	07506 274314

Website : www.eghamresidentsassociation.co.uk



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