



## Royal Holloway & Runnymede Consultative Group

### MEETING MINUTES

Monday, 24 March 2025, 5:30-7pm (Online via Teams)

#### Attendees

**Royal Holloway:** Professor Tracy Bhamra (Co-Chair), Mike Berry, Helen Groenendaal, Nick Pearce, Minna Ruohonen (note taking)

**Royal Holloway Students' Union:** Sharanya Sivarajah (President), Tony Logan (CEO)

**Runnymede Borough Council – Councillors:** Cllr Trevor Gates (Co-Chair), Cllr Abby King, Cllr Eliza Kettle, Cllr Paul Gahir, Cllr Geeta Moudgil, Cllr Isabel Mullens

**Runnymede Borough Council – Officers:** Aileen Baker (Senior Environmental Health Officer)

**Surrey Police:** Ian Nash (Runnymede Borough Commander)

**Residents' Associations:** Amanda Willis (Englefield Green Village Residents' Association), Willy Burgess (Egham Residents' Association)

**Apologies:** Daniel Brading, Cllr Elaine Gill – Mayor of Runnymede, Cllr Andrea Berardi, Cllr Marisa Heath, Cllr Sam Jenkins

#### PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

To provide a forum where topics of interest and / or concern to the communities in the Egham and Englefield Green Village areas can be discussed and debated by representatives from and stakeholders in those local communities with a view to identifying possible solutions, agreeing actions and allocating responsibility for those actions. The goal is that through shared understanding and collective action, issues can be resolved and agendas of mutual concern progressed.

#### PROCEDURAL ITEMS

##### 1. Welcome & Apologies (TB)

TB welcomed everyone and noted that, due to the cancellation of the November 2024 meeting, this was the first meeting since June. She briefly introduced the updated meeting format and co-chairing arrangement with Cllr Trevor Gates, which aims to ensure the agenda reflects both University and local community interests.

Minna Ruohonen was welcomed in her new role as Head of Engagement and Place.

Members were informed that Amanda Willis's update on the Englefield Green Community Hub would be postponed to a future meeting. This adjustment, along with prioritising the Estates report, was agreed in advance by the co-chairs and Minna, and accepted by the group at the start of the meeting.

Apologies were noted as listed above.

## **2. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes (TB)**

TB confirmed that the minutes from the previous meeting ([June 2024](#)) were approved, with some small changes via email in November 2024.

## **3. Outstanding Actions from Previous Meeting (TB)**

TB reviewed the two remaining open action points:

- The planning of an annual campus drop-in session will be discussed within the group later, with the aim of holding the first session in summer 2026.
- Willy Burgess and Max Ross have now successfully met, completing this previously outstanding action.

All previous action points are now completed.

## **MAIN ITEMS**

### **4. Royal Holloway-led Topic: Research & Innovation (TG)**

Sue Starbuck, Director of Innovation and Research, presented Royal Holloway's involvement in the Runnymede Business Boost programme, aimed at supporting local SMEs. Key achievements include engaging over 800 SMEs, awarding £230,000 in grants to 28 businesses, and creating 53 jobs. Royal Holloway also continues hosting business events and supporting local enterprises through the annual Runnymede Business Awards.

### **5. Working Group Updates (TB)**

- Antisocial Behaviour: Cllr Trevor Gates (TG)
- Transport & Parking: Mike Berry (for Cllr Andrea Berardi)
- Student Accommodation: Cllr Isabel Mullens

All three working groups are now active and meeting regularly, both online and on campus. Each group is chaired by a local councillor and includes representatives from Royal Holloway, local councils, residents' associations, Surrey Police, and other stakeholders.

Progress to date has been positive, with constructive discussions and a focus on both short- and long-term solutions. Some quick-win ideas are already in development and will be shared at the next RHRCG meeting. It was noted, however, that while the groups provide valuable space for dialogue and collaboration, they are not expected to resolve all issues within their scope. Managing expectations will remain important.

A special thank you was extended to Amanda Willis and Willy Burgess, who, as chairs of local residents' associations, have supported all three working groups with their continued involvement.

## **6. Redevelopment - Englefield Green Community Hub (TG)**

This item was postponed and will be presented by Amanda Willis at future RHRCG meetings.

## **7. Reports (TG)**

The Estates Report and the RHSU Student Safety Survey were the two reports discussed in detail. Other reports, listed below, were also circulated to the group in advance of the meeting, but were not discussed during the session:

- Surrey Police
- RBC Environmental Health
- Royal Holloway Student Wellbeing
- RHSU Summer Ball Update

The Estates Report, provided by Mike Berry, included several topics. One proposal, relating to the Spring Rise Gate, was developed in response to student feedback captured through the RHSU Student Safety Survey. The George Eliot Accommodation planning application, also discussed during the meeting, was not connected to the student safety data.

### **Spring Rise Gate and Student Safety (Estates + RHSU Survey)**

The Estates report included a proposal to trial a one-hour extension to the Spring Rise Gate opening hours. This followed feedback from the RHSU Student Safety Survey, which highlighted concerns about personal safety when walking longer routes due to the gate's current closure hours.

The proposal prompted a detailed discussion among members. While the importance of student safety was acknowledged, several members questioned whether gate access was the most effective solution. Concerns were raised about the impact of extended hours on neighbouring residents, and members asked whether other safety improvements had been explored. It was noted that issues such as poor street lighting and pavement conditions were also key factors in perceptions of safety.

Some members recalled that previous gate access had caused disruption, and questioned the rationale for revisiting this arrangement. Others queried whether data existed to evidence the number of students travelling late at night, or specific safety incidents linked to the gate's closure.

While views varied, there was broad agreement that this topic would benefit from further discussion. It was proposed that the issue be brought back to the next RHRCG meeting for continued review.

### **George Eliot Accommodation Planning Application (Estates Report)**

The Estates report also included information about a planning application to vary the use of George Eliot Halls of Residence during the summer period. This matter is unrelated to the RHSU Student Safety Survey.

Discussion highlighted concern that the application had been submitted without prior engagement with the local community. Some residents expressed disappointment that this occurred at a time when communication between the University and local groups had been improving.

The main issue raised was the potential impact on parking. While residents do not object to the use of halls for groups such as summer schools, who typically arrive in organised groups and do not require parking, there was concern that broader commercial use could result in increased car traffic and parking pressure in the area.

While there was a brief discussion about whether this matter could be addressed through the Student Accommodation Working Group (WG), it was agreed that the topic would be revisited separately following the next WG meeting on 2 April.

## **OTHER MATTERS AND INFORMAL UPDATES**

### **8. AOB (TB)**

Amanda Willis raised a question on how residents should report noise disturbance. Ian Nash (Surrey Police) clarified that internal noise complaints (inside properties) fall under the remit of Environmental Health, not the police. In cases where the 101 phone line is unavailable, residents were advised to use the [Runnymede Police Facebook](#) page, which is monitored 24/7.

Trevor Gates highlighted recent antisocial behaviour on the Nightingale Shott. Helen Groenendaal (Royal Holloway) confirmed that students had attended a meeting at the University to discuss the matter and that the usual internal procedures were followed.

Paul Gahir expressed interest in exploring opportunities related to AI and potential future collaboration with Royal Holloway. It was noted that Sue Starbuck would be the appropriate contact, and a meeting will be arranged to follow up on this matter.

### **9. Date of Next Meeting (TG)**

Wednesday, 21 May 2025, 5:30-7pm (Online via Teams)

All members were encouraged to suggest agenda items for the next meeting.

*Appendix A – Action Points from the 24 March 2025 meeting.*

## Appendix A: RHRCG ACTION POINTS from March 2025 meeting

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>1</b>	Sue Starbuck to provide examples of Egham businesses that benefited from the Runnymede Business Boost programme (requested by Willy Burgess).	<b>Sue Starbuck</b>	Completed
<b>2</b>	Sue Starbuck to provide information on business benefits, such as improved revenue, and local economic growth resulting from Royal Holloway's business engagement activities (requested by Paul Gahir).	<b>Sue Starbuck</b>	Completed
<b>3</b>	Spring Rise Gate proposal to be brought back for further discussion at the May 2025 RHRCG meeting, following feedback gathered at this meeting.	<b>Mike Berry &amp; Minna Ruohonen</b>	On agenda for the RHRCG summer meeting 2025
<b>4</b>	A follow-up meeting on George Eliot Halls planning application to take place after the Student Accommodation Working Group in April, with key people present, including Mike Berry. Minna Ruohonen will arrange the room on campus for this meeting.	<b>Minna Ruohonen</b>	Completed
<b>5</b>	Update on the discussion about the George Eliot Halls planning application to be shared with the RHRCG group afterwards.	<b>Isabel Mullens / Mike Berry</b>	Completed
<b>6</b>	CLlr Paul Gahir to be introduced to Sue Starbuck, to explore potential collaboration on AI opportunities.	<b>Minna Ruohonen</b>	Completed