

Royal Holloway & Runnymede Consultative Group, 14 November 2023

Civic University, Community news, Volunteering, Community, and incident data

CIVIC UNIVERSITY

In 2022 Royal Holloway, University of London and Runnymede Borough Council (RBC) committed to work together under a bilateral Memorandum of Understanding as part of a developing Civic University relationship working in collaboration to achieve mutual benefits for the community.

Community engagement increased in 2022/2023 with the return of largescale events and community initiatives. The number of community partners, statutory, and voluntary organisations working with the University have increased and they have been keen to engage with staff and students on campus. Our University community cares about tackling global and community challenges that face our people and planet. To make a real difference, we focus our expertise around the areas of immersive and digital technologies, climate change, cyber security, and quantum sciences. The contribution of the University's research to the advancement of knowledge and understanding was reflected in the outcome of the REF 2021 which positioned our research within the top 25% of research overall. Research from University academics also continues to contribute to national global learning and development as an addition to this agenda. Recent examples include:

- 5G radio frequency interference: The recent expansion of 5G has led to an increased amount of radio frequency interference (RFI) with the potential to heavily impact the measurements and forecasting of weather systems and interference of aircraft radio altimeters. This has posed a major technical challenge for the implementation of 5G around the world and research at Royal Holloway is helping to find a solution.
- PlomBOX, the analysis of lead in water: Researchers at Royal Holloway are contributing to sustainable development goal six 'Clean Water and Sanitation', with a research project aiming at the development of a low-cost device, PlomBOX, to assay drinking water for lead. They are using their expertise in dark matter technology and detector development to design the device.
- The Sensational Museum: The UK heritage sector wants to offer all visitors memorable, inclusive, engaging, and enjoyable experiences. Their evolving practices includes accessible offers for people who cannot experience the museum in traditional ways but this reliance on 'access' provision to support non-traditional visitors perpetuates a dichotomy between 'abled' and 'disabled' people that marginalises non-normative ways of experiencing the museum. The Sensational Museum aims to address this systemic issue by rethinking the role and place of senses in the museum – with a new sensory logic.

LOCAL COMMUNITY NEWS

The Autumn edition of our Community newsletter is [available online](#) and we encourage local residents and businesses to [sign up](#) to receive this directly. To be added to the mailing list please contact the team via the online form so we can record your consent to receive the newsletter. Residents can also keep up with news and events of interest to the local community throughout the year via our [webpages here](#). Our latest updates include:

- [Message from the Vice-Chancellor](#)
- [Silver Rating in TEF](#)
- [Honorary Doctorates](#)
- [Black Cultural Archives partnership](#)

The University hosted the Festival of Volunteering on Wednesday 20 September, during the University's Welcome Week. The festival, which took place within Founder's Square, was launched by the Mayor of Runnymede, Cllr Shannon Saise-Marshall and sponsored by Challenges Abroad, a charity that supports community development and volunteering abroad opportunities in some of the poorest regions of the world. The all-day event encouraged both students and staff to get involved with volunteering opportunities available at Royal Holloway, and to be part of the University's ever growing voluntary presence in the local community. The festival had many voluntary activities available for students to sign up to including Community Action, Social Action, Community Research, Volunteering Abroad and Sports Volunteering. On the day, there were 16 student led projects to

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sample, such as the Community Garden, where a team of volunteers take care of a garden and are part of many events including planting, how to DIY your own greenhouse and how to make your own plant hangers. Other projects included ESOL Tutoring where students work with Syrian, Afghan and Ukrainian refugees to improve their English skills. There were also 42 community partner organisations including Voluntary Support North Surrey, UCE Charity Bookstall, Runnymede Foodbank, the Prison Advice and Care Trust and many more.

Within the Directorate of Student Life, the Active Lifestyle and Sport team have continued to support local community use of sports facilities and enable students to engage in volunteering in sport within the local community.

- We currently have 11 community groups using our sports facilities each week with around 970 members of the community attending those sessions (180 adults, 790 children).
- Ninety-two community members have a fitness membership with them which includes gym, group exercise classes and discounts on facility bookings.
- The Sports department have assisted seven student sports clubs find coaching opportunities in the local community within school or youth clubs providing ten hours of volunteer coaching each week.
- They host and manage a Community Sports Day each term on campus which engages twelve local schools and additionally provides up to thirty students with volunteering opportunities and experiences.
- The Step-Up foundation have worked with Sports to provide a trial holiday summer camp for children aged five to twelve for two weeks during the summer holidays and it is hoped this can be replicated at Easter and Summer 2024.

Students and alumni from the University continue to actively contribute to the local and national community with highlights including:

- A haunting story from a Royal Holloway alumna features on an episode of the hit BBC podcast *Uncanny* which has recently been developed into a TV series. The episode 'Harry Called' revolves around an alumna who experienced strange paranormal phenomena while studying at Royal Holloway in the 1990s.
- Psychology student Annabelle Ruinet won gold in the lightweight women's single sculls at the European Universities Rowing Championships in Bydgoszcz, Poland. Annabelle was the first to claim a medal for the British delegation when she won her race in style and came out on top and as a recipient of a Royal Holloway Sports Scholarship received support from the Royal Holloway Rowing Club.
- Royal Holloway graduate, Mark Berry, has returned to the University as our new Head of Sustainability. In his time since graduating Mark has built his career in the commercial sector and has extensive experience at the Environment Agency holding leadership roles across flood forecasting, emergency planning, and risk management.

VOLUNTEERING

Our Royal Holloway Volunteering team have continued to mark their twentieth anniversary year of volunteering at Royal Holloway. Over the last academic year, sixty-eight new community partners signed up via the online platform bringing the total number of partner organisations to 242. New connections have included national organisations such as Crimestoppers, Diabetes UK, Refugee Education UK, and The Children's Trust and local organisations including 1st Staines Scout Group, Basingstoke Canal Society, London Wildlife Trust, and the Action for Carers Surrey.

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Recent and upcoming projects include:

- Refugee Day.
- Food Recycling scheme.
- Literacy Support
- Community Research Living Library
- Donate & Reuse
- Thames 21 (conservation)
- Volunteer Tutors (Maths & English)
- Make A Difference Day

More information about Royal Holloway's volunteering programme can be found [online](#).

COMMUNITY

Over the summer the Community Wellbeing team refreshed their student facing online and digital content taking on board feedback received from local residents and partner agencies whilst seeking to ensure engaging content for students. The Be a Good Neighbour student intranet page has been updated with agreement on content from the Police and Council teams. We filmed new digital content with the Students' Union Sabbatical team which has been shared on social media with engagement at a good level. Digital campaigns have the biggest impact on students and peer led messaging is the most effective delivery of key information.

Subject	Released	Engagement
Be a Good neighbour	7 September	12.4 k views / 283 likes
Parking and Travel	29 September	9.6 k views / 168 likes
Getting home at night	13 October	20.8 k views / 357 likes
Refuse and recycling	24 October	5.3 k views / 95 likes

The Community Wellbeing team completed the annual mailout to over 1,100 student occupied houses or flats in Egham and Englefield Green with a revised welcome letter and the new addition of a senior leadership letter reiterating the expectations of the university. This has been supported by the usual round of welcome visits to a number of student households by the Community Wellbeing Advisers. These have been taking place since mid-September and were completed by the end of October. There has also been a new parking leaflet developed which we have used in response to concerns about off-campus parking which is believed may be linked to the university. The University remains keen to work with the local authorities who manage statutory enforcement of illegal or obstructive parking to resolve concerns if a student or staff member is found to have committed an offence. The University hosted a meeting with representatives from Runnymede Borough Council and Surrey Police on 24 August as preparation for the new academic year and with a re-agreement of partnership working expectations. This was attended by two Police, three Council and three university representatives and will be followed up with regular meetings to discuss issues that may arise and to agree responses where there is a need for multi-agency input. Since the start of term there has been one further partnership meeting, held on Thursday 26 October. Over the summer the University has met with the management teams of local Purpose-Built Student Accommodation Providers (Pad, Podium, Hox Park, The Garage, Straits Garden, Parish Halls) to continue to develop a positive working relationship to support students and to manage concerns which may arise related to the community. At the time of writing the autumn resident call-in session scheduled for Tuesday 7 November had not received requests from residents for a call or meeting.

The data below shows the total number of complaints received to the university between 1 August and 31 October 2023 – with a total of 36 reports between Egham and Englefield; 30.5% of which related to noise nuisance; 28% to refuse and recycling – with the majority of these relating to concerns about furniture or similar being left outside properties at the end of tenancy agreements.

REPORTED INCIDENTS & STUDENT CONDUCT

Issues raised. Reporting period: 01 August 2023 to 31 October 2023

Category	Egham	Englefield Green	23/24 TOTAL	
Noise nuisance	6	5	11	30.5 %
Refuse & recycling	1	9	10	28 %
Transient noise	5	0	5	14 %
Parking / vehicle use	0	3	3	8 %
Anti-social behaviour	1	2	3	8 %
Trolleys	0	0	0	0 %
Event Notification	0	0	0	0 %
SU Event	3	1	4	11 %
Other	0	0	0	0 %
TOTAL	16	20	36	99.5 %
For comparison: 2022/23 data (August 2022 – October 2022)				
August - October 2022	40	49	89	
Year on year change	- 24	- 29	- 53	
Percentage change	- 60%	- 60%	- 60%	

From our regular partnership meetings -we are aware that Environmental Health have record to date: 6 transient noise complaints; 7 noise nuisance investigation (student occupied) and 5 complaints related to the SU Freshers Ball. When collated with reports to Runnymede Borough Council there are a total of 37 reports – i.e., one report made to RBC was not made to the University; all others were reported to both.

Properties: Individual houses or locations (e.g., a road where there has been a parking issue or transient noise). The areas which have been reported more than twice most often relate to transient noise in the street.		
Properties / Road (transient)	Reported	Percentage
26	Once	90 %
2	Twice	7 %
1	Three times	3 %
29 in total		
Residents involved.		
Complainants	Contact made	Percentage
18	Once	72 %
5	Twice	20 %
1	Three times	4 %
1	Five times	4 %
25 in total		

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Follow up to each report is assessed on a case-by-case basis determined by the issue of concern, the impact of the issue, the routes available to resolve and proportionality of response. To date follow up* and resolution of reports has included:

- Content in all-student emails from the university and Students' Union along with social media messaging.
- No cases have yet been escalated to our student conduct process.
- Made five visits to houses.
- Made direct contact with houses by email, letter, or phone on 23 occasions.
- Held three meetings with students.

* Some issues will be followed up in more than one way (e.g., a visit & a letter).

*Helen Groenendaal, Director of Student Life
Student Journey Division
November 2023*