

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

23 April 04

Question 1.

From Carole Jones, Deputy Mayor for Runnymede and Cllr. for Englefield Green West:

This committee may recall that the community of Englefield Green raised a substantial amount of money to renovate the Youth Club in Corby Drive, the works and labour donated amounted to over £60,000, the works included the provision of an outdoor multi-use play area. This enormous contribution from the community came about because of the extremely poor state of the existing facility and in a hope to keep youngsters off the streets and causing problems (which they were) the community hoped that by providing a better facility, the young people would benefit, and in turn the residents of Englefield Green would benefit.

It is with great disappointment that after all of this work, that still the facility is only open for 6 hours per week. In fact it is closed far more often that it is open. We find also that the Egham Youth Club opens on the same two evening slots being a Monday and a Thursday. Staff shortages at Egham mean that Englefield Green is regularly now being closed so that staff can go to Egham, - a situation that the people of Englefield Green find quite unacceptable.

Why cannot Egham and E/Green operate on different nights of the week at the very least, this way staff would not be stretched, both centres could be open when they promise to be, and the youngsters within the area could have the option of going to Egham one night, E/Green the next and so on.

Finally, will Surrey County Council work towards opening the Youth Club more than 6 hours a week to meet the needs of the local community.

Response from John Davies – Surrey County Council, Youth Development Officer for Runnymede

Members of the County and Borough who attended the meeting held at the Runnymede Centre on the evening of the 1st March 2004, will be aware that the Youth Development Service is committed to expanding its provision at Englefield Green Youth Centre.

At that meeting the presentation included our commitment that it is our intention that all youth provisions in Runnymede Would be open to Young People on three evenings per week, commencing in this new financial year, and at other times where the need has been identified in consultation with young people.

Developments since the presentation are:

1. The Appointment of a permanent Youth Worker in Charge at Egham Youth Centre.
2. The introduction of support for young parents, through relocating the “Babylink” support group at Englefield Green Youth Centre on Thursdays.
3. Interviews for part time staff have been undertaken, with further interviews to undertaken in the next two weeks.

Since the appointment of the new Neighbourhood Youth Worker, Jessica Cox, new initiatives are currently being planned for work with young people in North Runnymede.

All new staff still require enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks, and therefore the impact of new staff will not be immediately felt.

With regard to the question relating to Egham and Englefield Green being “open” on the same evenings, this matter was reviewed 12 months ago in consultation with young people. It was felt that the evening arrangement should continue, particularly as both centres serve different communities and that at Egham, ages vary depending on the evening. In addition, Egham is also open on two other evenings one serving special needs young people and the other serving young people with interests in music

After consulting with my staff team, I can confirm it was on one occasion that staff from Englefield Green worked at Egham. This occurred when no young people were in attendance at Englefield Green, and rather than do nothing they supported the new youth work team at Egham.

The programme for last term at Englefield Green has involved activities away from the Centre, both at leisure venues or other youth provisions eg. Leacroft Centre, Staines