



**Surrey County Council's Local
Committee
Surrey Fire & Rescue Service's
Activity in Runnymede
September 22nd 2006**

KEY ISSUE:

This report outlines the major strands of activity being undertaken within Runnymede, by the Fire Service teams based at Chertsey and Egham Fire Stations.

SUMMARY:

The report contains information on new operational equipment at Chertsey, provided by the Service and Central Government. There is also information on the various activities undertaken by the Borough Team to reduce the risk from fire and road traffic to the residents of Runnymede, including direct contact public education programmes and campaigns.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:

Although this report is for information only, we recommend that the Committee recognises the achievements of the Borough Teams at Chertsey and Egham, and supports their commitment to embrace new technology and improved initiatives to reduce risk and make Runnymede safer.

1. Operational Equipment Update

Compressed Air Foam

- 1.1 In November 2006 Chertsey will receive a new Fire Engine, which incorporates a revolutionary new fire fighting system. This is a computer-controlled system, which produces a compressed air foam/water mix, which has a superior fire-fighting capability to plain water. There are benefits to the Service and the environment in terms of improved efficiency at knocking down fires, and a reduction in the potential pollution of surrounding waterways from the fire scene water run-off.

High Volume Pumping Equipment and Flooding in Runnymede

- 1.2 Under the Government-sponsored New Dimensions programme SF&RS has been supplied with a demountable pod containing equipment, which would allow us to pump large volumes of water over a significant distance. The vehicle and the pod-based equipment is a regional resource, which is available for response anywhere in the country. However, our vehicle is based at Chertsey and it is here that the training of Surrey personnel is taking place.
- 1.3 Training is being delivered locally, by Firefighters at Chertsey, who have attended instructor courses at the Fire Service College in Moreton in Marsh. It is anticipated that the unit will become fully operational by the end of October this year. We are thankful to Thorpe Park for their cooperation in allowing us access to the lakes for some realistic training.
- 1.4 The ability of this equipment to pump much larger quantities of water than a standard fire engine, over much greater distances, makes it a valuable resource in the event of local flooding. This is a significant issue to Runnymede, where the Thames and the Bourne have both contributed to major problems in recent years.

2. Automatic Fire Alarms – measures to reduce number of calls

- 2.1 Members will be aware of previous reports highlighting the unacceptably high number of unwanted calls to Fire Alarms experienced in Runnymede. There has been a small reduction of 3% over the past year. The highest contributors to the call-outs are Royal Holloway College and St Peter's Hospital. The Service has recently implemented a new policy to help reduce unwanted calls, which includes a series of letters to offending building occupiers requiring an improvement in the management of their alarm system.
- 2.2 Recent discussions with management at Royal Holloway have led to an agreement to make some material changes to one of the building systems as a pilot scheme and, if successful, to apply a similar scheme to other problematic sites on the campus.

- 2.3 St Peter's Hospital is a more complex problem, as responsibility for the range of buildings falls to more than one person/department.
- 2.4 The Runnymede team will continue to bring pressure to bear on all those responsible for buildings where the level of calls from fire alarms is unacceptable.

3. Work to reduce Road Traffic Casualties.

- 3.1 Members will be aware of the Safe Drive Stay Alive programme, which the Service is continuing to lead on.
Aimed at Surrey's sixth form pupils, in an effort to educate young drivers about their actions and possible consequences whilst they are driving, this is a hard-hitting, scenario-based live stage production, involving participants from the emergency services. Also, and perhaps most poignantly, stories are told by the parent of a young person who lost their life in a road traffic collision and from a person disabled by the actions of a young driver.
The production is sponsored by local companies and is totally free of charge to Surrey's schools.
- 3.2 In the school year to July 2006 pupils from Salesian and St George's College saw the production. The programme for November this year has just been published and it is hoped that Strode's College and Sir William Perkins school will join the other two in sending their sixth form pupils along to this excellent event.
The Runnymede team is currently exploring the possibility of extending the invitation to Jubilee High School, in order to avoid the possibility of its fifth form pupils slipping through the net.
- 3.3 In March this year the 15 month pilot multi-agency Duke of Edinburgh Gold course came to a successful end. 14 students from Runnymede, Woking and Surrey Heath received training from Surrey Fire, Police and Ambulance services, based around the implications and social effects of causing or being involved in a Road Traffic Collision (RTC), where drink and drugs played a part. At the end of the course the students were required to put together a presentation aimed at their peer group, to both demonstrate the knowledge they had acquired, and to educate them in the dangers of irresponsible driving. The students produced a mini stage play, which they presented twice: once to their peers at Woking College and, later, to an invited audience of parents, Service personnel and The High Sheriff of Surrey. The High Sheriff David Hypher was so impressed with their work that he presented each student with his own special Youth Award.
- 3.4 In October this year Egham Fire Station will host a multi-agency casualty reduction day, aimed at motorcycle riders. This is a Joint Action Group (JAG) initiative, focussing on the problem of young people riding motorcycles off-road or in an inappropriate manner.

4. Young People

- 4.1 In addition to the D of E Gold course and the Motorcycle safety day mentioned above, the following activities are aimed at educating the young people of Runnymede in fire safety.

Schools' education programme

- 4.2 This is an ongoing programme of fire safety education for schoolchildren, with classroom-based input in years 2, 5, and 8. From October this year Firefighters from Chertsey and Egham will be joining the Schools' Education Officer, on an ad hoc basis, to promote an increase in the use of smoke alarms in children's bedrooms. In year 6, additional input comes in the form of the Junior Citizens scheme, which is a two week, multi-agency event, held at Chertsey Fire Station in November each year.

Duke of Edinburgh Award and Scouts

- 4.3 In January 2007 we will be starting two redesigned courses: A new Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award course, which will be run at Egham Fire Station, and a new Scouts Fire Badge course at Chertsey.

Youth Engagement Scheme (YES)

- 4.4 This a week of practical fire service activities aimed at young people who, for a variety of reasons, have come to the attention of the Youth Offending Team (YOT). The first of these courses was run at Walton Fire Station in May this year, when 14 young men were referred by the YOT, to take part in a pilot programme. The scheme was judged, by all concerned, to be a great success, and is now an example of best practice, which could be appropriate for other boroughs to use.

Firewise scheme

- 4.5 This scheme is aimed at young people who have displayed an unhealthy interest in fire, which has led or could lead to deliberate fire-setting. It has been running for many years with great success. One of the elements of the first IRMP, two years ago, was to increase by one, the number of trained Firewise counsellors. This was achieved and, since then, another three counsellors have been added to the Runnymede-based team. In the year to end of August 2006 Runnymede had nine referrals, of which four are still active cases.

5. Domestic Fires

Residential Property Fires and Casualties

- 5.1 In the reporting year April 2005 to March 2006 we attended 255 calls to fires; this represents a reduction of 20% on the previous year's total of 316.

Runnymede has maintained its good record of recording no deaths from fires in dwellings.

Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSC) and Smoke Alarm fitting.

- 5.2 In June 2004 the Service entered into a partnership scheme with Age Concern, Social Service, The Primary Care Trust, Runnymede Association of Voluntary Services, and Health Visitors. Personnel from these groups were trained in the basics of Home Fire Safety so that they could notify us of any vulnerable people that they encountered in the course of their daily work activities. Fire Service personnel follow up these contacts to carry out a more comprehensive HFSC and fit a free smoke alarm, where appropriate. Since the start of the scheme Runnymede Firefighters have fitted around 700 smoke alarms to date. Performing free Home Fire Safety Checks for Runnymede residents is one of the major community safety activities carried out by our Firefighters and we are constantly seeking new ways to make contact with our public.

Report by:	Alan Oakes, Borough Manager
LEAD/CONTACT OFFICER:	Alan Oakes
TELEPHONE NUMBER:	07968 834493
BACKGROUND PAPERS:	None