



Communities Select Committee  
25 September 2014

**Magna Carta update**

**Introduction**

The 15<sup>th</sup> June 2015 will mark the 800th anniversary of the sealing of the Magna Carta by King John in Runnymede.

Surrey County Council are working closely with a wide range of partners to ensure appropriate commemoration activities and events are programmed for residents and visitors alike.

The Council aims to raise profile of the area attract inward economic investment into the County through the installation of a British Magna Carta art commission, playing host to the official event on the 15 June 2015, delivering an extensive event & education programme, and ensuring a legacy of improvements to the visitor offer, site access and interpretation, and the creation of a culturally branded tourist destination - Magna Carta Country.

Cabinet approved a budget of £1M to support the events programme (£300K) and the commissioning of an artwork to commemorate the 800th anniversary (£700K).

**1.0 Magna Carta Art Commission**

Surrey County Council and National Trust, as the landowners, along with the local authority and representatives of artistic organisations, have selected an artist of notable repute to further develop a favoured proposal.

An intensive community engagement programme will progress over the next few months, and the artist's timescale of delivery is the 15 June 2015.

The Cabinet approved a total budget of £700K for the commission. The selection panel was chaired by the Leader of SCC and contract negotiations are being finalised with the artist before announcements can be made.

**2.0 Official Event – 15<sup>th</sup> June 2015**

The 15<sup>th</sup> June 2015 event will be an exciting celebration of the foundation of Liberty through the Magna Carta. It will be a contemporary event full of music, drama and action that remembers the past but acknowledges the future. A senior member of the Royal Family, with

Dignitaries (local, national - and international), community representatives and schools will be present to witness the commemoration event in planning.

The event on the 15<sup>th</sup> June 2015 has four main outcomes.

These are:

1. To demonstrate the relevance of the Magna Carta, locally, nationally and internationally.
2. To reaffirm the principles of rule of law, fair justice, equality and safety from the abuse of governmental or judicial power.
3. To promote the vital importance of individual rights and acknowledge the role of Parliament in promoting these rights.
4. To acknowledge the Magna Carta's impact on constitutional and democratic development since 1215.

A Project Manager working jointly for Surrey County Council and the National Trust is coordinating the ceremonial event. A senior project board is in place (Chaired by the Director General of the National Trust - and with David McNulty as the Surrey County Council representative) to provide strategic direction and oversight of the arrangements, to ensure it is the most fitting of occasions.

The main official ceremonial event will take place on Runnymede Meadows on the morning of Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2015... and there will be programme of events and activities on site for the rest of the day. 'Liber-teas' - the afternoon event (tea party picnic style occasion), will involve community participation with various activities to promote debate on Magna Carta, liberty, freedom and law, animated through music, arts, drama and the spoken word.

Surrey County Council has committed a £100K contribution - which is being matched by the National Trust - and there are other contributors to the operational budget. Gap fundraising is still being undertaken.

### **3.0 Event Programme**

**3.1** Surrey County Council have contributed to a range of commemorative activities and initiatives across the county including:-

- An Eight Centuries of Magna Carta Giants Picnic Event: 15.06.2014 – the event to mark the 799<sup>th</sup> anniversary was a great success. The event involved a community parade with school children, performance, dance and song – with a community picnic to end.
- An exhibition created by Surrey using the Lincoln Magna Carta facsimile will tour across Surrey Libraries and the Surrey History Centre (Woking) from early January – March / and continue as a Magna Carta 800 exhibition tour (but without the loan - as this could only be negotiated for two months) to other libraries and venues around Surrey Libraries during 2015.
- Surrey Arts Magna Carta Royal Albert Hall concert: The event is an exciting new community concert that has been commissioned to celebrate the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sealing of the Magna Carta in Runnymede, Surrey. Composed by Hannah Conway, directed by Karen Gillingham with lyrics by Sir Richard Stilgoe - the world premiere performance will be on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2015. The opera explores Magna Carta values such as democracy, liberty, citizenship and identity and their relevance to 21<sup>st</sup> Century Society and will be performed by over 1000 Surrey residents of all ages. Excerpts will also be performed at official Magna Carta celebrations in Runnymede in June 2015. (Note - Arts Council England have awarded Surrey Arts a

grant of £45,000 towards the development of Magna Carta 'The Freedom Game' project).

- Great Charter Festival: a major arts, science and debate family and community festival at RHUL on Sunday 14.06.14, which it is hoped will become a regular Magna Carta anniversary festival.
- High Street Community Banner project - co-ordinated by Egham Museum, this project will display Magna Carta inspired banners created by the community, for display in Egham and Staines High Streets, and Englefield Green, as a public art project.
- American Bar Association International Magna Carta exhibition which will be in the UK for six weeks will be at the Surrey History Centre from 15th - 27th June 2015 (and possibly at the Runnymede Borough Civic Offices for two weeks).
- Great Charter Magna Carta tapestry project.. a local craft skill inspired project - involving Magna Carta quilted images for exhibition, and for use as an educational resource.

Other projects being planned with offers of financial contribution from Surrey County Council include:-

- Tour of Salisbury Cathedral Magna Carta facsimile and exhibition of other contemporary art installation projects on Magna Carta events at Guildford Cathedral - June - August 2015:
- Houses of Parliament touring Magna Carta community theatre arts project to unite / connect the Magna Carta towns.
- Event/s in Egham High Street Summer holidays (July / Aug) 2015.
- Surrey History Centre 10th Magna Carta Study Day, with various speakers including Prof. Nigel Saul / May 2015
- Surrey History Centre Magna Carta lecture by Nick Barratt - "1215 and all that" - June 20th 2015
- Author and historical talks in libraries & public buildings across Surrey and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.
- Other projects include the Houses of Parliament constituency Magna Carta flags project and Liber-teas event, which will be part of the programme of events on the Runnymede Meadows on afternoon of 15<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

In addition, Surrey County Council has contributed to:-

- Smart phone App "Runnymede Explored" is being developed by Royal Holloway on behalf of the partnership, to help locals and visitors explore, and learn more about, the local area. Due for April 2015 launch - it will be widely promoted by all local stakeholders, alongside the Magna Carta trail promotion.

and will fund

- the audience development manager required as part of the development of the HLF bid.

Libraries across Surrey and Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (and Surrey History Centre) will be venues for a Magna Carta women's collage exhibition. This will highlight key historical women who, over 800 years, have broken down barriers with regard to women's rights and gender issues, including the right to vote.

**3.2** Cabinet agreed a budget of £300k to support the local Magna Carta events programme.

£100k has been committed to support the major 800th anniversary event on Runnymede Meadows on 15th June 2015.... £113k has been committed to events that are confirmed - and £65k has been offered to events that are still in planning stage with stakeholders. A balance of £22k remains unallocated.

- 3.3** The stakeholders in the Magna Carta Partnership have a major programme of complimentary events in planning - including: lectures, guided tours, exhibitions, school games, student debates, river pageant, flower festival, theatre shows, music concerts, food and wine festivals, beacon lighting, bell ringing and community processions.

These events, along with events of other independent event organisers are centrally recorded and cross promoted as a comprehensive programme for residents and visitors of Surrey and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. Currently there are 56 events/activities scheduled and 13 events are in planning.

*\*NB: Please note that events, including exhibition and lecture programmes, are subject to change.*

Information on these events will be promoted at <http://www.visitsurrey.com/magna-carta>

#### **4.0 Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Legacy Bid**

A legacy bid by the 6 partners (National Trust, Surrey County Council, Runnymede Borough Council, Royal Holloway University of London, Brunel University, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead) in the Magna Carta Surrey Partnership for £4.5 million has been submitted to the HLF. The objective is to achieve a legacy of heritage and countryside /landscape conservation; improved access to and around the area; education, interpretation, recreation and visitor facilities; better local community and tourist use of the area etc.

The HLF have, on this occasion, decided to decline the bid application, however we are reassured by the fact that the partnership has been asked to resubmit an application in December 2014 and it is working closely with the HLF to ensure this complex partnership application has a successful outcome.

The legacy bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund formed just one strand of our plans for Runnymede - the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary event programme, the official event on the 15<sup>th</sup> June 2015 and the art commission remain unaffected by this decision.

The Magna Carta Surrey Partnership is still committed to improve aspects of the visitor offer at Runnymede and to ensure that its importance and relevance to Magna Carta is fully understood, especially in the context of the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its sealing at this special place. It is appreciated that there is limited funding available and that on this occasion other bids took priority.

**ENDS**

**Lead Officer:** Peter Milton