

JOINT REPORT

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL
RUNNYMEDE BOROUGH COUNCIL**



LOCAL COMMITTEE (RUNNYMEDE)

DATE: 2 MARCH 2015

**LEAD OFFICERS: PAUL TURRELL
PETER MILTON**

SUBJECT: MAGNA CARTA 800TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIONS

DIVISION: RUNNYMEDE

SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

The sealing of Magna Carta in Runnymede is a major part of Surrey's heritage and cultural identity, and the 800th anniversary (15 June 2015) will be an occasion of national and international prominence and significance.

The Runnymede Meadow site witnessed the sealing of Magna Carta which established the Rule of Law and Human Rights and effectively challenged for the first time the divine right of Kings.

The County Council is providing strategic co-ordination, working with local, national and international partners to ensure that the 800th anniversary is celebrated and a lasting legacy is created by raising the profile of the area, attracting inward investment - for the benefit of residents, businesses and visitors.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Local Committee (Runnymede) is asked to note:

- (i) The programme of Magna Carta commemorations and activities in planning for the 800th anniversary.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 The 15th June 2015 will mark the 800th anniversary of the sealing of Magna Carta by King John in Runnymede. In December 2012, in response to the local bid for HLF funding for a proposed visitor centre, SCC requested that officers develop a Masterplan for the site together with proposals for the 800th celebrations. In July 2013, Surrey County Council's Cabinet approved funding of £1 million towards a partnership project that will celebrate the 800th anniversary of the sealing of Magna Carta in Runnymede; deliver an extensive event and education programme and ensure a legacy of improvements to offer the visitor, and the creation of a culturally branded tourist destination – Magna Carta Country.
- 1.2 The Magna Carta Surrey & Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead Partnership has been working closely to develop and implement these ambitious plans. At a national level, all partners are represented on the Magna Carta 800th Committee. This ensures coordination with national plans for celebrating the 800th anniversary.
- 1.3 Surrey County Council and Runnymede Borough Council are supporting this scheme because of the tremendous importance of Magna Carta in terms of heritage education, economic development, tourism and civic pride in our county. Through the events in 2015 and the legacy of an enhanced visitor offer, the profile of the area will be improved both nationally and internationally which will benefit the economy of the area.
- 1.4 Plans include:
 - 1.4.1 A Magna Carta art commission to celebrate the 800th anniversary.
 - 1.4.2 Celebration events – creating an event programme that will raise the profile of the area, bring the community together to participate in a variety of cultural, healthy and educational pursuits, and provide an international celebration worthy of the occasion.
 - 1.4.3 A lasting legacy – one of the key ambitions of local stakeholders for the 2015 anniversary is to provide improved visitor facilities and interpretation arrangements at the historically important site in Runnymede with minimal impact on the natural environment.

2. MAGNA CARTA ART COMMISSION

- 2.1 Surrey County Council (SCC) and the National Trust, as the landowners, formed a selection panel, chaired by the Leader of Surrey County Council. Hew Locke was selected from a competitive tendering exercise to undertake the art commission to mark the 800th anniversary of the sealing of Magna Carta. The artwork is funded by SCC and will be sited on National Trust land at Runnymede Meadows via a loan agreement.
- 2.2 Hew Locke was born in Edinburgh in 1959 and from 1966-1980, he resided in Georgetown, Guyana; he currently lives in London. Hew obtained a BA Honours Degree in Fine Art (1988) studying in Falmouth and an MA in Sculpture (1994) from the Royal College of Art. He is an award-winning artist

and has undertaken a number of important public art commissions in this country.

- 2.3 He has been inspired by the impact of the Magna Carta's fundamental principles of justice, the basis of common law which has influenced the development of the United States constitution, the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and over a third of the world's legal systems.
- 2.4 Applications for planning permission and relevant common land approval have been submitted, and the artwork will be unveiled and will be a highlight of the official commemoration event on Monday 15 June 2015.

3. OFFICIAL EVENT

- 3.1 The 15 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.
- 3.2 The event on the 15 June 2015 has four main outcomes:-
 - 3.2.1 To demonstrate the relevance of the Magna Carta, locally, nationally and internationally.
 - 3.2.2 To reaffirm the principles of rule of law, fair justice, equality and safety from the abuse of governmental or judicial power.
 - 3.2.3 To promote the vital importance of individual rights and acknowledge the role of Parliament in promoting these rights.
 - 3.2.4 To acknowledge the Magna Carta's impact on constitutional and democratic development since 1215.
- 3.3 The event itself will be both commemorative and celebratory in nature. Currently, the running order has yet to be finalised, but it is set to include a processional display of constitutional, civic and ceremonial flags; a welcome from the Master of the Rolls; spiritual music from the Choir of the Church of the Temple; Four Voices – whereby four known personalities speak about the enduring relevance of Magna Carta; the rededication of the American Bar Association Memorial; and the unveiling of the Magna Carta Art Commission piece created by Hew Locke.
- 3.4 The main official / ceremonial event will take place on Runnymede Meadows on the morning of Monday 15 June 2015 and there will be a programme of events and activities on site for the rest of the day. In the afternoon there will be a "LiberTeas" event, a national concept developed by the Houses of Parliament in association with the National Trust based on a tea party picnic style occasion that 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.

4. EVENTS PROGRAMME

4.1 Runnymede Borough Council and partners have a programme of events in planning, including:

- the Magna Carta 800th River Relay event, featuring the Gloriana Royal Row Barge - Hurley to the Runnymede Pleasure Ground (13 and 14 June 2015)
- Magna Carta 800th - The Pageant on the Runnymede Pleasure Ground (14 June 2015) www.runnymede.gov.uk/magnacarta
- a three month pop-up visitor centre at the United Church of Egham
- a music festival at RHUL (<https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/aboutus/newsandevents/events/magnacarta/magnacarta.aspx> and in the towns of Egham, Chertsey and Addlestone (first two weeks of June 2015),
- Magna Carta Day and a Food and Wine Festival (13 June 2015) in Egham
- a Magna Carta Sports Festival (June 2015)
- Street Theatre involving 18 performances around Borough (13 -14 June),
- six Community Talks in various community venues (April – June 2015), www.eghammuseum.org/magnacarta
- a special souvenir edition Borough Guide which will be delivered to every household in the Borough,
- a Spread the Word School Competition,
- university students and community volunteers 'sprucing up' Egham town centre during National Volunteers Week (February 2015),
- a Flower Festival at RHUL (11 –16 June 2015),
- a series of Embroidery Panels are under way, for display at various locations.

4.2 For the National Volunteers Week project, Royal Holloway, Strode's College, and Brunel University volunteers, and other individuals from the local community will spruce up Egham High Street and prepare it for the Magna Carta commemorations, by designing decorative bunting through a series of community workshops run with elderly residents, painting of street furniture, planting of flowers, and installing a new Magna Carta community mosaic in the new walkway which connects Egham High Street to the new supermarket/hotel development (from 23 March 2015). A set of heraldic flags will also to be displayed at local venues, and incorporated into High Street and other Magna Carta events (produced for May 2015).

4.3 A smart phone application "Runnymede Explored" has been developed by students from Royal Holloway University of London, on behalf of the Surrey & RBWM partnership (due to launch April 2015). This 'app' will help locals and visitors explore and learn more about the local area as they walk around.

www.surreycc.gov.uk/runnymede

- 4.4 RBWM have a number of other events in planning, including a Magna Carta themed primary Dance Festival (mid-February 2015), a school competition and exhibition at St Georges (19 March 2015), a Museum Exhibition at the Guildhall, a Literary Reception at the Guildhall Windsor (23 April 2015), a Windsor & Maidenhead Community Forum Event, a medieval fair (13 -14 June 2015), a LiberTeas event will be held in Windsor (14 June 2015 at 4.00 p.m). www.rbwm.gov.uk/web/museum_magna_carta.htm Additionally there will be some recognition at the Royal Windsor Horse Show in May 2015.
- 4.5 Last year Surrey County Council initiated a 'one year to go' event on Runnymede Meadows involving eight centuries of Magna Carta-themed Giant Puppets and a community picnic, to generate interest and excitement for the coming year - and has contributed to a range of commemorative activities and initiatives across the county. The events will range from high profile events attracting international attention, to community events involving celebrations with local residents.
- 4.6 SCC have created a Magna Carta exhibition involving a loan of the facsimile of the Lincoln Magna Carta to tour across Surrey Libraries and other venues. Surrey History Centre in Woking will host a Magna Carta Study Day (www.surreycc.gov.uk/recreation-heritage-and-culture/archives-and-history/heritage-events) with various speakers including Professor Nigel Saul (May 2015), and a lecture on 20 June 2015 by Nick Barratt (BBC Producer of the 'Who do you think you are' - "1215 and all that"). In partnership with Guildford Cathedral there will be an exhibition and events programme (lectures, concerts, talks, public and educational workshops) associated with the loan of a facsimile of the Magna Carta document and a replica seal from Salisbury Cathedral (8 June - 8 August 2015).
- 4.7 The Great Charter Festival - a major arts, science and debating family and community festival at Royal Holloway University of London - will take place on Sunday 14 June 2014; a Community Banner project coordinated by Egham Museum will be displayed in Egham and possibly other High Streets, and Englefield Green; the American Bar Association International Magna Carta exhibition will be on display at Woking Library from 15 - 27 June 2015 and at Runnymede Borough Civic Offices. A Magna Carta touring community theatre project promoted by the Houses of Parliament will perform across Magna Carta towns including Egham. An exhibition of work by tutors and students at Sunbury Community Learning Centre on the theme of Magna Carta will be on display at the centre and will tour other Surrey venues.
- 4.8 SCC hopes to support a number of additional projects including; the Great Charter Magna Carta tapestry project - a local craft-skill inspired project involving Magna Carta quilted images for exhibition, and projects with the Surrey Minority Ethnic Forum on the importance of Magna Carta. There are plans for a high profile project in Egham High Street for the summer 2015.
- 4.9 Other events including lectures, guided tours, exhibitions, student debates, theatre shows, music concerts, beacon lighting and bell ringing will take place across the county. In addition, plans for the following local events are under way:

ITEM 9

4.10 Confirmed Local Events

11.02.15 - Talk by David Davis MP at Strode's College

05.03.15 - Talk by Brian Barker at Strode's College

15.04.15 - Talk by Julian Harrison BL at Strode's College

24.04.15 - Constitutional Convention Project led by Egham Museum

29.04.15 - Talk by Will Self at Strode's College

15.05.15 - Talk by Nicholas Vincent at Egham

16.05.15 - Magna Carta Celebrations in Thorpe

27.05.15 - Talk by David Carpenter at Jubilee High School

01.06.15 - The Ghurkha Walk

04.06.15 - Talk by Prof. Nigel Saul in Chertsey

07.06.15 – Odiham, Hampshire - 40 mile journey and picnic

10.06.15 - Talk by Anthony Barnett at a location to be confirmed

12.06.15 - Special Service in Royal Holloway Chapel

13.06.15 - Freedom Association - Runnymede walk and speeches

13.06.15 - Concert at St Johns Church by Egham Choral Society
www.eghamchoral.org/index.php?page=coming-up

13.06.15 - Magna Carta Day organised by Egham Chamber of Commerce

14.06.15 - Beacon lighting on St Ann's Hill Chertsey

14.06.15 - Talk by Tim Hancock at St Johns Church, Egham

15.06.15 - Bell ringing across the borough and UK (details in the Ringing World)

These events, along with events of independent organisers, are centrally recorded and cross promoted as a comprehensive programme. Information on these events will be promoted at: <http://www.visitsurrey.com/magna-carta>

5. WORLD PREMIERE- MAGNA CARTA: THE FREEDOM GAME

5.1 Surrey County Council is promoting a Magna Carta 800th anniversary concert at the Royal Albert Hall. Entitled 'The Freedom Game', this will be an exciting new community concert composed by Hannah Conway and directed by Karen Gillingham, with lyrics written by Sir Richard Stilgoe. The world premiere performance will be on Tuesday 12 May 2015.

5.2 This specially commissioned work explores the Magna Carta values of democracy, liberty, citizenship and freedom. In the plot, a Surrey family come under the influence of an evil dictator who attempts to control them and take

away their liberties. The children challenge the dictator to play 'The Freedom Game.' Like a computer game, there are a series of 'levels' in which they attempt to win back their freedoms. The piece focuses on the freedoms that we often take for granted, exploring significant events in history that have shaped these. It describes a heroic battle against oppression, often with what seem insurmountable odds.

- 5.3 Selected through a series of travelling workshops and auditions taking place throughout the county, Surrey Arts are recruiting over 1,300 singers and dancers from the age of five to adult. The opera will see a diverse mix of people coming together and celebrating the topic of freedom, including one of the country's first 'inclusive' orchestras for young people with a Special Educational Need (SEN). It is hoped that performing at the Royal Albert Hall will give everyone involved a once in a lifetime opportunity that they will not forget. The workshops leading up to the performance will allow the participants not only to develop their vocal skills, but also to grow in confidence and make new friends as well as getting a better understanding of the significance of Magna Carta. See www.surreymusichub.com/magnacarta
- 5.1 Local auditions were held on Thursday 11 December 2015 at the Magna Carta Arts Centre in The Magna Carta School TW18 3HJ.

6. HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND BID

- 6.1 In December a legacy bid by the partners (National Trust, Surrey County Council, Runnymede Borough Council, Royal Holloway University of London, Brunel University) of the Magna Carta Surrey Partnership was submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for approximately £3.3 million. The strategic ambition is to improve access to and around the site; improve visitor facilities and site interpretation and learning facilities/resources; undertake improvement works to the landscape and local network of paths and trails; develop Runnymede and Ankerwycke as a cohesive site; and create a culturally branded destination to celebrate the heritage of the area by marketing it to visitors as Magna Carta Country.
- 6.2 Earlier in the year, the HLF had declined the previous bid application. The Magna Carta Surrey Partnership is still committed to improve aspects on offer to the visitor at Runnymede and to ensure that its importance and relevance to Magna Carta is fully understood, especially in the context of the 800th anniversary of its sealing. It was appreciated that there is limited funding available to the HLF at any one time and that in July other bids took priority. However, we are reassured by the fact that the partnership were asked to resubmit a first round application in December 2014 and we have been working hard to ensure this complex partnership application has a successful outcome. A decision by the HLF is expected 25 March 2015 – but will be subject to a two week embargo.
- 6.3 The aim is to engage our visitors with this special place, and that they know why Runnymede matters. It is an incredibly rich local resource for recreation and leisure, learning, volunteering, and for engaging others in its history and future, and for why it matters as a place that can speak to a global audience about liberty, the rule of law, of human rights and individual freedom.

ITEM 9

- 6.4 This project will ensure that Runnymede and Ankerwycke are able to continue to be a source of pleasure, reflection and inspiration in the modern world. In practice, this means making a number of improvements to the conservation, management and interpretation of the landscape and its many features, including its buildings, wildlife, numerous habitats, archaeology, monuments, memorials and the River Thames. The project will utilise existing infrastructure in order to deliver its ambitions which include a wide ranging programme of outreach, educational, participation and volunteering opportunities for the local community and visitors.
- 6.5 The bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund is part of the Legacy Plan for Runnymede. The 800th anniversary event programme, the official event on 15 June 2015 and the art commission remain unaffected by this decision.

7. A308 HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS

- 7.1 SCC Highways are concluding a number of road and pedestrian safety improvements on the A308, as this issue was subject to many comments from the local community. This cost at circa £300,000, will be met from the SCC Highways budget. These will be completed early 2015.
- 7.2 Three new refuges (islands) and revised road markings have been installed in the section of Windsor Road between the Tea Rooms and the Runnymede Pleasure Ground; their installation was coordinated with the resurfacing work undertaken in summer 2014. Two of the refuges near the entrance to the National Trust car parks were designed to help pedestrians cross Windsor Road. The other refuge was included together with the revised road markings, as part of a series of wider measures to help encourage a reduction of vehicle speeds.
- 7.3 The road is subject to a new 40mph speed limit that has been introduced along the section of Windsor Road, which previously had a 60mph speed limit, and a new signalised pedestrian crossing has been constructed at one of the busiest pedestrian crossing points, by the National Trust Lodges.
- 7.4 Signage options have been developed for the gateway features which will support the new 40mph speed limit, by encouraging lower vehicle speeds, as well as giving identity to the area.
- 7.5 As part of the Major Schemes bids made to the EM3 Local Enterprise Partnership on 30 September 2014, a funding award has been confirmed for major improvements to the Runnymede roundabout. Some preparatory work will commence during April and May 2015, but work will be suspended during the summer for the anniversary commemorations and will recommence in September 2015.

8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

- 8.1 None.

9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

9.1 This report is for information only.

10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

10.1 Work will continue to confirm and deliver the event and legacy programmes of commemorations, as outlined in the report.

Consulted:

There have been various consultation and engagement events and public meetings since March 2013.

Annexes:

None.

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