



Communities Select Committee  
Monday 18 May 2015

**Magna Carta Programme - Update**

**Purpose of the report:**

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Magna Carta Programme, the art commission and the work being undertaken to deliver the official event to commemorate the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sealing of Magna Carta.

In response to matters raised at Communities Select Committee of 19 March 2015, this paper principally reports on the planning arrangements / budget to deliver the 15<sup>th</sup> June 2015 event. Due to the high profile nature of the event – and security provisions – this will be a verbal report to the meeting, and part of the discussion will, of necessity, have to be in part 2.

## Introduction:

1. The 15<sup>th</sup> June 2015 will mark the 800th anniversary of the sealing of the Magna Carta by King John in Runnymede.
2. Surrey County Council is providing strategic leadership to the project and is working closely with a wide range of partners to ensure appropriate commemoration activities and events are programmed for residents and visitors alike.
3. Surrey County Council is 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.
4. Plans include :-
  - 4.1 A Magna Carta art commission to celebrate the 800th anniversary.
  - 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.
  - 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.

## Budget

5. Cabinet approved a budget of £1,000,000 to support the Magna Carta anniversary.
  - 5.1 £300,000 allocated for events currently:-
    - £180,000 has been committed to the general programme of events
    - £100,000 was reserved as a contribution towards the Official Event
  - 5.2 £700,000 allocated to the cost of the art commission to commemorate the 800th anniversary
    - The cost of the selected artwork by Hew Locke £405,000
  - 5.3 As the art commission is now costing less than originally allocated, £300,000 of the budget allocated for this has been added to the budget for the official event.
  - 5.4 A copy of the budget of the overall total SCC expenditure on Magna Carta 2015 activities can be located in Annex A.

- 6.1 The event is titled:- **Magna Carta foundation of Liberty Runnymede 800 Commemoration Event** and its ambition is to celebrate the contribution of Magna Carta in the foundation of liberty, democracy, human rights and the rule of law throughout the world.
- 6.2 Event Objectives
- To demonstrate the relevance of Magna Carta, locally, nationally and internationally.
  - To reaffirm the principles of rule of law, fair justice, equality and safety from the abuse of governmental or judicial power.
  - To promote the vital importance of individual rights and acknowledge the role of Parliament in promoting these rights.
  - To acknowledge the Magna Carta's impact on constitutional and democratic development since 1215.
- 6.3 Buckingham Palace have announced that Her Majesty The Queen will attend the 800<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on Runnymede Meadows on 15<sup>th</sup> June. Her Majesty will be accompanied by HRH Duke of Edinburgh and The Duke of Cambridge, and the Princess Royal will also be present.
- 6.4 The formal / official ceremony will comprise of:-
- Dedication of the Magna Carta Art Commission
  - Short programme of orchestral and choral work
  - Civic introductions to HRH and others
  - Speeches by key national leaders
  - Unveiling of a plaque
- 6.5 Other elements to the programme will include:-
- 150 young people from Surrey Arts are to lead the procession of the Parliamentary Flags project, deliver an extract performance of the Freedom Games concert from the Royal Albert Hall
  - A performance of the 799 Magna Carta Giant Puppets
  - Freestyle music programme and screen broadcast.
  - Music programme
  - ABA memorial rededication
  - There will be a reprise of Freestyle music programme and screen broadcasts after the closure of the official event
- 6.6 Over 4,000 guests will be attending including representatives from the local community and national / international connections, and many VIPs, giving us the chance to showcase our county to the world.
- 6.7 The Common Land application has been approved.

## Magna Carta Art Commission

7. The latest Project Management situation report is that the Hew Locke commission to commemorate the 800th anniversary is on time and to budget.
  - 7.1 All the panels and other chair components have now been cast and are in the process of being cleaned and the chairs assembled. To complete the process, they are burnished to highlight details and features on the panels and some final hand-tool finishing is undertaken to add a final layer of detail.
  - 7.2 The dedication of this new commission will be one of the main features of the official Magna Carta 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary event on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2015.
  - 7.3 Planning consent and Common Land consent have been granted by Runnymede Borough Council.
  - 7.4 Site installation will take place during the set-up period for the official event.
  - 7.5 Ownership will be retained by SCC but it will be sited on National Trust land via a Loan Agreement. The National Trust will be required to have insurance cover in place and security measures will be to the satisfaction of their insurer.

## Event Programme

8. New developments to the previously reported events programme supported from the SCC budget include:
  - The Library Service have successfully booked David Starkey to give a lecture - 22 April. To accommodate a large audience the venue was the Guildford Cathedral. The event was highly successful – in effect a ‘sell out’ and ticket sales exceeded 600.
  - There will be a Runnymede / Surrey Magna Carta 800 anniversary themed garden at RHS Chelsea Flower Show. Financially supported by SCC and the Runnymede Hotel, Egham the garden will be subsequently relocated to the hotel grounds and will be accessible to the public. There have been negotiations with a commercial sponsor (Kier) to offset some of the costs of the SCC contribution.
  - The Houses of Parliament community theatre project touring Magna Carta towns is still subject to final confirmation of partnership funds.
  - SCC is making a contribution to Englefield Green Village Fair on 20<sup>th</sup> June, towards the costs of a medieval combat society doing a historical re-enactment event to reflect their own 2015 Magna Carta theme.

- 8.1 The Runnymede Explored App developed by Royal Holloway for Magna Carta Country on behalf of the local partnership was launched on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2015.
- 8.2 SCC, in partnership with Royal Holloway London University – is making significant progress on the arrangements for the Great Charter Festival; a major free event commemorating Magna Carta on the 14th June.
- 8.3 The cost of these additional activities is included within the £180,000 expenditure on events previously reported to Select Committee.
- 8.4 Information on these events will be promoted at [www.visitsurrey.com/magna-carta](http://www.visitsurrey.com/magna-carta) and the 2015 Visit Surrey Guide will include two pages on Magna Carta.

<p><b>World Premier of 'The Freedom Game' – Magna Carta Concert at the Royal Albert Hall 12<sup>th</sup> May 2015</b></p>
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- 9. Musicians, singers and dancers from the age of five to adult from all over Surrey have been recruited and are in the final rehearsal stage of the programme.
  - 9.1 Ticket sales are selling well at <http://www.royalalberthall.com/>
  - 9.2 Excerpts from the production will be performed at the official event on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

<p><b>Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Legacy Bid</b></p>
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- 10.1 A decision taken by the Heritage Lottery Fund on the Magna Carta 'Legacy' Bid at their meeting of 25th March 2015 the HLF decided not to award a grant for the bid on this occasion; however the partners partnership bid - principally led by the National Trust - has been invited to resubmit the application.
- 10.2 The legacy bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund formed just one part of the plans for Runnymede - the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary event on the 15<sup>th</sup> June 2015 and the art commission remain unaffected by this decision and it does not affect more localised site improvements for 2015 (the improvement of the Tea Rooms, footpath and access improvements / visitor interpretation and site notice boards).
- 10.3 The Magna Carta Surrey Partnership is still committed to long-term plans to improve aspects of the visitor offer at Runnymede and the development of facilities and to ensure that its importance and relevance to Magna Carta is fully understood and is working closely with HLF to understand why the bid was not successful.

**A308 Highway Improvements**

- 11.1 The new pedestrian island near the junction with Yardmead is currently under construction. At present we are anticipating the island being fully complete by 2 May 2015.
- 11.2 The gateway features/signing/lining have been designed and ordered. The various elements will be delivered at different times. However, we are expecting the works to all be complete by mid-May.

**Recommendations:**

12. To note the content of the report and to request a debrief at a future meeting.

**Next steps:**

Identify future actions and dates.

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**Sources/background papers:**

*None applicable*