

**CABINET – 5 FEBRUARY 2013**

**ITEM 4 - PROCEDURAL MATTERS**

**Public Questions**

**Question (1) from Mr John Bosten**

I raise concerns about the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Magna Carta. Why do you celebrate the 800<sup>th</sup> celebration of Magna Carta when nobody suggested that we celebrate the 900<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our year 1066?

In these times of recession (which will continue for many years) why is £5,000,000 of public money to be spent on the 'Celebration of Magna Carta'? Do we also celebrate the 1914 commencement of war and in 1918 the end of the war?

In any event the Magna Carta, (The Great Charter, the declaration of Human Rights), has never been effective except for the 10 weeks between 15 June 2015 and 24 August 1215. Further, there were serious doubts if Magna Carta was ever sealed, and doubts existed if King John could even write; he only approved Magna Carta because he knew that Pope Innocent III would make it null and void, which he did 10 weeks later on 24 August 1215.

Further, Magna Carta was revised in November 1216, revised again in November 1217 and substantially revised in February 1235; only 3 of the original 65 clauses exist.

Hence the essential declaration of Human Rights was never effectively achieved in Britain until 20 October 1998, and we all know the difficulties we have suffered since 1998 so should we celebrate this?

**Reply:**

The Queen has established a Trust to plan celebrations across the country to celebrate this event and this is chaired by the Master of Rolls, Lord Dyson. As the Charter was sealed in Runnymede, Surrey County Council is completely committed to the Magna Carta celebrations in 2015 and recognises its importance as the cornerstone of modern democracy. We recognise also its importance in the heritage of Great Britain and our own county and are committed in our desires to commemorate the 800th anniversary of this great event. All other Charter areas will be joining in these celebrations and it would be a huge anomaly if we did not.

Surrey examined the plans and proposals for the visitor centre on the pleasure grounds site and reviewed how best the County Council could contribute to recognising this important site for future generations. In light of this research and recent government settlements, the County Council is of the view that there are other equally valid ways of supporting the Magna Carta which is both impactful and encourages visitors to the area thereby improving the local economy.

Surrey County Council remains committed to investing resources into the area and will explore alternative cost effective options with Runnymede Borough Council, the National Trust and the community over the next few weeks.

**Helyn Clack**

**Cabinet Member for Community Services and the 2012 Games  
5 February 2013**