

Runnymede

BOROUGH COUNCIL



CALENDAR 2012



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2012

MESSAGE FROM JENNY HILL



I have great pleasure in sending you the 2012 Calendar.

There have been many changes in housing over the last 12 months and there are a lot more to come. As Chairman of the Runnymede Council Residents' Association (RCRA) my aim is to make sure that the committee is kept up to date with all new regulations and legislation and also to make sure that all residents are kept in the picture too.

You will get regular updates of anything that affects residents in the spring and autumn editions of Streets Ahead that we send out and you will also receive feedback on the Council's performance in the Annual Report.

You will by now have received the 2nd Annual Report which I think you will agree is very different from last year's 1st Annual Report. I really hope you like the new format which we have developed after listening to your comments and feedback following our first attempt – and by the way I hope you enjoyed our competition and have sent in your entry for the prize draw!

We welcome any views that you have about the Annual Report, Streets Ahead or the Calendar – so please do get in touch and tell us what you think.

The bathroom refurbishment programme is now under way and I trust that those of you that have had a new bathroom are satisfied and pleased with the work that has been done.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any concerns regarding anything to do with your home or if you wish to become more involved. I realise that some people might not like formal meetings but we are always looking for residents to assist in other ways. My contact details are jennihill@ntlworld.com or telephone **07811 863565** or **01932 568405**.

On behalf of myself, the members of all the Runnymede resident groups and the staff, I would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Jenny Hill
Chairman RCRA

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HomeSwapper

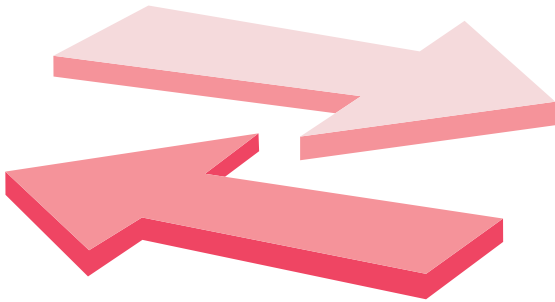
The mutual exchange solution for tenants and landlords



Want to move home?

HomeSwapper.co.uk is the largest mutual exchange service for council & housing association tenants wanting to swap homes.

- hundreds move every month
- new swappers join each hour
- homes all over the UK
- easy to register
- powerful searching
- generates thousands of potential swaps weekly
- match alerts by email & text



Find out more at www.HomeSwapper.co.uk
or ask your landlord.



www.runnymede.gov.uk



Winter scene at Painshill Park, Cobham

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The digital TV switchover and you!

TV in the UK is going digital, and the existing analogue TV signal transmitter will be switched off in April of 2012.



Switchover means that almost everyone will be able to receive digital TV through their aerial, but to watch the programs on your television you will need to convert your TV to receive digital before the switchover date.

The switchover dates for the London area are the 4th and 18th April. On the 4th of April you will no longer be able to watch BBC2 without a digital receiver and from the 18th April, all the channels will be switched to digital format. If you have not converted by the 18th April 2012 you will not be able to watch any TV.

Across the UK, nearly 95% of all TVs and aerials are ready to receive digital transmission, but if you have yet to make the changes, you will need to consider a number of options for converting your TV to digital. Not least of these factors will be the cost and the TV service that you would like. The government is running a help scheme which is being widely advertised on TV. They have created an independent body called Digital UK to provide help and support.



If you have a general query you can ring **free on 0800 40 85 900**, phone lines are open 8am-8pm Monday to Friday and 8am-6pm Saturday and Sunday, or go onto the web pages **www.digitaluk.co.uk** where a lot of information can be found. If you need to, you can contact them using Textphone on **0800 40 85 936**. We would remind you that free phone numbers are not always available from mobiles and may be charged at different rates depending on your network provider.



www.runnymede.gov.uk



Ta Prohm Temple, Cambodia

FEBRUARY

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Rent Payments

The Council's preferred method of payment is now **Direct Debit**.

This is the easiest way for you to pay and will be amended automatically if your housing benefit changes (we will of course write to let you know this). We have a number of payment dates and will set up a Direct Debit plan to fit in with your income.

To pay by Direct Debit, just contact the **Tenancy Management Section** on **01932 425821**.

The Tenancy Management Team can also give details of your rent account and balance and will also accept payment from most **credit or debit cards**.

In addition you can pay your rent by Runnymede Borough Council's **Automated Telephone Service** just phone **01932 425030**, select the Rent Payment Option and have your credit card details handy.

Please visit www.runnymede.gov.uk for details of how to pay online.

During normal office hours payment can be made at the **payment kiosk at the Civic Offices**. Payment made in this way will show on your account the next day.

The Post Office will still accept payments in the normal way with your swipe card; however these payments will take longer to reach your rent account. To compensate for this any payments made at the Post Office should be made as early in the relevant week as possible.

Payment can be made by forwarding a **cheque** to the Tenancy Management Section, at The Civic Offices, Station Road, Addlestone, Surrey KT15 2AH. Please remember to quote your rent account number and address on the back of the cheque.

Payment can be made at various **Paypoint** outlets located throughout the borough.

If you would like to make an arrangement or discuss any aspect of your rent account please contact the **Tenancy Management Section** on **01932 425821**.



www.runnymede.gov.uk



Spices in the souk, Morocco

MARCH

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Is your house too big for you?

If you are prepared to move to a one bed property then the council will help facilitate the move. Our intention is to provide a range of assistance which will make the process of moving much easier and less worrying.

We can help you bid for an alternative property or if you prefer you can tell us which types of property and which areas you will consider and we can bid on your behalf.

We can pay for removals (including packing and unpacking) and ensure the property you are moving to is decorated and possibly carpeted to your taste.

As well as receiving help and support with your move, older residents and those who are vulnerable may also be helped by Age UK.

They will provide help in many ways including:-

- filling in forms
- completing change of address paperwork
- dealing with utility companies
- helping dispose of unwanted items
- ordering new carpets
- putting up curtain rails



If you think you may be interested, would like some more details or would just like an informal chat about any of the above, please give Jane Margetts a call on 01932 425824, drop her a line at the Civic Offices, Station Road, Addlestone, Surrey KT15 2AH or email her at jane.margetts@runnymede.gov.uk.



Christ the Redeemer statue, Rio de Janeiro

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Garden Security Spring Clean

The average value of shed contents within the UK has been estimated at more than £1,000 with many people storing golf clubs, pedal cycles and tools in the garden shed or garage.

Tools stolen from garden sheds have been used to force entry into owners homes.

With spring in the air why not carry out a security spring clean of your garden, sheds and garages to reduce the opportunity for crime.

- Use a strong closed shackle, padlock, hasp and staple or use a strong metal shed bar which offers improved protection for the whole door.
- Consider installing a shed/garage alarm.
- Security mark all your tools and gardening equipment.
- Remember to lock any pedal cycles together inside your shed or garage.
- Take photographs of all garden ornaments and statues.
- Lock away small hand tools within a secure cabinet inside the shed or garage.
- Consider fitting an anchor point to secure larger items using a padlock and chain.
- Join or set up a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme within your street.
- Check your insurance policy to ensure you are adequately covered for theft.

You will never know if you prevent a crime but you will certainly know if a crime is committed!

A little time and effort now will make a big difference later.



The Monastery, Petra, Jordan

MAY

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Stop Loan Sharks

Loan sharks do not have a licence issued by the Office of Fair Trading and are therefore lending money illegally.

They trap people in a spiral of debt with extortionate rates of interest – Annual Percentage Rates of 131,000% have been seen.

They often use threats, intimidation and even violence - leaving their victims terrified, living in fear and paying the loan back for years.

These are the warning signs to look out for if you think you, or someone you know, may have borrowed from a loan shark:



- A lender who gives you little or no paperwork
- A lender who won't tell you how much you still owe or what the interest rates are
- A lender who adds charges to the loan or continues to increase the amount
- A lender who takes items as 'security' (these could include passports and bank cards)
- A lender who is intimidating, threatening or violent

The Trading Standards' illegal money lending team investigates and prosecutes loan sharks. They also help anyone who has borrowed from an illegal lender and have supported over 16,000 victims. For help or to report a loan shark, please call the confidential hot line on 0300 555 2222. For more information go to www.direct.gov.uk/stoploansharks



www.runnymede.gov.uk



Vietnamese boat people

JUNE

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Do you have Contents Insurance?

If you lost all your possessions in a house fire or as a result of flood or theft what would you do?

How would you replace the items we all take for granted such as clothes, furniture or electrical equipment?

The council **does not** insure your furniture, belongings or decorations.

You need to take out your own insurance to protect your belongings in the event of a fire, theft or flood. There are many Insurance Companies who can provide cover for your household goods and contents with the option to buy additional cover for specific items if you require. They will provide you with details of what is covered and a quote for how much the insurance cover will cost.



When you take out the insurance cover you will receive a policy booklet which should contain full details of the cover you have purchased.

Some companies will let you spread the cost of the premiums over several months or even the entire year. Look out for details of Insurance Companies in the press or online.



Collecting firewood, Zanzibar

JULY

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Prevent a fire in your neighbourhood



Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) is keen to work with its residents to prevent a fire from burning the heart out of your community and destroying the place where you live.

They particularly need your help with putting a stop to deliberate fires (arson) and hoax calls, which divert resources from where they are really needed.

You can help by:

- Maintaining communal areas and open spaces, keeping them free from rubbish and debris.
- Reporting any new incidents of graffiti or vandalism to the police or borough council. Such acts of anti-social behaviour can often be the start of an arson problem.
- Informing SFRS when properties in the area become vacant, especially whilst awaiting demolition or refurbishment. Unsecured, derelict or unoccupied buildings attract anti-social behaviour increasing the potential of an arson attack. The safety of fire crews is put at risk when attending fires in these types of buildings.
- Notifying the borough council of any abandoned vehicles in your neighbourhood so they can be removed before they become a target for arsonists.
- Listening out and acting if you hear a neighbour's smoke alarm. You could help them in case they are out, asleep or possibly even save their life if they have been injured. If you are in any doubt call 999. Please don't ignore it or leave any length of time before you call.
- Report all fires in your neighbourhood however small, even if it has been extinguished as SFRS need to know if there are incidents in your neighbourhood so they can address them.

You can contact Surrey Fire and Rescue Service on 01737 242444 or for a free home fire safety check call 0800 085 0767 or visit www.surrey-fire.gov.uk/besmartbesafe



The Sahara Desert, Morocco

AUGUST

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How Mediation can help resolve neighbour disputes



Problems between neighbours can often be resolved by speaking to each other, explaining the problem and seeing how you can work together to reach an amicable solution. However, if you want to talk to your neighbour but don't know how, **Mediation North Surrey Service** may be able to help.

Mediation is a way of helping people resolve problems in a safe, sensitive and confidential manner. Solutions acceptable to everyone are reached without the added anxiety and expense of legal intervention.

North Surrey Mediation Service is an independent, confidential and free service. Mediators don't take sides or try to tell people what they should do. They are trained and experienced in helping people reach agreements between themselves. They do not give advice.

Mediators will take time to visit each person to ensure their problems are understood before any mediation sessions take place with both sides. They will also make sure each side is aware of the process and will tell them what they can expect from the service - some people involved in neighbour disputes are reluctant to participate in mediation because they are unsure how it works.

Most importantly, feedback shows the process really does work. A recent publication from the Mediation Service includes the following quote from a Police Constable: *"This has been an ongoing neighbourhood dispute, that without mediation was unlikely to be resolved. I am amazed that they agreed to a joint meeting. They were both able to air their grievances, in a controlled manner. This is a great service. I am really pleased that the two parties met up and discussed their problems. Even if there are further problems they have tried to address their issues in a reasonable manner which is pleasing to see."*

For further information on Mediation North Surrey please visit www.mediate.me.uk or call Tenancy Management on 01932 425821. We are happy to refer all parties to Mediation North Surrey or you can do it yourself by telephoning 0870751 4311 or e-mailing help@mediate.me.uk.



www.runnymede.gov.uk



Jaisalmer Fort, Rajasthan

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As the clocks go back

Surrey Police are giving the following advice to help residents avoid becoming victims of burglary as the winter months rapidly approach.

- Light up your house – inside and outside. If you are out or away, use timer switches to turn internal lights on and off
- Make sure your doors are securely locked at all times
- Close and lock all windows – burglars can wiggle through any gap larger than a human head
- Fit locks at the top and bottom of patio doors
- A visible burglar alarm will make a burglar think twice. Make sure you set your alarm every time you leave your house
- Never leave garages or sheds unlocked
- Fit and lock gates across side and back entrances
- Be alert to strangers loitering in the street, if you don't recognise them and they are acting suspiciously, call the police
- Don't hide your keys under a mat or a flowerpot – it's the first place a burglar will look
- Keep an inventory of your valuable property, either on paper or online with a company such as www.immobilise.com
- Use a property marking product to uniquely mark valuable possessions. For more information visit www.securedbydesign.com
- Beware of bogus callers. Use a door chain and check the callers identity carefully. If in doubt, keep them out
- And finally, if a burglar does get into your home handbags, wallets and car keys are rich pickings so never leave these items in view



www.runnymede.gov.uk



Angkor Wat at sunrise, Cambodia

OCTOBER

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How you can help tackle anti social behaviour

We encourage residents to try and sort out any anti social behaviour issues themselves. Normally, if you speak to the person causing the issue face-to-face, the problem will be resolved. However, if this is not the case you can report anti social behaviour by contacting Tenancy Management on 01932 425821 or tenancy.management@runnymede.gov.uk

The Council is fully committed to stamping out anti social behaviour and creating a safer and more enjoyable place to live. However, in order to tackle the problem we need your help. Without information from residents we are unable to gather the vital evidence needed to take action against perpetrators. If you report anti social behaviour you will usually be asked to keep a record of any further incidents. Any information provided by you will be treated in the strictest confidence.

We will then assess information provided and if appropriate will take further action. If the perpetrator then fails to adhere to warnings issued by the Council it may be necessary to take formal legal action in respect of their tenancy. In this case you may be asked to provide a witness statement to describe the nuisance you have experienced. The point of such statements is to show the court how the nuisance behaviour has affected the lives of other residents. Whilst these statements can be anonymous, courts place much more weight on statements provided by witnesses who are prepared to come to court.

The Council have had a number of successful cases against perpetrators over the past 12 months. Since October 2010 the Council has obtained:-

- 12 Injunction Orders
(all with a power of arrest attached)
- 1 Suspended Possession Order
- 2 Demotion Orders
- 2 Further applications for Possession Orders are currently in the pipeline.



After the rain, Togo

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Centres for Older People

Come and visit our warm and friendly Social Centres for Older People. We offer:-

- A freshly cooked set meal, including a dessert (special diets catered for)
- Wine can be purchased to enjoy with your meal
- Come along and enjoy a cup of tea/coffee and a cake from our coffee shop

Services available include:

- Chiropody
- Beauty Therapies – come along and be pampered
- Hairdressers
- Local District Nurses – to take blood pressure
- Benefits Advice and Age UK

If you feel a little daunted at the prospect of visiting one of our Social Centres for Older People, our Centre Chaperone will be delighted to accompany you to your chosen Centre. We will introduce you to the Manager who will make you very welcome and in no time you will make new friends and enjoy the warm atmosphere found in each of the Centres.

For your chance to learn how to use a mobile phone or to receive some informal training on computers, especially designed for those people with no previous computer knowledge, please get in touch.

Centre Lettings

If you have a special occasion to celebrate or a party to organise you can hire any of our Centres.

For more details on any of the above please call our friendly team on 01932 425868



www.runnymede.gov.uk



Cedar tree in the snow, Painshill Park, Cobham

DECEMBER

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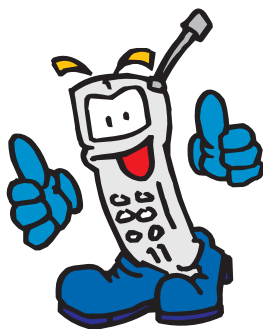
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Useful Telephone Numbers



Runnymede Borough Council Main Reception

01932 838383

Tenancy Management Section

01932 425821

tenancy.management@runnymede.gov.uk

Housing Transfers/Register

01932 425832

Homelessness/Housing Advice

01932 425811

Maintenance

01932 425858

Emergency Repairs

(Outside office hours only)

01932 425060

Housing Benefits

01932 425388 or www.runnymede.gov.uk/benefits

Independent Housing Advice, Citizens Advice Bureau

01932 842666

Debtscape

(Free local advice regarding money problems)

01932 821848

National Debt Line

0808 808 4000

FamilyLine

Freephone 0808 808 5678

Homestart

01932 568874 or email info@home-starrunnymede.org.uk