

Climate Change and Sustainability Newsletter



Welcome to the Runnymede Climate Change and Sustainability e-newsletter, and thank you for subscribing. Each quarter, we will be sending you updates on environmental initiatives taking place within the Council and across the borough, alongside information and advice to help you live more sustainably.

For more Council content, please follow us on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn for daily updates.



Emissions slashed by 55% due to HVO transition

The Climate Change & Sustainability team calculates and details the greenhouse gas emissions from Council operations annually and presents the findings to the Corporate Management Committee. Statistics for the 2024/25 financial year were provided in October 2025, and showed that compared to the baseline year of 2019/20, the Council's scope 1&2 emissions, which are within scope of our 2030 net zero target, have dropped 54.9%.

This reduction is principally driven by the transition from diesel to Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil (HVO), a biofuel created from waste fats and cooking oils, to fuel the Council's vehicle fleet. Runnymede was the first Council in Surrey to make this transition which was unanimously backed by Councillors at the Environment & Sustainability Committee in March 2024. As a result of the change, emissions from all sectors associated with the Council's operational fleet have been significantly reduced. However, there remains much work to be done to maintain this positive momentum and make the 2030 net zero target a reality.

You can find the full report that was taken to Corporate Management Committee on our greenhouse gas emissions, or read more about the transition from diesel to HVO, via the links below.

[Read our 2024/25 Emissions Report](#)

[Learn about our HVO transition](#)



Hedgerow planting enables nature to thrive



Runnymede Borough Council has partnered with Surrey County Council and their fantastic volunteers to plant over 5,500 trees this autumn. New mixed native hedgerows have been planted at Chertsey Meads, Hythe Centre Recreation Ground and Thorpe Green which will mature into nature havens, bursting with flowers and berries and providing safe places for birds to nest. While planting at Chertsey Meads, our Biodiversity Officer even discovered eggs of the rare and elusive Brown Hairstreak butterfly – another species which will thrive in the new hedgerows as they grow.

Funded energy upgrades for low-income households

The Warm Homes Local Grant is a government-funded scheme that helps low-income households in England improve energy efficiency and switch to low-carbon heating. The scheme is managed by Surrey County Council on behalf of 11 boroughs and districts across Surrey, with funding provided by the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ).

This is a fully government funded grant, where eligible homeowners are not expected to make any contributions to the cost. The grant allows residents to receive a range of retrofitting measures, from energy performance upgrades such as various forms of insulation or window and door upgrades to low carbon heating, making your home more comfortable and lowering energy bills. Landlords can also receive full funding for one property where tenants meet low-

income criteria, but for any additional properties, must contribute a minimum of 50% of the upgrade costs, with no limit on the number of properties that can be upgraded.

Click the link below to find out more and check your eligibility, and if you have any questions or need support, contact energy@surreycc.gov.uk.

[Find out if you are eligible and apply to the Warm Homes Local Grant](#)

Earn rewards for travelling sustainably in Surrey

Want to earn rewards and win prizes for travelling around Surrey on foot, by bike or by public transport?

The Greener Futures team at Surrey County Council has teamed up with BetterPoints to create an app for Surrey residents to earn rewards and win prizes for travelling around Surrey sustainably. This can be either on foot, by bike, or by public transport. The app can be downloaded for free and will automatically track your activity to allow you to start gaining rewards. These rewards can then be spent at participating local businesses, redeemed for high street vouchers, or donated to charity.

[Download the BetterPoints app here](#)

Nominations open for 2026 Runnymede Civic Awards



Nominations are now open for the 2026 Runnymede Civic Awards, recognising residents who go above and beyond for our community — from volunteers making a difference to individuals excelling in sport, art, culture or helping others to thrive. With 19 award categories across Community, Sports and Physical Activity, and Arts — including awards for young people under 18 — this is your chance to highlight the amazing people and groups making a positive impact in Runnymede.

Within the Community Awards section, the 'Green Champion Award' celebrates an individual, group/organisation or school eco-council who are actively working to improve the environment for the benefit of their local community or school.

This may be achieved through sustainability initiatives or providing practical support and solutions to combat the effects of climate change. The deadline for nominations is 9am on Monday 26 January 2026, so help us celebrate those making a positive difference in Runnymede by getting applications in now!

[Nominate for a Civic Award](#)

[See our 2025 winners](#)

800 local students engaged in nature education

In November 2025, the Climate Change & Sustainability team, alongside our Biodiversity Officer, attended Runnymede Junior Citizen at Thorpe Park. Across two weeks, we engaged around 800 year six students from schools across the borough on climate and environmental issues, while helping them to imagine a healthier, happier future for our planet.

This year, we used Forestry England's 'Tree Trumps' game, modelled on the popular Top Trumps, to teach students about different species of trees that grow in the UK and some of the incredible facts about them. Did you know that the Douglas Fir can live for 1000 years? That the Sitka spruce can grow up to 100 metres tall? Or that the Silver Birch acts as a home for up to 334 species of insect? Our students didn't before they started playing, but were able to learn these facts, plus many more, through a fun and interactive experience with one another. Tree Trumps is downloadable for free from the Forestry England website if you'd like to play at home.

[Download Tree Trumps](#)

[Learn more about Junior Citizen](#)



Living roof bus shelters introduced in Runnymede

Over the next nine months, our bus shelters will be undergoing significant upgrades including features which improve environmental sustainability. Most of the 50 free of advertising shelters will have solar powered lighting, and all shelters are 99% recyclable and produced with recycled aluminium, alongside upcycled plastic components. 10 bus shelters will feature living roofs, which attenuate surface water runoff, improve biodiversity and support improvements in localised air quality.

Travelling by bus where possible can be a more affordable, environmentally sustainable, and less stressful alternative to driving a private vehicle. These services cut down on traffic congestion, reduce emissions, and connect you with key areas across the borough and beyond. See the local bus timetables on the Surrey County Council website below.

[Find a bus shelter](#)

[See your local bus timetable](#)

Could you be our next Climate Change Officer?

We will soon be opening recruitment for a passionate and forward-thinking Climate Change and Sustainability Officer to join our team. This exciting role will drive the council's work on tackling climate change, embedding sustainability across our services, and supporting local communities to reduce their environmental impact. We're looking for someone who can lead our engagement activities with enthusiasm, energy, and commitment to help us deliver on our climate and nature action plan and create a greener, healthier future for Runnymede. If you're ready to make a real difference to the borough, keep an eye on our Careers page for updates!

[Visit our Careers Page](#)

If you have any suggestions or comments related to all-things climate change and sustainability in Runnymede, get in touch with the Council's Climate Change Team at climatechange@runnymede.gov.uk.

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