

Check out our new online news pages!  
See p3

# Newsletter

June 2023

Information for Runnymede Borough Council tenants

## Improving repairs service

Since April, repairs to Runnymede Borough Council housing properties have been carried out by our new partner, MCP Property Services.

MCP Property Services has taken over from BCE Mills Bros and is carrying out day-to-day repairs and maintenance in homes, and empty Council-owned properties.

Bringing in MCP also means you can report repairs online, schedule an appointment and track the repairs.

As part of our on-going commitment to delivering an excellent repairs service, we would encourage tenants to provide feedback via the satisfaction text sent after each repair.

Since MCP has started, we have been hosting meet and greet events throughout the Borough so tenants can speak to staff and ask questions about the repairs service. The most recent events were at Chertsey Hall and Independent Retirement Living schemes, where these photos were taken.

Your experience matters and we want to hear your views on MCP and the repairs process delivered by the Council.



## All your info now in one place

Housing Online is a new and secure way tenants can communicate with the Council. The system will be an easier way for you to view documents, rent account and payments, and report issues such as anti-social behaviour and repairs.

Housing Online is available through the Council's OneAccount. If you have not yet created your own OneAccount, you can do so on the Runnymede website: [www.runnymede.gov.uk](http://www.runnymede.gov.uk)

Housing Online is especially useful when it comes to repairs. You can:

- identify your repairs using picture guides,

- request non-urgent repairs and book an appointment that suits you,
- track your repair through to completion, and
- receive updates on existing repairs by text.

If you would prefer to not communicate with the Council online, you can call us on 01932 838383 or speak to us at the Civic Centre.

OneAccount



# Spring clean in School Lane

After listening to residents, we planned a Community Spring Clean Day in Egham. Ahead of the event, residents had the opportunity to tell us what they felt should be included on the day.

We provided skips and our staff helped clear garden waste, we litter picked, and we spoke to local people about what issues and concerns they felt needed addressing to help improve the area.

We also re-painted the parking spaces, had a kerb

lowered to improve access for disabled residents and overgrown hedges were cleared. A fenced off area was cleared and communal rotary lines installed, as people had asked for.

If you feel your area would benefit from an estate walk about with our staff, get in touch by emailing us on [listening@runnymede.gov.uk](mailto:listening@runnymede.gov.uk)

## Help improve how our website works

We want to improve our website and would like your help.

We have recognised fewer tenants are using our webpages whereas phone calls to the Council have increased. This results in longer waiting times for your questions to be answered.

We recognise that some information may be difficult to find on our housing pages, by not being in the place where you might expect information to be, or the content is not sufficient your purpose.

If you can help, email our team with your contact details at [listening@runnymede.gov.uk](mailto:listening@runnymede.gov.uk)

## Handbook thanks

A big thank you to everyone who helped create the new repairs handbook.

You helped identify what is most important to understand about the repairs service, ensure we do not use 'council' terminology, and avoided overloading people with too much information.

With the help of the 17 people involved, we now have a handbook that that is comprehensive and easy to follow.

To view or download the handbook please visit [www.runnymede.gov.uk/housing](http://www.runnymede.gov.uk/housing) or let us know if you need a paper copy.

## Reporting anti-social behaviour

Ensuring you feel safe in your home is important to us.

We want to improve how we handle reports of anti-social behaviour (ASB), so we asked you for assistance in shaping what we do. This included reviewing how issues are reported to us and how we keep people updated once a report has been made.

The 22 people involved also contributed to ideas for a ASB guide, which can be used as a reference point after a complaint is made. This will include who to report certain issues to, and what to expect from us when the report is made.



## Celebrating our new monarch

In celebration of the King's Coronation, we held a photo competition for our tenants. The winning photo is of Mrs Elizabeth Thatcher celebrating with Age Concern, and the photo was taken by her daughter Patricia Hosier. Congratulations!

## New kitchens, bathrooms, fire doors and roofs coming soon

Since April this year, we have installed over 80 kitchens and bathrooms in your homes.

This year we will carry out surveys at flats and maisonettes to install new fire doors. The work will be carried out over three years by NEO Property Solutions.

We have started installing new doors and windows to properties. This is a five year programme, with the aim of completing 250 homes a year. Both flats and houses will receive this, with priority to high-rise buildings.

We are currently tendering for a new roof contractor, to begin work in September this year.

If your home is to receive improvements, you will receive a letter explaining what's happening before any work is carried out.

## Cost of living payments help

The Council has a Household Support Fund for residents struggling with the increased cost of living. Help is available for food, essentials and utility bills.

See [runnymede.gov.uk/benefits-support/household-support-fund](http://runnymede.gov.uk/benefits-support/household-support-fund) or contact us if you need help to claim.

Benefits claimants, including people on Universal Credit, Pension Credit and Tax Credit, received £900 in instalments direct from the Department for Work and Pensions. There will also be a separate £150 payment for people with disabilities, and £300 for pensioners.

DWP has also announced that households on low income will receive cost of living payments during Autumn this year, and Spring 2024.



If you are struggling with your rent, please speak to your Area Housing Manager by emailing [tenancy.management@runnymede.gov.uk](mailto:tenancy.management@runnymede.gov.uk) or call 01932 838383.

## Could benefits advice help?

You can now book an appointment with our benefits team on our website: [www.runnymede.gov.uk/benefitappointment](http://www.runnymede.gov.uk/benefitappointment).

By booking in advance, we can ensure the right person is available to help with your enquiry.

Appointments can be booked for discretionary housing payments, new claims, household support fund, and you can also use our scanner to submit supporting evidence.

Our online news pages have loads of extra information about what the Council is doing.

## \*Read more housing news on our website\*

- ✓ Garfield Road Get Together
- ✓ Feedback on balcony safety policy
- ✓ Building safety information
- ✓ Our new repairs handbook.

Visit [www.runnymede.gov.uk/tenants-news](http://www.runnymede.gov.uk/tenants-news) or scan with your phone



# Explaining our Parkside goals

In the last Newsletter, we explained how we were exploring options for regenerating the Parkside area of New Haw.

The project is in the early stages and a lot of work is required to establish what will be possible and how much the project would cost.

We will meet with locals to discuss the plans, consider views, and incorporate ideas where possible. In this newsletter, we are sharing some of the goals that are being considered.

Find out more: [www.runnymede.gov.uk/parkside-regeneration](http://www.runnymede.gov.uk/parkside-regeneration)

## Mix of housing

We're planning for houses, flats and a new independent retirement living scheme. A greater mix would allow people to remain in the area throughout their lives and help to reduce under and over occupation.

## Owned and rented

It is likely Council rented, affordable home ownership, open market sale and possibly open market rented homes will be available. This would bring greater choice and make the project affordable.

## More homes

We intend to increase the number of homes. Most existing houses have three bedrooms and large gardens. Extra homes means more people can be housed and will make the project more affordable.

## Local facility

We want the community spirit to remain and to build on it with an exciting new facility.

## Energy efficient

Highly insulated homes using new technology will emit less carbon and will be cheaper to run.

## Pylons removed

Removing pylons would make the area look better and may make it easier to build homes.

## We all have an important role in protecting homes from fire

New Fire Safety Regulations have been introduced by the Government. For social landlords including the Council, this means improved fire protections for high rise buildings.

Our obligations now include checking fire-fighting equipment, fire doors and providing fire safety instructions to all residents. It is our responsibility to ensure that your building is safe, however you have a part to play too. This includes:

- Not to do anything that creates a significant risk to your building's structural safety.
- Not to do anything that creates a significant risk of causing or spreading fire in your building.
- Not to damage or remove any of your building's fire safety measures, such as smoke detectors, fire alarms, fire doors, and fire extinguishers (if present).

If you notice an issue concerning any of these report it to [firesafety@runnymede.gov.uk](mailto:firesafety@runnymede.gov.uk)

We are working towards best practice in fire safety, which is why Runnymede Borough Council is now a member of the Fire Protection Association, the UK's leading fire safety organisation.

For more information, visit [www.runnymede.gov.uk/tenants-news/fire-safety-residential-buildings](http://www.runnymede.gov.uk/tenants-news/fire-safety-residential-buildings)

### Tell us what you think!

Last year you told us what you think of the services we provide.

We then made an improvement action plan based on survey responses.

The Regulator of Social Housing has now introduced Tenant Satisfaction Measures and we have decided to offer all tenants the opportunity to complete another survey.

We will write to you later this year and explain how you can take part.