

# 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.



## Energy efficiency improvements for Council homes

We are planning an ambitious £2.5million programme of energy efficiency works, which could cut the cost of living and greenhouse gas emissions for 169 council-owned properties. We're investing £1.28million into the programme which intends to bring the EPC rating on selected houses up to a C level, and have secured a £1.25million government grant to support the works so that more homes can be included.

The 169 homes selected for these works will have a mix of solar panels, external wall, cavity or loft insulation installed. Our research highlighted that tenants in these homes could save up to £750 per year on their energy bills, while reducing emissions, supporting green jobs in the borough, and tackling fuel poverty.

You can learn more about the scheme by reading the article about the planned works published on our website. If you're a private home owner interested in improving the energy efficiency of your house, take a look at our 'Energy at Home' webpage to find out how you can reduce your impact and access grants.

[Read more about the project](#)

[Visit our Energy at Home page](#)



## **Sustainability at heart of play area procurement**

More than 20 play areas have been upgraded and made safer by the Council. As part of this work, we put an emphasis in the tender specification for bidders to highlight their commitment to climate change mitigation. As a result, the new play areas in Runnymede highlight some fantastic green credentials.

New panels in refurbished play areas at Chertsey Recreation Ground and King George V play area in Virginia Water are made from post-consumer ocean recycled waste collected from the maritime industry, such as fishing nets, ropes and trawl nets, and in other areas panels are made from post-consumer household waste.

New posts in some play areas were made from more than 95% post-consumer recycled textile and plastic waste instead of more traditional steel posts, reducing carbon emissions by 74%. Overall, 95% of the new materials used in the refurbished play areas can be recycled after use.

Visit our website to find out more about the recent investment to improving play areas in Runnymede and to see how our procurement strategy and policies ensure that we are committed to the delivery of social value and sustainability in our supply chain.

**Play area improvement project**

**Ensuring sustainable procurement**



## Imagining a sustainable future at Junior Citizen event

In November, we attended the Runnymede Junior Citizen scheme at Thorpe Park. Over two weeks, we were able to engage with around 700 year six students on climate change and its impacts.

Using climate dice, we encouraged students to consider how we can reduce our impact on the planet to create a healthier, happier environment for everyone by writing short stories about what this future might look like.

To find out more about Junior Citizen and read some of our favourite sustainable stories from across the event, head to our website.



[Read our favourite sustainable stories](#)

## Reduce food waste and save money this Christmas

Did you know that households across the UK waste an estimated 4.2 million Christmas dinners each year? A survey by Which? identified cheese as the most frequently overbought food during the festive season!

With Christmas day just around the corner, many of us will be in the process of planning and prepping meals for the festive season. To help reduce the impact of Christmas on the planet and our pockets, Love Food Hate Waste have produced an ultimate guide to Christmas food planning which includes tools and tips to help



you enjoy fun-filled feasting while reducing environmental or economic costs associated with this. You can also use their food and recipes pages to find out how to safely store your festive leftovers and discover amazing recipes that put these ingredients to good use over time.

[Christmas Food Planning Guide](#)

[Food and Recipes tool](#)



## **New approach to meadow management approved**

Councillors have recently approved the adoption of a new approach to meadow management. We will be expanding and improving our network of meadows, which will bring biodiversity and carbon capture benefits.

Meadows will be cut in late summer once the wildflowers have produced seeds, and the resulting hay will be removed to make space for next year's flowers to grow. We are planning to collect seeds from our best existing meadows and use these to create new meadows

Keep an eye out next summer for opportunities to help us sow wildflowers in areas of Runnymede to enhance and create meadows bursting with life.



# Council adopts Energy and Climate Change Mitigation Supplementary Planning Document

The Council's Planning Committee has approved the adoption of the Energy and Climate Change Mitigation Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The SPD identifies the energy and carbon emissions reduction policy requirements of the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan and provides clarity for both applicants and decision-makers on how the requirements can be achieved and evidenced, and preferably exceeded wherever possible.

The SPD includes detailed guidance for applicants of major development proposals on how to produce robust Energy Statements which demonstrate how each step of the energy hierarchy has been considered. It also includes a questionnaire that applicants for minor development proposals can use to provide information which is proportionate to the size and scale of their proposal, aiming to ensure that energy and carbon emissions reduction remains an integral part of a development's design and evolution, to bring about effective climate change mitigation.

For more information and to read the full adopted SPD, visit the dedicated Energy and Climate Change Mitigation SPD page on our website

[Energy and Climate Change Mitigation SPD Webpage](#)

## Great Big Green Week returning to Runnymede in 2025

Following a report on the Council's involvement in Great Big Green Week 2024, the Corporate Management Committee has agreed to support, promote, co-ordinate, provide assistance, and participate in the Great Big Green Week 2025, taking place across the UK from 7-15 June. Great Big Green Week is the UK's biggest ever celebration of community action to tackle climate change and protect nature.

To view the full report on Great Big Green Week 2024 and stay up to date with plans for 2025 as they develop, visit our dedicated pages, and if you're part of a group interested in getting involved, we would love to hear from you!



[Visit our Green Week pages](#)

[Take part in 2025](#)

## Surrey County Council launch One Stop Shop energy saving service for households

Surrey County Council have teamed up with home energy experts [Furbnow](#) to support residents in upgrading their homes with energy saving 'retrofit' measures through an innovative Home Energy Improvement 'One-Stop Shop' pilot scheme. The service aims to help residents that can afford to invest in long-term energy saving measures, such as insulation, solar panels, and air source heat pumps, to access a qualified Retrofit Assessor and trusted installers, offering end-to-end support along the journey to improve the energy efficiency of their home.

Benefits of energy saving measures include lower energy bills, more resilient and future-proofed homes, improved thermal comfort, and reduced emissions from the residential sector. Plus, the first 245 eligible homes can access a subsidised whole Home Energy Plan, providing a comprehensive property assessment and personalised roadmap based on your household priorities and budget.

To learn more about this service, check your eligibility, and receive a no-obligation quote, visit the Home Energy Improvement One-Stop Shop page on the Furbnow website.

[Improve your home energy efficiency with Furbnow](#)

## Grants and advice available for businesses and organisations

The Council website has specific pages dedicated to grants that are available to organisations to support them in climate action and improve their sustainability. Grants currently available include Your Fund Surrey and the South Western Rail Customer and Communities Improvement Fund.

The Council has also recently launched a new page to provide resources which support businesses to go green. All these tips and links to access the relevant pages can be found on our Business Runnymede website.



[Grants for organisations](#)

[Go green on Business Runnymede](#)

## Join Surrey Chambers Sustainability Webinar

If your business is interested in building confidence in approaching net zero and tackling climate change, then join Surrey Chambers of Commerce on 30 January 2025 for a webinar on "Busting 10 Top Sustainability & Climate Change Myths".

The online webinar is free to attend and will cover a variety of critical sustainability topics. To find out more and to book your place, visit the Surrey Chambers website.



[Book my place](#)

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](mailto:climatechange@runnymede.gov.uk).

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