

RALG Spring Activities

So what has RALG been up to since April 2017?

RALG has received requests for help from:

- The National Trust, Runnymede
- Runnymede Borough Council's Development Officer, John Rice
- Achieve Lifestyle Management
- Places for People
- Runnymede Council Planning Department
- Egham Museum

Please read on below to learn how our wholly voluntary group is doing its best to help improve the quality of life for all our able and variously mobility and sensory impaired residents.

The National Trust, Runnymede

A legacy project following **Magna Carta 800** is an initial Lottery funded project to broaden the participation of the "harder to reach" residents of Runnymede, enabling them to enjoy the scenic and therapeutic benefits of visiting Runnymede Meadows and the neighbouring Ankerwycke riverside area.

Following an invitation from their Project Leader, Mrs Debbie Dart, to be part of the "**Runnymede Explored**" project, RALG has attended information gathering workshops to suggest how the whole community can be encouraged to visit this internationally important area. Research has revealed that many local people fail to explore this beautiful area because of mobility or other serious impairments. The majority of RALG members have life-long experience of wheelchair use, hearing and sight impairment.

Getting increased involvement will take careful planning, especially when the project includes linking the Colne Valley footpath, Ankerwycke, various monuments south of the river, and ultimately the Commonwealth Air Forces Memorial.

Please contact RALG through: info@ralg.org.uk if you have any suggestions or offers of help.

The new Egham Sports Centre

Achieve Lifestyle, the operators of Egham Sports Centre, are forging ahead with the massive expansion of its facilities with the incorporation of an 8 lane, 25m swimming pool.

RALG members have already opened a working dialogue with their management with the sole intention that this pool complex will be fully accessible to all disabled people.

Much detailed advice is being given to ensure that the developers, Places for People, create a true “state of the art” inclusive health and fitness facility. RALG will be constructively informing all concerned about the highly specialised pre-construction processes which will realise this fantastic opportunity. The size and shape of wheelchair user friendly changing areas with sufficient space is but one vital requisite.

Runnymede has never had such a facility, Woking Leisure Centre has always been the nearest approximation to a swimming and hydrotherapy facility.

Detailed external access will also require consultation to enable users to reach the centre. Surrey CC Highways, the local bus operators, and Community Transport will also be asked to ensure safe access for disabled pedestrians wishing to use the Centre. Much work creating this will lie ahead.

The work and expenditure may be daunting but the end result could be a massive popular facility which will benefit the whole community. A truly exciting opportunity!

Egham Gateway (West)

Committee members have slightly more advanced progress with this. RALG is continuing its involvement to press for greater involvement with the proposed Academy, Theatre and retail project.

RALG attended the launch presentations and, as with the Runnymede Explored project, is strenuously working to ensure that the needs of all mobility and sensory impaired residents and visitors will get respected and included.

Our goal is to see effective interaction is assured.

Egham Museum

Egham Museum has sought RALG's expertise in designing a fully accessible building to view its collections.

This again is a completely new venture. At a time of financial limits this will probably be one of the biggest ongoing challenges. Please watch this space for more news as it evolves.

None of the above interaction and engagement would have been possible without the funding from Runnymede Borough Council; enabling disabled residents access to these sites will greatly enhance the revenue earning potential and social inclusion.

Further news...

Negotiations are also in progress to rectify the Service Level Agreement under the terms of which Runnymede Borough will continue to be our principal funding source. Let's hope it is satisfactory for both parties.

RALG cannot understate its gratitude for every official, designer and organisation we will be working with.

RALG needs and is always on the lookout for more skilled help; if anyone reading this can offer web skills or any other relevant experiences, please feel able to contact us at info@ralg.org.uk