

Report from Cllr Margaret Harnden for TWRA AGM Monday 3rd April 2017

My apologies for not being able to be with you this evening. Unfortunately the date has clashed with the AGM of Runnymede Access Liaison Group (RALG) which I am a committee member of, representing RBC. As I'm also on the sub-committee organising this year's Awards Ceremony, which is an agenda item tonight, I felt I needed to be there.

It's been another busy year as one of your 3 Independent Ward councillors at RBC. As our Independent colleague from Egham Ward, Cllr Alan Alderson, has had the honour of representing Runnymede Borough as Mayor, his usual committee duties needed to be covered by other Independents. I hope I have played my part but I would at this point like to publically thank Cllrs Elaine Gill and Linda Gillham for all the extra work they have taken on. Some of you may know it has not been the best year for me personally and I have been truly grateful for all the support I have received from both Linda and Elaine, as well as others, at a difficult time.

I continue to serve on the Licensing and Regulatory committees as well as Community Services and Environment and Sustainability committees. I have attended local Taxi Forum meetings to keep abreast of new regulatory developments and listen to and feed back concerns from the taxi trade. In addition I've served on a sub committee considering licensing alterations.

During the year I was part of the RALG team which identified and reported access problems in the Pooley Green area and suggested mitigation possibilities. Those of you who use Virginia Water Station will be aware that work to install a fully accessible footbridge with lifts is being carried out there. This was something RALG had lobbied for and works are expected to be completed by June 2017. RALG is involved in advising on access aspects of both the Egham Gateway project and the proposed new leisure centre with swimming pool at Egham - which is actually in Thorpe Ward!

The Volunteers Awards Evening I attended at RHUL brought home just how much amazing voluntary work is done by so many residents, of all ages, that benefits the borough hugely. Many award recipients were students, who often get a very bad press, so it was good to see their positive contributions to the borough recognised.

I continue to be a trustee of Egham Museum, which has had a difficult year due to water ingress as a result of heavy rain. Luckily, due to prompt action by museum volunteers there was no significant damage to any exhibits and the museum is now fully functioning again and the curator, Sarah Corn, would be glad to welcome you back, or introduce you to the museum if you don't know it. Having an interest in local and family history, I continue to serve on the Surrey Museums Partnership committee for RBC.

Over the year I have attended a number of briefings at the Civic Offices, regarding the new shopping and housing complex, Addlestone One, and the new regeneration plans for Egham as well as the scheduled committee and full council meetings.

I had the privilege of being one of the judges of last year's Green Fingers completion, which involved touring the borough looking at residents' gardens, school gardens, allotments etc. The impossible task was picking a winner in each category – they were all amazing! It's time now to enter for 2017 – see the RBC website for more details. It would be good to have some entrants from Thorpe Ward – I've seen many lovely gardens while walking round delivering the latest Thorpe Together. Please do consider entering!

The perennial problems don't go away: fly tipping, speeding, dog fouling etc. Speeding is an item that we hope to address via the Thorpe Neighbourhood Forum, which I'll mention later and new measures regarding littering and dog fouling are soon to be trialled by RBC – details in the next Thorpe Together newsletter.

As I am not with you to answer questions, I hope my fellow councillors won't mind if I leave them to update you on 4 major issues I think will interest you: the Green Belt Review, the River Thames Scheme, the Emerging Runnymede 2035 Local Plan and the newly formed Thorpe Neighbourhood Forum.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have a local issue you think I may be able to help with.

