



Runnymede Conservative Manifesto 2019:

Runnymede Conservatives - Delivering for You

Dear fellow Runnymede resident,

For the first time in many years, Runnymede Borough Council will be holding all out elections, meaning every Council seat is up for election. In a very real sense, the future of Runnymede Borough Council is at stake and you, the residents, get to choose the whole team you wish to represent you and deliver for Runnymede.

Runnymede Conservatives have responded by publishing a manifesto that contains a set of borough-wide policy pledges and a blueprint as to how your Conservative councillors will serve all the residents of Runnymede borough. Whilst you elect ward candidates to be your elected councillors, the combined efforts of all Conservative councillors will shape policy decisions based on these 5 principles.

I would therefore ask you to vote for all of your local Conservative candidates in May because, if you do so, we as a team we will be able to deliver these pledges and build on the great record we have in Runnymede of zero-cuts to services, value for money, innovation and investment in the communities we live in.

Our purpose is clear; to ensure the residents of Runnymede live in a borough that is prosperous, productive and progressive, whilst being compassionate to the needs of all residents.

Best wishes,

Nick Prescott
Leader of Runnymede Conservative Group



Runnymede Conservatives: Delivering for You

Conservatives deliver: Value for money

- We will keep Runnymede Borough Council Tax one of the lowest in the country, while maintaining and expanding key services.

Conservatives deliver: Investment in our communities

- We will continue to invest in our communities, protecting our heritage and green open spaces while continuing the regeneration of our key towns and improving services for all residents.

Conservatives deliver: A zero tolerance approach to fly tipping

- We will continue our zero-tolerance approach to fly-tipping and littering. We will support the use of all enforcement powers, including fines, seizure of vehicles and prosecution where appropriate.

Conservatives deliver: Quality housing across the borough

- We will continue to provide more and better-quality housing across the borough for both private and social sectors.

Conservatives deliver: Increase engagement

- We will increase resident engagement on key policy decisions affecting our communities and will always be accessible to assist and support residents, including support for Neighbourhood Plans where requested.



Runnymede Conservatives: Delivering for You

Conservatives deliver: Value for money

- We will keep Runnymede Borough Council Tax one of the lowest in the country, while maintaining and expanding key services.

Runnymede Conservatives commit to keeping Runnymede as one of the lowest council tax boroughs in the country. We have maintained this record while protecting services across the borough. We will continue to ensure value for money, through both financial monitoring and re-investing investment returns into further improving and expanding services for residents.

Runnymede Conservatives have consistently kept borough council tax low for residents. The table below shows the result of this compared to neighbouring Surrey boroughs, based on Band D 2018/19 rates.

Borough	2018/19 Band D tax rate
Elmbridge	£215.00
Guildford	£166.82
Runnymede	£159.59
Spelthorne	£197.44
Surrey heath	£212.42
Woking	£233.46

While Runnymede Borough Council (RBC) is responsible for collecting Council Tax on behalf of Surrey County Council and the Police, the borough council only controls and receives 8.76% of the total bill. In 2019/20 the charge for a Band D property will be £164.59, or £3.17 per week for all of the services provided by RBC.

Since 2009 there have been major changes to local government financing and Runnymede has seen a huge reduction in the amount received from central government. This places huge pressure to either raise tax or cut services. However, we have delivered on our commitment to do neither. Instead Runnymede Conservatives championed a policy to borrow money to invest in our borough, and in commercial assets which now generate an annual investment return of £10 million. This has enabled Runnymede to be the only borough in Surrey that can claim a fully balanced budget with no cuts to services. And while that change of funding may seem scary to some, the safeguards we have built in and strong financial management mean all this can be achieved with a clean financial bill of health in our audit reports.

Surrey County Council is also facing significant cuts to budgets, which will affect services that Runnymede residents receive. Working with our Surrey Conservative colleagues, Runnymede Conservatives are working to mitigate the impact of these cuts. Our aim will be to create community hubs where our residents can access both borough and county services, delivered in an efficient and accessible way. This would use existing resources, such as our libraries, and in using these facilities for service delivery we hope to not only recognise their importance within communities but also protect their long-term future.

Conservatives deliver: Investment in our communities

- We will continue to invest in our communities, protecting our heritage and green open spaces while continuing the regeneration of our key towns and improving services for all residents.

Runnymede Conservatives pledge to invest in our communities, maintaining our heritage while continuing the regeneration of our key towns. This investment is part of a long-term £200m investment and redevelopment programme which, if re-elected, we will continue across our borough to bring benefits to all of our residents.

From the regeneration of Addlestone, which includes new shops, housing and our borough's first new cinema, to the state-of-the-art new leisure centre in Egham, Runnymede Conservatives' pledge to invest in our towns is already delivering real results. Our aim is to ensure our towns are accessible and vibrant destinations, while retaining the heritage we are rightly so proud of. The next major investment is the planned regeneration of Egham, where close consultation with local residents has resulted in an exciting design that will transform the town centre for the benefit of all.

And our plans don't stop there. Chertsey, as our borough's third major town, also deserves investment. We pledge to work with local residents to develop plans that deliver the requirements for a modern town while respecting and protecting its heritage.

However, our vision for Runnymede extends beyond just bricks and mortar. Runnymede Conservatives pledge to continue to invest in our borough's state-of-the-art CCTV, and to work closely with police and other organisations to keep residents safe.

We will also continue to protect and support our most vulnerable residents. Despite reduced funding RBC have remained committed to providing a huge range of services for residents - from support for the elderly, working with voluntary groups, family support, and our Community First programme. These services and more will continue to be fully supported by Runnymede Conservatives. You can find out all about these additional services available to you in the Community Services Directory

- https://www.runnymede.gov.uk/media/12410/Community-Services-Directory/pdf/Community_Services_2016-17.pdf.

Conservatives deliver: A zero tolerance approach to fly tipping

- We will continue our zero-tolerance approach to fly-tipping and littering. We will support the use of all enforcement powers, including fines, seizure of vehicles and prosecution where appropriate.

Our Conservative policy is a zero-tolerance approach to fly tipping. The disposal of any waste illegally is a serious issue. Fly tipping is not only unsightly but can be damaging to the environment and is incredibly costly to clean up.

Runnymede residents should be free to enjoy a borough which enjoys over 70% greenbelt, without this being marred by illegally dumped waste. Under powers granted to Local Authorities in the Control of Waste Dealing With Seized Property (England and Wales) Regulations 2015, vehicles can be seized if they have been involved in transporting waste without a licence, unauthorised dumping, failing to ensure transfer of waste to an 'authorised person' and failure to provide waste information forms when requested.

Since the regulations came into force in April 2017 RBC has seized and destroyed 3 vehicles found to be involved in the illegal dumping of waste. We will continue to support full use of these powers to issue penalties and where necessary prosecute offenders. We also support close engagement with local police and Surrey County Council to track and apprehend offenders, through use of CCTV and community intelligence.

While fly-tipping can be a major hazard, littering and mess on our streets also detracts from our borough. For this reason, we have supported the use of enforcement officers throughout Runnymede who can issue fines to people who drop litter or don't clean up after their dogs. Littering is a criminal offence that impacts on everyone, which is why we support prosecution for anyone not willing to pay a fine. Over the past year 51 people have been prosecuted for this, and we fully support the continued use of these powers to protect our communities.

Runnymede Conservatives also pledge that any profit generated from these fines will be reinvested in environmental services, to ensure that those spoiling our towns and public spaces will be responsible for paying to improve them for all.

Conservatives deliver: Quality housing across the borough

- We will continue to provide more and better-quality housing across the borough for both private and social sectors.

Families are increasingly finding that their children cannot afford a home of their own in the area where they have grown-up, and Runnymede Conservatives are determined that the council will play its part in addressing this challenge. Runnymede Conservatives pledge to create more and better housing in both the private and social sectors.

Under Conservative leadership, RBC has built new homes across the borough, from new houses in New Haw and Englefield Green, to 213 new properties in the new Addlestone

development, as well as further housing planned in the Egham regeneration. We are also committed to finding innovative ways to provide access to new social housing opportunities. RBC successes to date includes transforming run down garages into new, energy efficient housing in Englefield Green, and creating new ways of working with private landlords to ensure long term social housing options. Runnymede Conservatives pledge to continue this great record of investment and innovation to provide top quality housing for residents.

In addition to these new initiatives, we are committed to improving the quality of existing housing. We will ensure all contracts for repairs and maintenance of social housing will provide both quality service and value for money. For privately rented houses with multiple occupants (HMOs), which are typically used for student accommodation, we pledge to fully implement the new stricter licensing and safety requirements, and to track down those landlords who do not register or comply with the rules.

In these ways, Runnymede Conservatives pledge to deliver safe, quality housing as an essential part of our thriving borough.

Conservatives deliver: Increase engagement

- We will increase resident engagement on key policy decisions affecting our communities and will always be accessible to assist and support residents, including support for Neighbourhood Plans where requested.

Your Conservative councillors are always available to residents. Whatever your issue or concern, your local Conservative councillors are here to help, no matter which way you vote. If the matter you raise is not the responsibility of the borough council, we will help put you in contact with a relevant person who can assist. The best way to effectively represent our wards is to know the local area and issues. So, we also pledge to be a presence within the community, and to ensure residents have access to the information they need about local issues and decisions.

We are proud of the record we have delivered but recognise we could be better in communicating key issues to residents. We have therefore supported the re-introduction of the Runnymede Council magazine 'Runnymede Talks', which will keep residents up to date on major policies and developments. We are also keen to work with local residents groups, and pledge to expand RBC's Community Planning Forum to include a wider group of community and residents' associations.

We are aware that major planning decisions are often one of the most contentious local issues. To help residents respond to these and to shape their own local priorities, we will also continue to support residents in the development of local neighbourhood plans where requested.