

STWN Chairman's Report 24th April 2026

1. Runnymede Issue

See copy of email from the Englefield Green Village Forum rep

RE: Tree Planting



mikefkelly47@gmail.com

To: treforh@googlemail.com

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Mon 30/03/2026 22:40

Many thanks for your e mail.

I have little problem so far with Surrey CC- we are co-operating on another project (Renovating our village Central Area) and that has gone well, despite a considerable amount of paperwork over a 9 month period prior to doing the 8 week project!

This we can handle and are used to.

Our problem lies with Runnymede Borough Council.

We have had a series of meetings over the last 2.5 years with relevant officers, who are at first enthusiastic and then seem to back off when they get back to their office. Two years ago Surrey offered to plant a 100m hedge and maintain it for 3 years, but had to withdraw the offer when RBC failed to even respond to their request to use their land.

We now have a CIL grant which is being held by RBC because we had to agree (a) not to plant hedges (b) to consult and agree in detail on where the planting of trees (only) would go and (c) to guarantee maintenance basically ad infinitum.

In desperation last year we raised a petition with over 100 signatures asking RBC that local volunteer groups should be allowed to plant trees on Council land. Officers recommendation to Council last week (it has taken till now to grind through the system) was that there was no suitable land and that the officers had not got the time to deal with it. Council asked that they reconsider and it will come up again at Council in June.

All whilst RBC have a Green Policy saying that local groups should be actively encouraged to undertake this type of project.

Now we have been promised the grant (3 weeks ago) I currently am liaising with the RBC Parks Manager with a view to examine and identify areas. He has said he can't see me till mid May. Will his boss postpone, stop the process in some way (as clearly happened before)? Thus it goes on.

Sorry to keep on but this has been one of the most frustrating experiences I have had and any help I can get is welcome!

Regards, and thanks again for contacting us

Mike Kelly

From: englefield green village forum <egvforum@gmail.com>

Sent: 20 March 2025 10:01

2. SCC Tree Planting Objective

SCC passed the halfway mark last year but it seems unlikely the 2030 objective of 1.2 million new trees will be reached before the council ceases to exist in April 2027.

3. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The recent changes and related government guidance strengthen protections for ancient woodland and veteran trees, enforcing a "presumption against development" affecting them. Key updates emphasize mitigating developer harm, implementing strict compensation strategies as a last resort, and utilizing updated inventories to identify smaller, 0.25-hectare sites for protection. However, the protections for other trees, woodlands, AONB and green belt are all considerably weakened. Golf courses and some plantation woodlands in particular are now previously developed landscape (grey belt/ brown land)

4. Policy Documents – still awaiting a block of free time.....