

Junior Citizen 2023 (Community Services, Katie Walker)

Synopsis of report:

This report is to provide an update on Junior Citizen following the introduction of the Safer Communities Programme and seek direction of the future of the scheme.

Recommendation that:

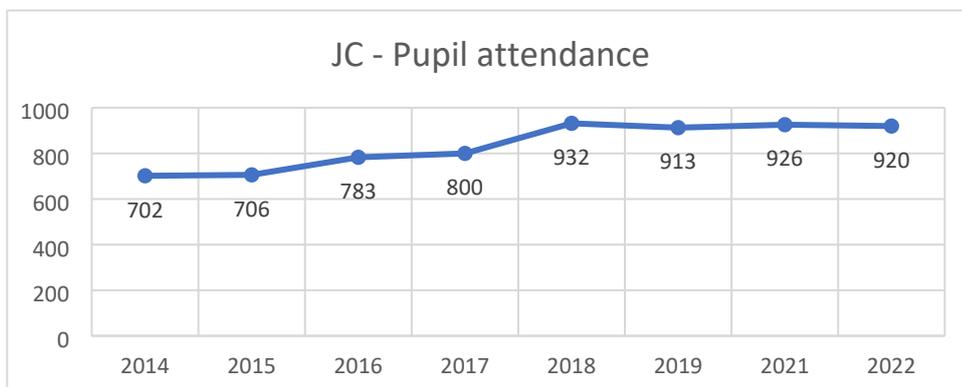
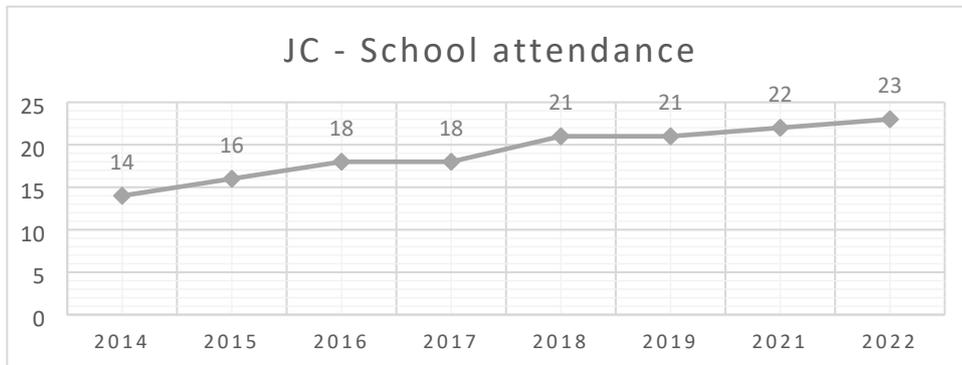
- i) the Junior Citizen scheme continues, incorporating health and wellbeing themes; and**
- ii) Members approve a budget provision of £5,000, allocated from the Youth Development budget held by Community Services, annually for a period of 3 years**

1. Context of report

- 1.1 This report seeks to provide an update on the current status of the Runnymede Junior Citizen scheme, following the introduction of a new 'Safer Communities Programme' by Surrey County Council and seeks direction from the Committee on the future of the scheme.
- 1.2 The Runnymede Junior Citizen scheme has been running annual events for year 6 pupils across the Borough for over 20 years. The scheme aims to teach children vital life skills in a fun, exciting and memorable way, bringing pupils awareness of real life, potentially dangerous scenarios so they can be better informed on how to act in emergency situations and how to avoid them happening in the first place, thus creating safer communities.
- 1.3 Historically, inputs have been provided by Runnymede Borough Council, Surrey Police, Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS), St John Ambulance (SJA), Network Rail, UK Power Network, and Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI), with recent events also benefiting from inputs from Fearless and School Nurses.
- 1.4 Inputs provided to the children have focused on the following subjects;
 - Anonymous reporting of crime & concerns
 - Antisocial Behaviour
 - Electrical Safety
 - Fire Safety
 - First Aid
 - Healthy bodies – sugar swaps and healthy teeth
 - How to make an emergency call
 - Rail Safety
 - Road Safety
 - Stranger Danger

- Water Safety

- 1.5 Since 2014 where attendance numbers are available, the Runnymede scheme has increased its coverage from 14 to 23 schools (including mainstream and specialist provisions, one of which caters for complex speech, language, and communication needs, the other being a Life Skills Day Centre for adults with learning disabilities) and increased from approx. 700 to 900 pupils.



2. Report and, where applicable, options considered

Surrey County Council's Safer Communities Programme offer

- 2.1 In January 2023, Surrey County Council launched a free, digital Community Safety resource created for teachers to deliver flexibly in their year 6 classrooms. This is known as the Safer Communities Programme.
- 2.2 The Safer Communities Programme is an enhancement of the PSHE curriculum, in line with PSHE Association guidelines and Surrey Healthy Schools, that compliments the syllabus primary school children are already following. The programme adopts a trauma informed, strength-based approach to teaching and reflects contemporary topics important to the whole of Surrey, such as physical health and mental wellbeing, making empowering decisions, mutual respect and embracing difference.
- 2.3 A main part of this programme is to 'leave the teaching to teachers' whilst regularly engaging pupils with key topics and increasing their opportunity to ask questions and solidify learning.

- 2.4 As part of this programme, Surrey Police and Surrey Fire and Rescue Service have designed their youth offer to allow for engagement with year 4 and year 7 students, resulting in their withdrawal of support for the Junior Citizen scheme.
- 2.5 Other agencies and providers including St John Ambulance, Network Rail, RNLI and School Nurses have expressed their desire to continue with the Junior Citizen Scheme as it is a valuable engagement event, allowing them to provide key messages to over 900 Runnymede pupils each year. Without the event, it is felt the pupils will miss out on valuable life-saving skills not covered within the PSHE curriculum.

Funding

- 2.6 In previous years, the Junior Citizen scheme has been reliant on grant funding of £5,000 per year to run. This funding has come from the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and the Runnymede Community First Fund, each supplying £2,500 on the basis of their contributions being match funded by the other.
- 2.7 The £5,000 has mainly been used to purchase handbooks produced by Child Safety Media at a cost of £5 per unit with a minimum order of 1000. However on occasions the funds have supported the purchase of other items (for goodie bags).
- 2.8 In light of the Safer Communities Programme and withdrawal of support by some agencies, the funding which has been made available from the PCC is likely to be vastly reduced or ceased completely, meaning it would be difficult, if not impossible to continue without funding from another source.
- 2.9 It is asked that this Committee considers funding the event annually for an initial period of 3 years.

Feedback from schools

- 2.10 Following the 2022 event, a feedback survey was provided to all education establishments who attended to obtain their views on the future of Junior Citizen. 100% of respondents stated they would like to still attend Junior Citizen alongside the Safer Communities Programme.
- 2.11 When advised that it may be necessary to implement a cost for attendance in future, 46% of respondents advised that this would impact them and result in non-attendance.

Options for change

- 2.12 The Junior Citizen scheme now has a unique opportunity to embrace the changes thrust upon us, with the ability to widen the scope of learning from safety messages to incorporate wider health and well-being areas.
- 2.13 The 2022 event saw the School Nurses being reintroduced to provide advice on keeping teeth healthy and sugar swaps and this could be expanded upon to include inputs on keeping our minds and bodies healthy through stress and anxiety management / mindfulness and physical activity should suitable providers be found.

- 2.14 Runnymede is identified as having a higher than average (for Surrey) rate for childhood obesity and as such, focusing on physical activity or effects of inactivity would be beneficial. This could be provided by officers within Runnymede Borough Council's Community Development team.
- 2.15 Areas for change are still being developed with however communications have been sent to Hope UK and Eikon. Hope UK currently deliver basic drug awareness (alcohol, cigarettes, aerosol can, nitrous oxide, cannabis, cocaine and medicines) in 10 other areas which include 4 Surrey Boroughs. Eikon are the Runnymede provider of early intervention and resilience building within The Surrey Wellbeing Partnership (SWP) which in turn is part of the Mindworks Surrey Alliance.
- 2.16 It is proposed that an annual sum of £5,000 be funded from the new Youth Development budget held by Community Services and against which, expenditure is required to be approved by this Committee.

3. Policy framework implications

- 3.1 It is suggested that without funding, costs would need to be passed onto the schools, which would likely be further passed onto parents. Taking into account the current financial climate, this would not be suitable, especially given that our own Corporate Business Plan shows Runnymede has a higher than average rate of children living in relative low-income families and/or live in absolute poverty (pg 7 - [Corporate Business Plan 2022- 2026 \(runnymede.gov.uk\)](https://www.runnymede.gov.uk/corporate-business-plan-2022-2026))
- 3.2 Continuing with the Junior Citizen event and expanding into health and wellbeing areas as well as vital safety messages would conform to two of the corporate themes:
- Empowering our communities
 - Health and Wellbeing

4. Resource implications (where applicable)

- 4.1 The annual cost for the Junior Citizen scheme is £5,000 with zero income moving forward. Staffing needs for the scheme will be impacted by expanding into health and wellbeing as this area will require support from officers within the Community Development team. However, dates for the event do not conflict with other large projects undertaken by the team.

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 None identified.

6. Equality implications

- 6.1 The Council has a Public Sector Duty under the Equalities Act 2010 (as amended) to have due regard to the need to:
- a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation;

- b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a Protected Characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- c) Foster good relations between those who share a relevant characteristic and persons who do not share those characteristics;

in relation to the 9 'Protected Characteristics' stated within the Act.

- 6.2 There are no negative equality implications with continuing with the Junior Citizen scheme. The scheme has a positive impact on age and disability in particular.
- 6.3 The scheme is available to year 6 pupils across Runnymede with invites to attend being provided to public and private schools as well as mainstream and specialist provisions. In addition to this, the event has welcomed adults with learning difficulties where the messages have been deemed suitable to their developmental needs.

7. Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

7.1 None identified.

8. Other implications (where applicable)

8.1 None identified.

(To Resolve)

Background papers

None stated.