

# Annual Report 2006/7

A little booklet called “ The Good Councillors Guide” instructs us that the main purpose of a Parish Council is to make decisions and then carry them through. I would add that it is important that we keep people informed about those decisions and actions, and the expected consequences, and also to give warning of what is to come, where possible.

This report aims to do just that – to keep all Purley on Thames residents briefed about what the Parish Council has done on your behalf over the last year, and about what we intend to do over the next 12 months. We’ve taken the opportunity to add a little more on how we work, how money is spent, who to contact and where to get more information if needed.

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## Summary of 2006/7

Although we continue to use the Village Plan to guide our actions, and as a blueprint for what people want, it is now over two years since its publication, and we need to keep up to date. Many of the original actions have now been completed, but new demands have emerged to add to the plan.

In the past year we have:

Introduced the Neighbourhood Warden scheme

Promoted the Farmer's Market to be a firm fixture in the village calendar

Conducted speeding studies and awareness in reported hot spots

Encouraged more community activities in the Barn

Improved maintenance and inspection of play area equipment in recreation grounds.

Extended our website, and trialled an electronic newsletter to increase communication

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Worked with other bodies to improve services in the village:

- continued the focus on Community Safety, with Police, Wardens, WB council, and others
- monitored planning applications with the Planning Authority (WBC)
- litter provision and clearing
- Streetcare services
- re-cycling, including the recent Xmas tree service

More long-term, we have exerted influence over highways / cycleways and footpath provision, and more community facilities in this Eastern area of West Berkshire.

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## And for 2007/8...

Not forgetting that we have a considerable day-to-day responsibility to keep services running smoothly for the village, and to protect the village as much as possible, in 2007 some of our main priorities will be:

A Parking Study and improvements around schools and other problem areas

More provision for older youth leisure - starting with the promised cycle track in Bucknell's Meadow.

Continued emphasis on working with other agencies for community safety and tranquillity.

Influence the Tilehurst Learning Campus project for benefit to Purley, also press for the implementation of Kennet & Thames Vision.

Long-term pressure on highways and footpath maintenance.

Prepare a Village Design Statement to boost our influence on planning applications, trying to keep development appropriate to the character of the village.

Maintain and improve recreation facilities in Goosecroft Recreation Ground, Bucknell's Meadow and Pikeshaw Wood.

## Finance - how your money is used

The Council managed a budget of just over £100,000 in the last year, representing a contribution of less than £40 per household. Full accounts for 2006/7 are not available at this time, and are normally finalised and audited in the Autumn. Figures mentioned here are therefore provisional. The income sources are illustrated in Figure 1. Figure 2 looks at expenditure in the same way.

Figure 1. Income

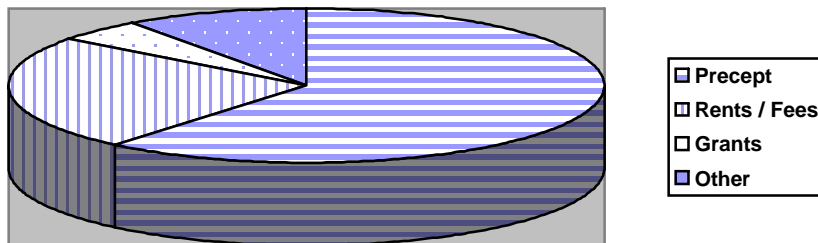
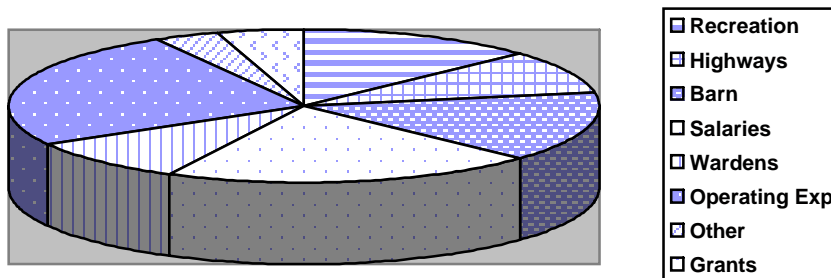


Figure 2. Expenditure



Expenditure is heavily weighted towards funding day-to-day maintenance and management of Parish assets and provision of services. However, we have where possible also provided funding for important improvement projects. We believe that the Parish Council's work provides good value.

## Planning issues

People consult us more about planning issues than any other topic. Our concern is to maintain the good living characteristics of Purley, but we are aware of the pressure to add more and more houses. Our powers are limited, but we use them

to try and influence the number, type and location of housing and to get the accommodation that local people want and can afford.

Our areas of focus have been

- Long Lane, where development within the 'settlement line' continues;
- Mapledurham Lock, where the village was successful for the present in blocking an unwelcome proposal from the Environment Agency for a sanitation station;
- so-called 'back garden' developments, where 2 or 3 houses replace one existing house. Purley is very vulnerable to that trend, and we are keen to ensure that Purleys' semi-rural character is retained, and not just give in to the high-density pressures.

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## Tilehurst Learning Campus

One of the major influences on Long Lane developments in the medium term will be the proposed re-development of the Denefield School site. This is West Berkshire's largest capital project, if it proceeds, and is currently in a feasibility study stage. We are monitoring it very closely on behalf of Purley, because although it is not within our boundary, it will have significant impact on many in the village. Matters of primary school children and school travel, traffic and parking implications, and the redevelopment of school sites need to be carefully considered. We are insisting on good public information and real consultation, and these are happening with newsletters to everyone, and expected consultation around June or July of this year.

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## Community Safety

The term community safety embraces safe travel, crime and anti-social behaviour. Through the work of the Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG), we have put a huge emphasis on this area for more than two years, and our Wardens and Police recently described Purley as 'very quiet'.

'Very quiet' is a good result from all the hard work put in by ourselves and the protection agencies acting on our behalf. In the last year, we have had to deal with a spate of burglaries in the lower village; a number of burnt-out cars abandoned on footpaths; mini-motorbike nuisance in the village and in Sulham Woods; and we have been working to reduce speeds on the A329 through Purley. So we cannot relax.

Overall though, Purley is a safe place to live and work.

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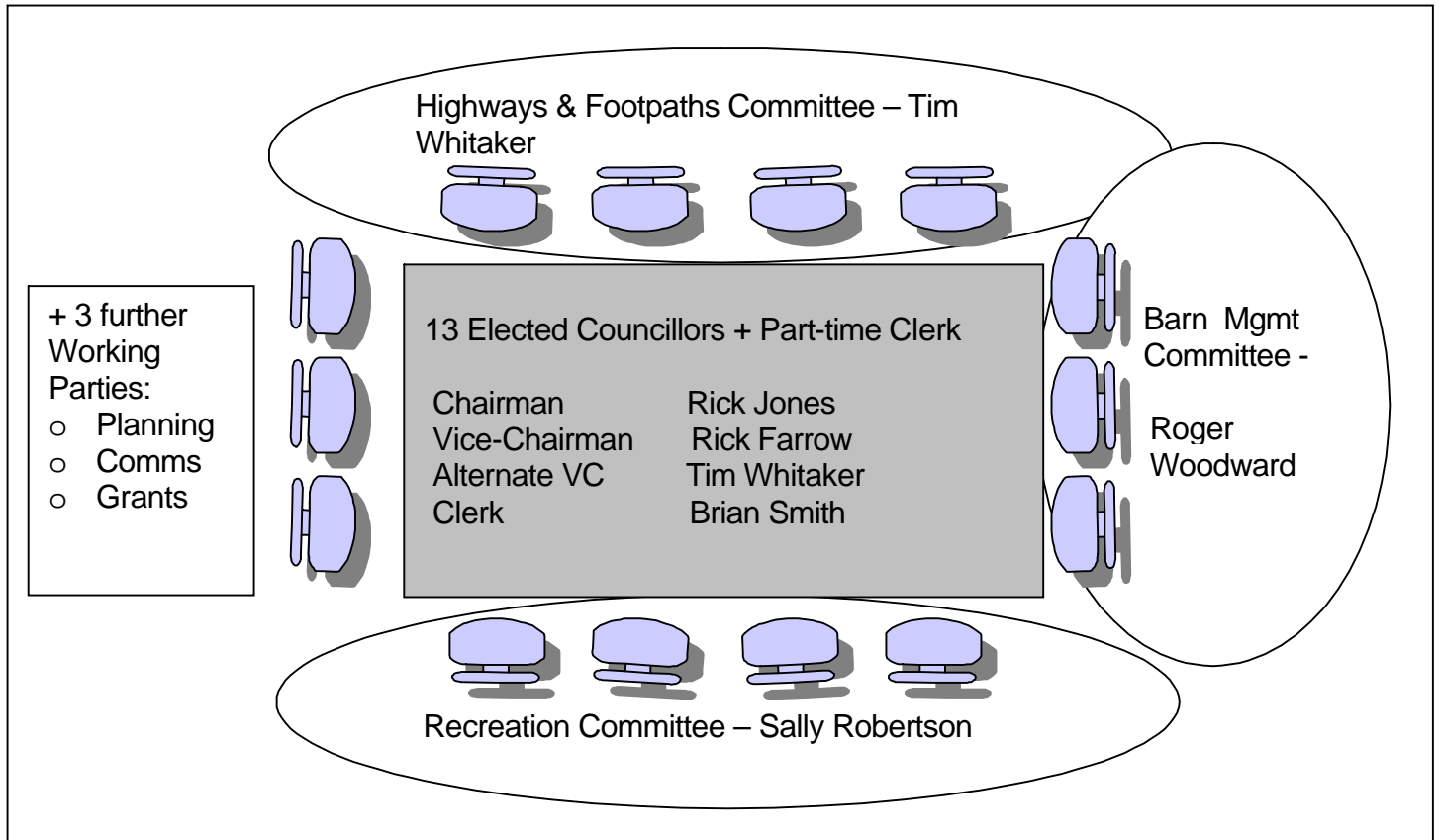
## How the Council works...

The full Council meets monthly to review the work of officers and committees, monitor projects and spending, approve decisions and allocate tasks.

Periodically, progress against plan is reported and longer-term strategies are prepared and agreed.

The Clerk and Chairman manage the Parish Office, finances and administration, and control the Council's schedule.

There are three main committees, which take responsibility for different areas of the Council's business, manage major projects in conjunction with our Partners – West Berks Council, Sovereign Housing Association and Wardens, Thames Valley Neighbourhood Police, our contractors and so on.



- Highways and Footpaths Committee manage some footpaths, the Allotments, the Burial Ground and Pikeshaw, noticeboards and litter bins. They work with WBC on maintenance of highways and footpaths, litter collection, and have projects involving parking, cycle routes and highways improvements.
- The Recreation Committee manage our two recreation grounds and all the recreation equipment. They work closely with Youth agencies, the sports clubs, and contractors and caretaker as well. Provision of new and improved facilities is always a focus.
- The Barn Management Committee manages the Barn community centre and the booking system, working with the Barn Manager and caretaker, local organisations, education providers and Farmers Market. They also are working hard to enhance the Barn's facilities and equipment.

In addition, we have less formal working parties (WP) who work on specialist aspects of the Council's responsibilities:

- The Planning Working Party meets weekly on Monday evenings to consider planning applications and advise the Planning Authority.

- The Communications WP manages our web site, and uses many other means to inform residents of matters of importance or interest.
- The Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG) is a forum where multiple agencies, including several Parish Councils, hosted by Purley, work together to improve community safety.

## How to contact us

Parish Office: Telephone 0118 984 4507  
 Email [clerk@purleypc.wanadoo.co.uk](mailto:clerk@purleypc.wanadoo.co.uk)  
 Write Parish Office, Goosecroft Lane, off Beech Road, Purley on Thames, RG8 8DR

Website: [www.purleyonthames.net](http://www.purleyonthames.net) (lots of contacts and information)

## Opening hours

The Parish Office is open to the public during the following hours:

Monday evenings (except bank Holidays) 5.45pm to 8.30pm  
 Thursday 9.00am to 3.15pm

Councillors are available for consultation on Monday evening 'surgery' between 6.00 – 7.00pm

## Members

Chairman	Rick Jones	0118 962 3793
Vice-Chair	Rick Farrow	0118 962 4577
Vice-Chair, Highways	Tim Whitaker	0118 984 5553
Recreation	Sally Robertson	0118 962 5978
Barn	Roger Woodard	0118 984 2112
Member	Bill Ayling	0118 941 9437
Member	David Betts	07899 774475
Member	John Chapman	0118 942 6999
Member	Paul Coombes	0118 961 3462
Member	John Devine	0118 962 5818
Member	Tim Metcalfe	0118 942 8001
Member	Graham Rolfe	0118 941 7247
Member	Alex Stott	0118 941 9186