
Annual Report 2009/10

In an age of multiple communication channels, the Parish Council is limited to just a few. We use the Web, Noticeboards and Parish News as much as possible, and produce this Annual Report to supplement those regular notices.

This edition highlights some of the last year, and will give you an overview of what Purley on Thames Parish Council has achieved for the village, and of our priorities for the near future. Hopefully, reading it will give you some idea of what the Parish Council (PC) does, how money is spent, who to contact and where to get more information if needed – the main sources being our comprehensive web site, www.purleyonthames.net, and the Parish Office.

The Council performs much of its work through formal meetings and projects, three main committees, and some less formal working parties. Most meetings are open to the public, and the schedule, agendas and minutes are published on our web site, or available from the Parish Office.

Much of the work is simply managing, maintaining and keeping safe, and gradually improving, all the village facilities. We do that directly, and work with all sorts of partners who help. I would like to thank our staff, all the Councillors themselves and many other volunteers who perform valuable roles. Also West Berkshire Council, our Neighbourhood Wardens and Police.

Highways and transport



Our Highways and Footpaths Committee have been working hard this year with WBC on a number of road improvements projects:

- A complete re-working of the traffic calming scheme in Long Lane, and re-surfacing of much of its length. Purley and Tilehurst Councils had requested changes, and the new scheme was the result of a lot of design and consultation. Monitoring since then has shown that the new scheme is more popular with motorists using the route, but that speeds are still being sensibly restricted.
- A329 re-surfacing from Knowlsey Road roundabout to the border with Reading. This is the fourth important road within the Purley boundary to be re-surfaced in the last few years, and has made such a difference!
- Agreement to implement a 30 mph speed limit on the A329 main road through the village. Long fought for, this will be a major safety improvement for those moving about the village between commercial, leisure and education facilities.

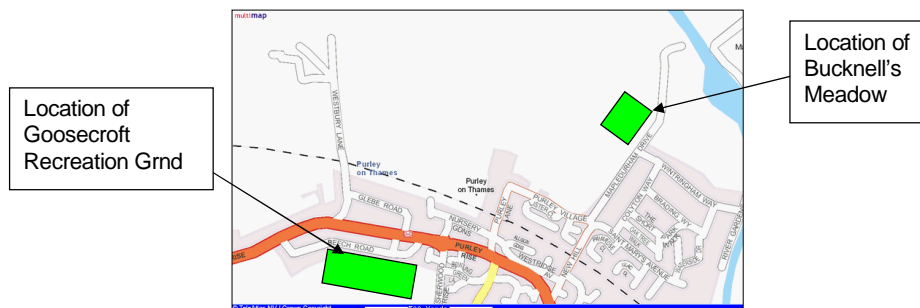
The Highways and Footpaths Committee also provide litter bins and street furniture, manage the Allotments with volunteer help, the Burial Ground at Goosecroft, and Pikeshaw woodland, as well as working with contractors to maintain a number of footpaths.

Recreation and Youth



Opening of the new
Outdoor Gym in
Bucknell's Meadow

Many hundreds of people enjoy the recreation facilities at **Goosecroft, Bucknell's Meadow, the Barn and Pikeshaw**. These are kept in good order by a small band of volunteers and contractors, to whom the Council is very grateful and again wish to record thanks to those involved.



During this year, the Recreation Committee:

- ❑ Provided opportunities for residents to play and experience Bowling, in association with Trentham's Bowling Club.
- ❑ Opened the Outdoor Gym in Bucknell's Meadow, intended to give free training and exercise for youths and adults in a beautiful setting near the river. This is part of our plan to improve the leisure facilities on the lower village.
- ❑ Are providing new seating and tables for the play areas in Goosecroft and Bucknell's Meadow.
- ❑ Supported the Youth Club, who now meet weekly in the Purley Park Social Club premises, and are going from strength to strength.
- ❑ Supported the sports clubs where we can

West Berkshire Local Development Framework

In this year, West Berkshire Council has published and submitted its Core Strategy for development in the district, which sets out its plan for residential development and their context up to 2026.

The Council has provided input to this document as far as the Eastern Area (which includes Purley) is concerned, over the past two years, and as a result, we feel that the plan reflects well the requirements for Purley – to provide sufficient housing for our population and families, whilst retaining and protecting the character of the village. It also points out the need for good infrastructure and services to support modern village life. See the documents online or at the Parish Office.

The Barn Community Centre



Our Barn Committee work with the Barn Manager and caretakers to make the Barn available and comfortable for the many local groups and events that use it. This is no small task, as it was not purpose-built to be a modern community centre! The maintenance load is heavy; the heating system is difficult to manage with our changeable weather and the differing requirements of each user. However, it is a wonderful building, and worth the effort. The Committee and Manager

organise hiring, cleaning, maintenance and improvements, and in the last year:

- ❑ Have upgraded kitchens
- ❑ Installed toilets in the small hall
- ❑ Recently, completely replaced the floors in both halls.

Contact the Barn Manager for more details.

Also in 2009/10 :

- ❑ The Council fought hard to retain our historic railway bridges, threatened with demolition by Network Rail. We have asked NR to lower track rather than destroy the bridges.
- ❑ We continue to work 'in the office' to enhance the way that we operate, partly because of ever tighter regulation governing parish councils, but also so that we can manage the village's assets better, protect and manage money more closely, and take actions faster. Thus we have installed new IT systems, developed new procedures and controls to this end.
- ❑ Part of this is the creation of a Publication Scheme, which sets out all the information that the Council holds, and how members of the public can access it. This scheme has been displayed on Noticeboards and on the web site.
- ❑ We now put a lot of effort and time into Health & Safety inspections and risk assessments of all our facilities and equipment, to ensure the safety of users.
- ❑ We put Community Safety as a high priority, working with Neighbourhood Wardens and Police on the continuing war against crime and anti-social behaviour. This year, statistics show a marked decline in crime in the village.

- We provide support to local groups through grants, subsidised hall hire, free publicity.
- A working party has started the process to update the recreation elements of Village plan, and expects to consult widely through the year, reporting back and publishing results early next year.
- We liaise with the Environment Agency on the works at Mapledurham Lock to minimise disruption, and are still pressing for more extensive flood management actions.
- The Council reviews all planning applications, and makes recommendation to West Berkshire Council.

Priorities for 2010/11:

Going into 2009/10, much of our emphasis, effort and time will again be devoted to managing the parish facilities and assets to enable as many people as possible to use and enjoy them to the full and in safety. We will again put enthusiastic support into our sports clubs, social clubs and youth club, flood warden scheme, community safety and want to encourage local voluntary organisations and societies.

- Highways - look at expanding the Allotments, implement the A329 30mph speed limit; consider a way of improving car parking for river and recreation access.
- Recreation - develop a long term strategy for leisure to update the recreation section of the Village Plan, continue with the plans for Bucknell's Meadow.
- Barn – also create a long term plan for maintenance of the Barn; install a sound limiter device to prevent excess noise.
- Electrical safety upgrades for all buildings
- Energy usage review intended to save money on energy costs, which have escalated in recent years.

I can summarise what we are about in what we might call a Council mission statement:

“To ensure that Purley on Thames is a safe and pleasant place to live”.

Finance - how your money is used

The Council managed a budget of almost £150,000 in the last year, including some expenditure from reserves. Full accounts for the year are not available until finalised and audited in the summer. Amounts mentioned here are therefore always provisional.

The income sources are illustrated in Figure 1. Figure 2 looks at expenditure in the same way.

Figure 1. Income (£000s)

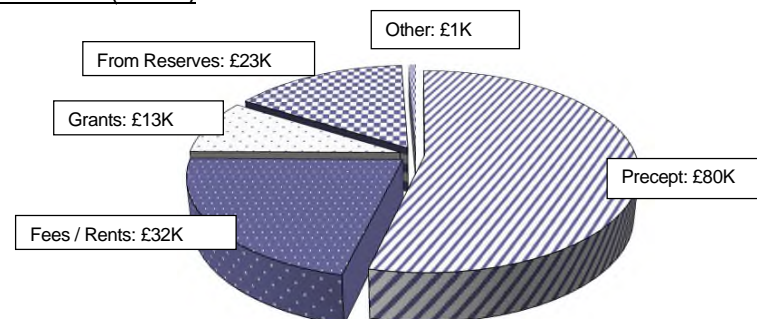
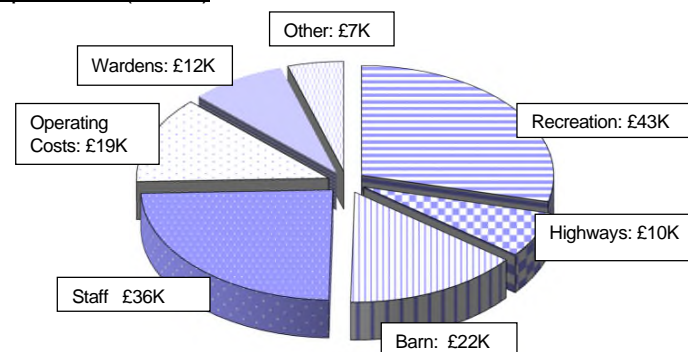


Figure 2. Expenditure (£000s)



Expenditure by the committees is all directed towards the day-to-day maintenance and management of Parish assets and provision of services. We use reserves to fund capital spending on improvement projects, and these reserves are built up where we can create income beyond our annual expenditure. This is often through applying for grants from other funding bodies, which helps to supplement money collected from the precept (householders). In this way, and by placing competitive contracts, we aim to ensure that your money is used to provide the greatest value for the village. Full accounts can be viewed at the Parish Office, or on the web site when published.

How to contact us

Parish Office: Telephone: 0118 984 4507
 Email: clerk@purleyonthames.net
 Write: Parish Office, Goosecroft Lane, off Beech Road, Purley on Thames, RG8 8DR

Website: www.purleyonthames.net (lots of contacts and information)

Clerk: Janet Field (Mrs)
Assistant Clerk: Jean Chudleigh (Mrs)

Opening hours

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

Monday (except bank Holidays) 2.00pm to 7.00pm

Thursday 9.00am to 2.00pm

Councillors are available for consultation on Monday evening 'surgery' between 6.30 – 7.00pm, or by appointment.

Members

Chairman	Rick Jones	0118 962 3793
Vice-Chair	Rick Farrow	0118 962 4577
Highways	Paul Coombes	0118 961 3462
Recreation	Graham Rolfe	0118 941 7247
Barn	Roger Woodward	0118 984 2112
Member	Bill Ayling	0118 941 9437
Member	Anne Bolland	0118 941 3259
Member*	David Betts	07917 697933
Member	Christine Collier	0118 942 2951
Member	John Chapman	0118 942 6999
Member	Pamela Beddoes	0118 941 4186
Member*	Tim Metcalfe	0118 942 8001
Member	Bernard Nix	0118 942 1067

* also our District Councillors.

Useful Numbers

Community Safety:

Neighbourhood Wardens	0118 945 5286
Police Non-Emergency	0845 8 505 505
Lock Keeper	0118 941 7776

District Council:

West Berkshire Council	01635 424000
WBC emergency out of hours	01635 41261
Streetcare	01635 519080

Purley Barn

Barn Manager	07917 453187
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Social Clubs

Purley Sports & Social Club	0118 984 3061
Purley Park Social Club	0118 942 7047

Schools

Purley C.E. School	0118 984 2384
Long Lane Primary School	0118 942 7187
Denefield School	0118 941 3458
Westwood Farm School	0118 942 5182
Westwood Farm County School	0118 942 6113

Doctors

Pangbourne Medical Practice	0118 984 2234
Tilehurst, Overdown Rd	0118 942 5432

Travel

Reading Buses	0118 959 4000
Great Western Trains	08457 000 125

Your useful numbers: