



Annual Report 2011/12



The Government seems keen that communities take on more and more responsibility for their own local affairs. There have been many words spoken in public and published on this subject. On the ground, though, not much has changed formally to make this happen. However,

active local councils have taken the opportunity of this mood to do things that materially affect people's quality of living. Purley on Thames, we hope, is in that category, and this report is intended to give parishioners a feel for what the Council does, is responsible for, and is focussed on.

Our first priority is to look after the 'assets' that the village owns, and make sure that they are accessible, safe and provide the facility that residents want. These are:

Two recreation grounds – Goosecroft and Bucknell's Meadow;
Pikeshaw woodland area
The Barn community centre
Goosecroft Burial Ground
Parish Office
'Landlord' of Purley Sports and Social Club, and Trentham Bowling Club;
Lots of play equipment, street furniture (litter bins, bus shelters, notice boards, some lights, etc)

I would like to thank our staff, especially our Clerks, the Councillors, many volunteers and contractors, and also West Berkshire Council, Neighbourhood Wardens and the Police. All these help to maintain the assets and provide services for us.

Highways and transport



Pikeshaw Woodland

Our Highways and Footpaths Committee liaise with WBC to influence how our roads and verges are maintained and developed, 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. The year has been dominated by the Network Rail works to two bridges in the village, but there have been a number of other initiatives as well:

- The A329 between Tilehurst Station and Knowlsey Road was re-surfaced, to everyone's relief!
- A 20 mph speed limit has been agreed to be introduced through the old village between the junction of Purley Lane and Nursery Gardens, and Lister Close – where the same restriction was imposed during the bridge diversion. This long term measure was also the desired outcome from the one-way experiment conducted along the same length of road.
- In conjunction with WBC, we have again increased the salt bin provision to help with severe winter weather disruption. WBC also has the main routes through and in the village as part of their regular salt spreading service.
- The parking restrictions introduced a few years ago have been reviewed and some changes and additional restrictions have been created where requested by local residents.
- A lot of tree work has been required in the Pikeshaw woodland in the last 12-18 months – a result of severe weather conditions and general age of the tree stock.

Recreation and Youth



Football at Goosecroft

The Recreation Committee manage the two recreation grounds, Goosecroft and Bucknell's Meadow, and they support youth initiatives in the village. The grounds are used for both formal sports and casual recreation, and enjoyed by hundreds of people each year. They are kept in good order by a

small band of Councillors, volunteers and contractors, to whom the Council is very grateful.

During this year, the Recreation Committee and supporters have:

- Provided a new picnic table and benches in Bucknell's Meadow.
- Received a generous grant from WBC Eastern Area Vision group to replace the roundabout at Goosecroft.
- Supported a new Boules piste, proposed and being constructed near the lock by one of our Councillors, Bernard Nix
- Researched and planned a new all-weather ball play area for Bucknell's Meadow, and a major upgrade of play equipment at Goosecroft. These projects take much elapsed time, because of planning permission, the consultation required, and the number of contractors involved, etc.

The Barn Community Centre



Our Barn Committee works with the Barn Manager and caretaker 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 Committee and Manager organise hiring, cleaning, maintenance and improvements, and in the last year have increased the variety of usage to make it a true community centre and

it is a very busy, active and vibrant place.

- The noise limiter has proved difficult to get to working correctly, and we are working with the manufacturers on this issue.
- We have installed a fantastic picture of the Barn, painted during WW1 by a famous local artist, Cecil Aldin. It depicts the Barn in its war work as an Army Remount Centre.
- Storage for users has been in great demand, and some changes have been made to accommodate this.
- The Barn is also a challenge to maintain, and we have decided that the exterior cladding needs to be replaced quite urgently. The Barn Committee is now engaging help to plan and execute this major project.

Planning

We have now established a full committee to consider planning applications, which meets on the 1st and 3rd Monday evenings each month. Although West Berkshire Council are the Planning Authority (i.e. they take the final decision), the Parish Council does provide a local view, and does have influence on those decisions.

Typically, we are sent each application when it is received by WBC, and have a limited time to discuss it and feedback comments, usually 2-3 weeks. The options we have are to (a) support (b) object or (c) have no objections. In considering applications we have to use strict planning criteria, and also assess what the impact of development will be on the immediate neighbourhood and the village as a whole.

If we have concerns, we can request that the application be presented and debated by the Eastern Area Planning Committee of WBC, which is a good forum for both supporters and objectors to present their case and get a decision from elected Councillors, rather than just the professional planning officers who determine all the less controversial developments.

Members of the public are invited to attend any of these meetings, as with all the council and committee meetings. The agendas are published in advance on our web site and noticeboards, and the minutes are also published once approved.

More in 2011/12:

- We have experienced considerable disruption to our email and website communications through this year, due to technical issues and persistent hacking. Thanks largely to Graham Rolfe and a small working party including our clerks, we have managed to stay online and are preparing a new and updated website.
- The Network Rail bridge works have arguably had the biggest impact of any event in recent years. The Council worked hard with all concerned to ensure minimum disruption to life and movement around the village, which in general, has been the case. We do, however, look forward to normality returning!
- The fruits of their efforts will not be felt until June 2012, but the Jubilee Committee, set up under the sponsorship of the Council, has worked tirelessly to create a wonderful programme of events covering the extended Jubilee weekend. Loads of people involved, but especial mention of Bill Ayling, Jean Chudleigh, and Catherine Sampson.

- We always carry a heavy and continuous maintenance load, as our financial report will verify. This year it has been dominated by battles with wildlife and nature – repairing squirrel damage, extensive tree works, as well as the more normal fencing renewals, drain clearance, car park repainting, play equipment, H&S risk assessments, and so on.
- Each year also, some equipment needs replacing or added to. This year we have renewed mowing, hedge-cutting and leaf collection items of machinery, installed ‘fly-zappers’ (more wild life!) and a water softener for the Barn.

Priorities for 2012/13:

In 2012/13, our emphasis, effort and time will as usual 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 always put support into our sports clubs, social clubs and youth club, flood warden scheme, community safety and will encourage local voluntary organisations and societies.

- Highways – finish bridge works, including Purley Lane. Implement the 20mph zone in the old village. Re-launch a management plan and volunteer group for maintaining Pikeshaw. Move the Mapledurham Drive noticeboard, which keeps getting vandalised, and re-furbish our stock of dog litter bins – life in the H & F committee is not glamorous!
- Recreation – We need to install the planned all-weather ball play area into Bucknell’s Meadow, though we still need to satisfy the requirements of the Environment Agency. We have ordered the new roundabout for Goosecroft, and want to upgrade the play area with some more colourful and modern equipment for young children. Complete the Boules piste and inaugurate the Boules club.
- Barn – the project to replace the outside cladding and improve sound insulation will provide the main focus for the Barn Committee. Get the Noise Limiter working properly.
- Complete the new website by the summer of 2012. If anyone has any requests or suggestions to improve the site, please contact our Clerk.
- We cannot include everything in this report. Please, if you have questions or comments for us; contact our Clerk at the Parish Office, either by calling in, telephone or email.

Finance - how your money is used

The Council managed to hold expenditure to just below the reduced 2011 figure, around £127,000. Full accounts for the year are not available until finalised and audited in the summer. Amounts mentioned here are therefore always provisional.

Figure 1: Income (£136,000)

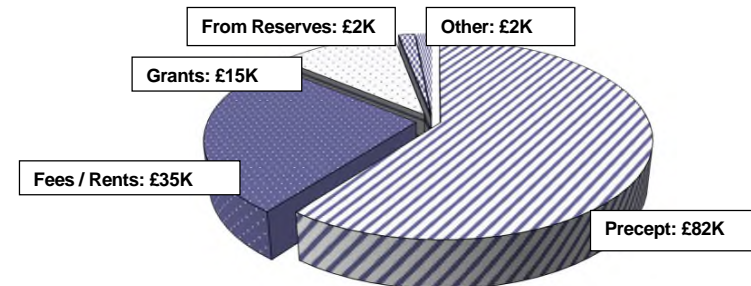
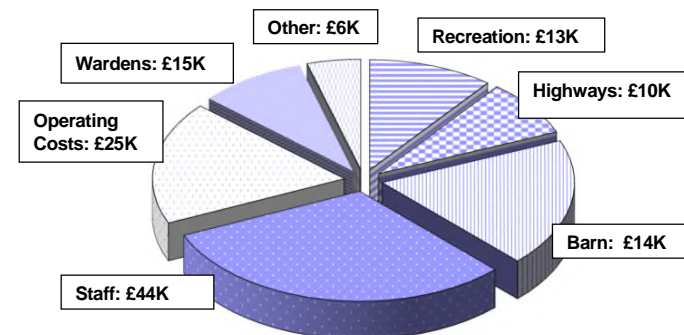


Figure 2: Expenditure (£127,000)



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). 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-pc.gov.uk
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 evenings, a
'surgery' between 6.00 – 7.00pm, or other times by appointment.

Members

Chairman	Rick Jones	0118 962 3793
Vice Chairman	Bernard Nix	0118 942 1067
Highways	Rick Jones	0118 962 3793
Recreation	Rick Farrow	0118 962 4577
Barn	Bernard Nix	0118 942 1067
Planning	Graham Rolfe	0118 941 7247
Member	Bill Ayling	0118 941 9437
Member	Pamela Beddoes	0118 941 4186
Member*	David Betts	07917 697933
Member	Anne Bolland	0118 941 3259
Member	John Chapman	0118 942 6999
Member	Christine Collier	0118 942 2951
Member	Gill Goodchild	0118 984 1248
Member	Neil Haughton	0118 942 3551
Member*	Tim Metcalfe	0118 942 8001

* also our District Councillors.

Useful Numbers

Community Safety:

Neighbourhood Wardens	0118 945 5286
Police Non-Emergency	0845 8505 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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Goosecroft Caretaker

	07901 640517
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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
ReadiBus	0118 931 0000
Great Western Trains	08457 000 125
Thames Travel	01491 837 988
Pangbourne & District Volunteer Centre	0118 984 4586