



Annual Report 2016/17

This report contains a brief summary of some of the Parish Council's projects over the past year. It also explains how we have managed the Council's finances and assets. More of village interest on the Parish Council website www.purleyonthames-pc.gov.uk

The Council's continuing aims are:

- To provide a safe environment in which parishioners can live, work and play.
- To provide good facilities and services or help West Berkshire District Council to do so.
- To spend money wisely and provide good value for money.



Purley Village

All the Parish Councillors appointed last year have remained in post. However there have been major changes in the parish office. Our Clerk retired and Assistant Clerk, Christine Lamb moved into that role. Sarah Williams was then appointed as Assistant Clerk. Due to the increasing amount of work for officers, the Council decided to create a new post of Amenities Manager, held by Dan Wisniewski. The new team is hard at work putting procedures in place for greater efficiency and compliance with recent rules for Parish Councils. They will be launching a parish newsletter which any parishioner

can request via email. Another way to find out about what is happening in the parish is the noticeboards. This year we have invested in several new boards and will be installing an additional board outside the Purley Park Social Club on Wintringham Way. This will be used for daily updates in the event of flooding as well as for other publicity at all times.

Allotments

The attraction of the beautiful location and the popularity of 'grow your own' means that, despite a small turn-over of plot holders each year, there is always a waiting list for an allotment.



Our Allotments

Last year the Honorary Allotments Manager, John Murphy, stood down. The Parish Council expresses our thanks to John for all the work he has done over the years. We welcome Graham Chapman, who has now taken over this role.

The Bungalow, Goosecroft

When our caretaker left last year, the bungalow at Goosecroft became vacant. The Parish Council is refurbishing this property in order to let it as a source of income.

Recreation



New play equipment at Goosecroft

Upkeep of the grounds is a key responsibility for the Parish Council. Without a caretaker, it was decided that it would be cost effective to employ grounds maintenance contractors to do this role. We have continued to use the services of a tree surgeon to keep our wooded areas at Pikeshaw, Bucknell's and Goosecroft tidy and safe.

The sports facilities at Goosecroft continue to be very well used, offering cricket, tennis and football

to both adults and children, coaching and matches.

Purley Primary School's Tour de Purley has become an annual event in Bucknell's Meadow, attracting both locals and newcomers to our amenities.

Also popular are the children's playgrounds. Some new play equipment is planned for Bucknell's Meadow and the zip-wire has been put back into commission after major repairs.

Purley received Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) money as a result of the Milton Park housing development on Oxford Rd. This money is ring-fenced for open-space projects.

We have been able to do two major projects as well as buy children's play equipment. We have installed a tree-root barrier along one side of Trenthams Bowling Club's green to prevent roots from breaking through the playing surface. The second project is to create a new surface for the tennis courts at Goosecroft and replace the railings around. Both are costly but necessary improvements.

The Barn



Christmas Market at the Barn

The Barn has a core group of regular users and the past year has seen a healthy number of one-off functions and some new regular hirers too. As a very popular venue for classes, groups, functions and training, the Barn requires a high level of management and upkeep. This year improvements have been made to the heating, lighting and some facilities; more is planned. Poor outside lighting has been addressed too.

Friends of Purley Barn organised three events, a Quiz Night, an 'Antiques Roadshow' and the Christmas Market, all of which were hugely successful, introduced many new people to the Barn and raised money which will go towards improving facilities there.

Highways and Footpaths

Recent months have seen two long-awaited improvements to our highways. After on-going requests from the Parish Council and District Councillors, West Berkshire have improved the no-parking restrictions at the bottom end of Hazel Road, so removing the need for drivers to move onto the wrong side of the road on a blind bend. They have also moved the 30mph zone out towards Pangbourne along the A329 in order to ensure less speeding through our residential area.



Barn decked out for a Wedding Reception



Pikeshaws

Local people and ramblers continue to enjoy our footpaths. Concerns about potential changes to footpaths at Springs Farm have been raised and the Parish Council facilitated a public meeting in order that these issues could be aired with the land-owners. The Parish Council has also been proactive in encouraging dog walkers to clear up after their pets. West Berkshire has provided dog-poo bag dispensers on popular routes and volunteers keep these supplied with bags.

The Parish Council is now responsible for keeping the roadside grit bins stocked in case of icy weather. Once again a fairly mild winter has helped our budget. However, we are reviewing the siting of a couple of these bins.

The Future

We enter the financial year 2017/18 in the knowledge that West Berkshire will devolve more responsibilities for local services to the Parish Council but we are unclear of what these will be. Last year we took on grit bins and chose to contribute to the cost of safeguarding the 143 bus service. We had hoped to continue buying into the Neighbourhood Warden service but withdrawal by their major funders meant that there was no service to purchase. This year we are already aware of requests to provide financial support to keep the toilet block in Pangbourne's Station Rd carpark open and to



Tennis Courts

pay a share of the cost to ensure the survival of Pangbourne library. There will be more demands and we will not be able to support them all. The Village Plan questionnaire will be delivered to every household in Purley during May. Hopefully a large response will provide data telling us the priorities of local people so the Parish Council can represent their wishes. This is really important as hard decisions are to be made. Meanwhile, we welcome communication about all local issues.

Major projects for the coming year –

- The Village Plan
- Resurfacing of Tennis Courts
- Refurbishment and letting of the Bungalow, Goosecroft
- Various 'open space' projects using CIL money
- Adoption of responsibilities devolved by West Berkshire

We wish to thank the Parish Council Clerks and Amenities Manager, the Councillors, many volunteers and contractors, West Berkshire Council and the Police. All these people provided services or have maintained village facilities and assets.

Finance - how we use 'your' money

• Income & Expenditure

The Council is conscious that we are spending your money, and that we have a responsibility to spend it wisely, and carefully. Spending has decreased slightly from £145,000 last year, to around £142,855 in 2016/17. The 2016/7 financial year has been a challenging one. We started the year with no clarity on the future of the Wardens or of the activities that West Berkshire would no longer fund which we considered essential to the village i.e. grit bins.

These figures are provisional, as our accounts will not be finalised until later in the year.

Figure 1: Operating Income:

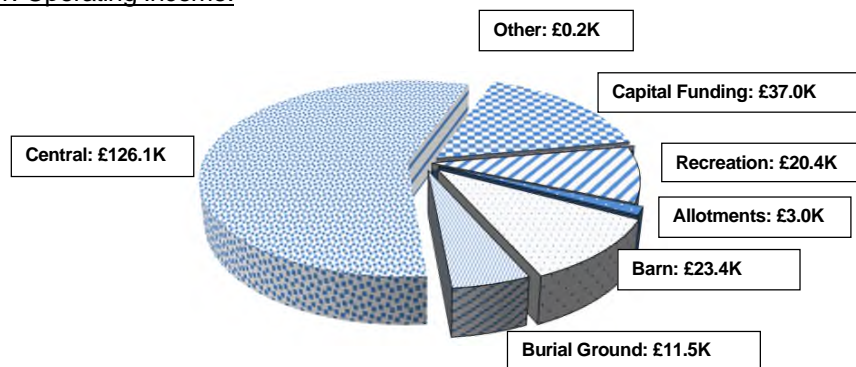
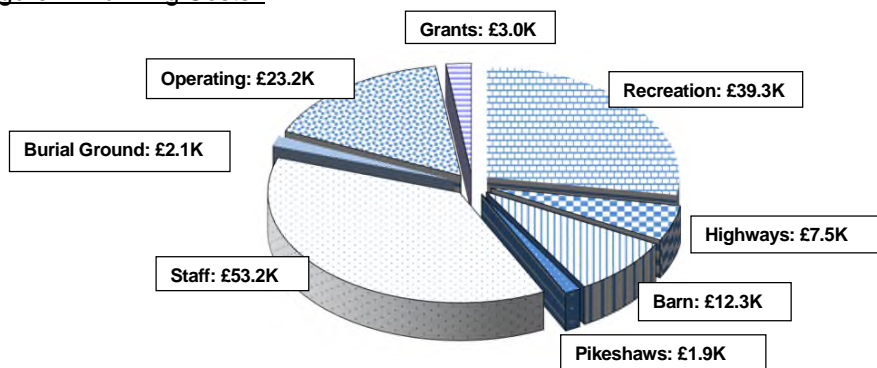


Figure 2: Running Costs:



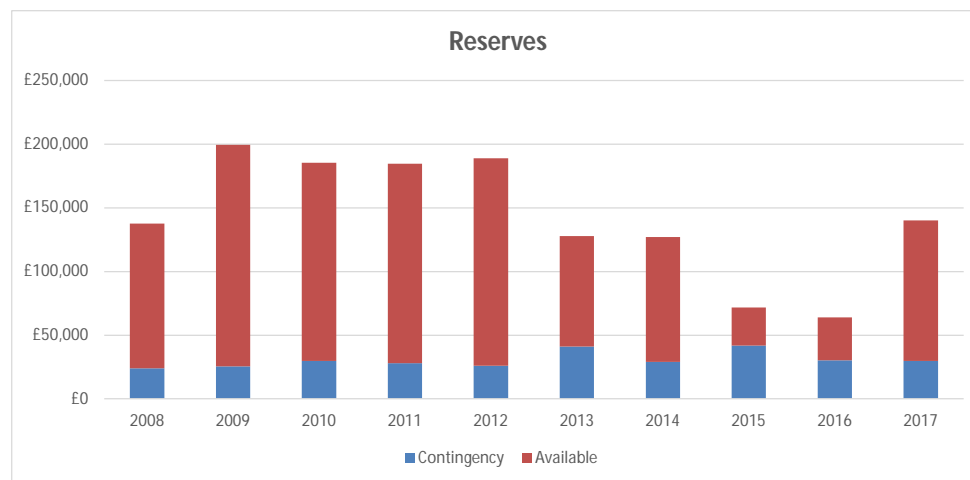
We produce some income from hires and grants but our main source of funding comes from the Precept. This is a very small element of Council Tax charged to householders in the Parish, which this year equated to around £63 per Band D household.

Full accounts can be viewed at the Parish Office, or on the web site when published.

• Reserves

The following chart shows how our reserves have moved over the past years. Our reserves are made up of two components:

- Contingency – reserves we need to keep as a cushion against our spending which we set at about 2 ½ times our monthly average spending for the year.
- Available – this is reserves that we have available to spend. It includes monies ring-fenced for “open space” development.



As you can see our available reserves, after having fallen quite considerably in previous years, have risen again this year. This is due, in part, to a large CiL payment we have received for the Milton Park development on the Oxford Road for “open space” development. When setting the budget for 2016/7, we also needed to make allowance for services which we thought we may need to fund plus any additional services transferred from West Berkshire. This has led to an underspend on what was expected in January 2015.

We expect that there will be several large capital projects in 2017/8 that will need to take place that this increase in the reserves will help fund.

Besides those mention above this includes:

- *Electrical safety work on the Pavilion and Barn*
- *Replacement of rotten machine room doors at Goosecroft*
- *Access lighting at Goosecroft for improved safety at night*
- *Replacement of defunct noticeboards*

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-pc.gov.uk (lots of contacts and information)
Clerk: Christine Lamb
Assistant Clerk: Sarah Williams
Amenities Manager: Dan Wisniewski

Opening hours

The Parish Office is open to the public during the following hours:
Monday (except bank Holidays) 2.00pm to 6.30pm
Thursday 9.30am to 2.30pm
Councillors are available for consultation on Monday evenings, between 5.30pm – 6.30pm, or other times by appointment.

Members and Staff

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|--|--|
|  Sue Briscoe Chairman 0118 945 6085 |  Graham Rolfe Vice Chairman & Planning 0118 941 7247 |  Rick Farrow Recreation 0118 962 4577 |  Bernard Nix Barn 0118 348 5867 |  Bill Ayling Highways 0118 941 9437 | |
|  Pamela Beddoes 0118 941 4186 |  Rick Jones* 0118 962 3793 |  John Chapman 0118 942 6999 |  Christine Collier 0118 942 2951 |  Martin Bishop 0118 945 3117 | |
|  Neil Haughton via office |  Stuart Chester 0118 942 2951 |  Jane Langford via office |  Christine Lamb Parish Clerk 0118 984 4507 |  Dan Wisniewski Amenities Mgr 0118 984 4507 |  Sarah Williams Asst Clerk 0118 984 4507 |

* Also our District Councillor. Our other District Councillor is Tim Metcalfe.

Useful Numbers

Community Safety:

Police Non-Emergency 101
Lock Keeper 0118 941 7776

District Council:

West Berkshire Council 01635 42400
West Berkshire Council emergency out of hours 01635 42161
Streetcare 01635 519080

Purley Barn

Via Parish Office 0118 984 4507

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 School 0118 942 7187
Denefield School 0118 941 3458
Theale Green School 0118 930 2741
Westwood Farm Junior School 0118 942 5182
Westwood Farm Infant School 0118 942 6113

Hospitals

Royal Berkshire 0118 322 5111
West Berkshire Community 01635 273 300

Doctors

The Boathouse Surgery, Pangbourne 0118 984 2234
Westwood Road Health Centre, Tilehurst 0118 942 7421
Tilehurst Village Surgery 0118 945 2612
Tilehurst Surgery Partnership, Tyler's Place 0118 942 7528

Travel

Reading Buses www.reading-buses.co.uk 0118 959 4000
ReadiBus www.readibus.co.uk 0118 931 0000
First GW Trains www.gwr.com 0345 7000 125
Thames Travel www.thames-travel.co.uk 01865 785 400
Pangbourne & District Volunteer Centre 0118 984 4586