



Annual Report 2019/20

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 Parish Council's finances and assets.

The Council's continuing aims are:

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

It is our responsibility to spend wisely and obtain good value for money.



Swans on the River

We would like to thank Graham Rolfe for all his work as a councillor. Graham resigned just before the Council Elections in May. When nominations closed all the other councillors had been nominated as had Bernard Nix. As there were thirteen candidates for thirteen Parish Council seats, we did not have to hold an election. Our Clerk, Christine Lamb left us at the end of October 2019, and we recruited Claire Thompson who started work as Clerk in January.

It has been, as always, a full and busy year. We have tried to keep our parishioners updated about our activities using our noticeboards, Purley Parish News and our own electronic newsletter as well as the Parish Council website.

This year:

- work is in progress to bring the website up to the requirements of General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).
- Pedestrian users of Goosecroft Lane have welcomed the replacement streetlights, making the road better lit at night, and installation of 5mph signs to increase safety.
- Many local people volunteer their time in a variety of ways to support the community of Purley. At the Chair's Reception in



Goosecroft Lane

October the Parish Council thanked these volunteers on behalf of all residents. This year both individuals and groups could be put forward for the Villager of the Year award and all the ten nominations were outstanding. The winner was the Armistice Group, which, in November 2018, organised the WW1 commemorative weekend and Purley's local soldier trail.

Allotments



Our Allotments

There are 136 plots in our allotments, situated at the end of Winston Way, overlooking the Thames valley and the Chiltern hills. There are different sized plots allowing gardeners to choose an allotment that they can manage. All the allotments continue to be popular.

Recreation

Upkeep of the grounds at Goosecroft, Bucknell's Meadow and Pikeshaw is a key responsibility of the Parish Council. Maintenance of these areas is contracted out to specialist ground care companies. Regular inspections, backed-up by thorough reports, check and monitor safety in the children's playgrounds. Over the year, repairs have been necessary to some of the equipment and a replacement wooden adventure trail is planned for installation at Goosecroft.



Goosecroft Pavilion

Responding to requests made in the Village Plan questionnaire we have refurbished the toilet next to the Pavilion at Goosecroft and this is open to users of the recreation ground during daylight hours.

Keeping our recreation areas safe and welcoming is of great importance to us. We have continued to employ a security company to check and lock up at Goosecroft at night. Aware that there is regular drug use in and around our recreation spaces, we have ongoing links with Thames Valley Police. Officers respond to reports of such behaviour but also pay unscheduled visits as a deterrent.

There is a growing demand for more sports pitches in Purley as football and cricket teams of both boys and girls now train and play here throughout the year. We still hope to extend our Goosecroft recreation ground further to the south but have experienced considerable difficulty in gaining the required planning permission. We have employed professional consultants, so we expect to move forward shortly.

The Barn



Chairman's Reception at The Barn

The Barn has a core group of regular users as it is a good venue for classes, groups, functions and training. It requires a high level of management and upkeep. In the past year we have refurbished the entrance doors to both Barns and whilst they remain in keeping with the age and design of the building, have been improved for both security and insulation. Recently all the Barn toilets have been decorated and upgraded with new vanity units, flooring and tiling. Thanks to the Friends of Purley Barn

and The Good Exchange for funding that project. We also thank Friends of Purley Barn and the Scouts for the new noticeboards in both Barns.

Highways and Footpaths

Residents in the lower village have recognised that thoughtless parking can hamper the progress of the number 16 bus. However, this has led to an increase in pavement parking which forces pedestrians, especially those with buggies or wheelchairs, into the road. We acknowledge that Purley has a parking problem that is difficult to resolve to everyone's satisfaction. Please think where and how you park!

Local people and ramblers continue to enjoy our footpaths. The Village Plan highlighted people's concern about the difficult access to Mapledurham Lock via Blounts Meadow. We have liaised with West Berkshire Council about the gates at River Gardens, Mapledurham Drive and to the lock itself. They agreed that improvements were necessary so hopefully these will happen in 2020.

A local resident lead on a Scoop the Poop campaign over the Summer and children from Purley Primary School supported this by designing posters. They also top up the dog-waste bag dispensers.



Pikeshaw

We are pleased that groups of children from several of our local schools now use the wooded area at Pikeshaw for 'Forest School'. This enables children to explore the plants and creatures found there as well as enjoy fresh air and physical challenges. The Parish Council continues to monitor proposed changes to footpaths on Springs Farm land. West Berkshire Council and GL Hearn who represent Springs Farm keep us informed and we contribute considered views as part of the official Planning process.

The Future

West Berkshire Council seem not to be planning such drastic cuts to their 2020/21 budget as in recent years, but the Parish Council may be required to take on further responsibilities for local services. In recent years we have assumed contributions to the cost of the 143 bus service, Pangbourne Library and the public toilets in Station Rd Pangbourne. These are reviewed annually.

Major projects for the coming year:

- Projects arising from the Village Plan (see Action Plan on our website)
- Preparation for recreational use of the land adjacent to Goosecroft, pending Planning Permission being granted.
- 'Open space' projects using Community Infrastructure Levy money.
- Adoption of responsibilities that may be devolved by West Berkshire.

Our facilities in action:



We wish to thank the Parish Council Clerks and Amenities Officer, 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 has a responsibility to use public money wisely and carefully. Spending has increased from £164,790 in 2018/19 to around £184,000 this year. This increase is in part because we have spent more on maintaining and improving our facilities and investing in our infrastructure. We also needed to spend on consultants' services to assist with our planning application. Nevertheless, our expenditure is under budget, partly through careful management and because there was no Clerk in post for two months. Our main expenditures in 2019/20 have been

- Upgrading street lighting at Goosecroft to lower energy efficient lights £1289
- Refurbishment of doors and locks to the Barn £2036
- Converting pavilion disabled toilet for public use with baby-changing facilities £1222
- Trade bin on Mapledurham Drive from April to October £368

These figures are provisional as at 20 February 2020, as our accounts will not be finalised until later in the year.

Figure 1: Operating Income:

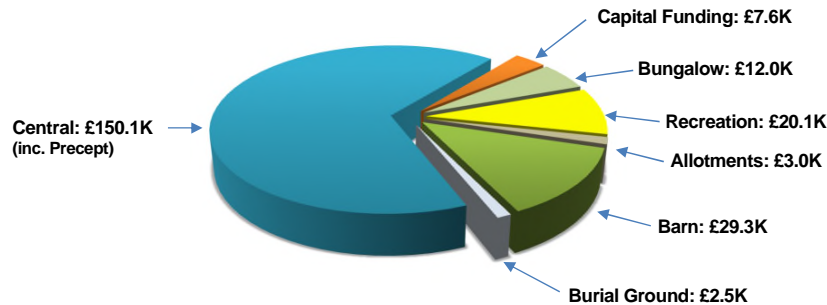
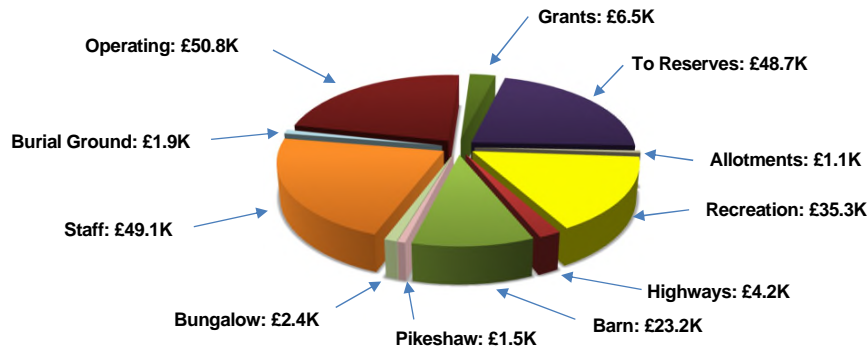


Figure 2: Running Costs:

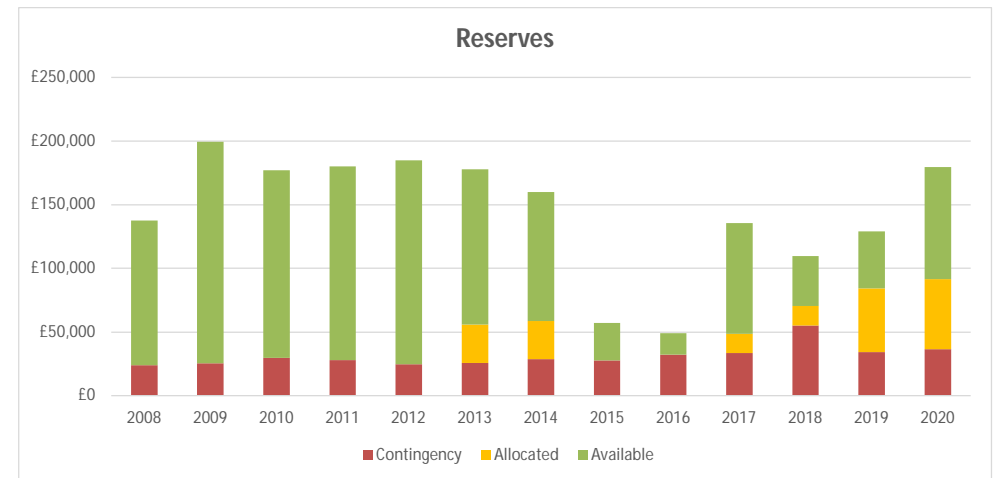


While we produce some income from hires, grants and the bungalow, our main source of funding comes from the Precept. This forms a very small element of the Council Tax charged to householders in the Parish, which this year equated to £74.94 per Band D household.

Reserves

The following chart shows how our reserves have moved over the past years. Our reserves are made up of several 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.
- Allocated – earmarked for specific projects. These projects could be major repairs or large infrastructure changes.
- Available – reserves we hold to enable new small projects or to cope with unforeseen emergencies. It includes monies ring-fenced for “open space” development.



We were again able to restore some of our available reserves during the last year having depleted them to undertake major refurbishment work in 2017/18.

There is more of village interest on the Parish Council website www.purleyonthames-pc.gov.uk

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, Reading, RG8 8DR

Website: www.purleyonthames-pc.gov.uk (lots of contacts and information)

Clerk: Claire Thompson
 Assistant Clerk: Sarah Williams
 Amenities Officer: Colin Moses

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	 Martin Bishop Vice Chairman & Recreation 0118 945 3117	 Rick Farrow Chairman & Recreation Planning 0118 962 4577	 Pamela Beddoes Barn 0118 941 4186	 Christine Collier Highways 0118 942 2951	
 Sarah Sinclair 0118 984 4507	 Rick Jones* 0118 962 3793	 John Chapman 0118 942 6999	 Bill Ayling 0118 941 9437	 Jane Langford via office	
 Neil Haughton via office	 Bernard Nix 07787 187363	 Gordon Adams 0118 942 8328	 Claire Thompson Parish Clerk 0118 984 4507	 Sarah Williams Asst. Clerk 0118 984 4507	 Colin Moses Amenities Officer 0118 984 4507

* Also our District Councillor. Our other District Councillors are Tom Marino and Andy Williamson.

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

Memorial Hall 07772 129 187

Social Clubs

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

Schools

Brookfield Special School 0118 942 1382
 Purley C.E. Primary School 0118 984 2384
 Long Lane Primary School 0118 942 7187
 Denefield School 0118 941 3458
 Downsway Primary School 0118 942 1362
 Theale Green Community 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
 Grovelands Medical Centre 0118 958 2525
 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
 Carebus 0118 930 4837
 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
www.pangbourne-district-volunteers.org