



# Purley on Thames Parish Council

## Annual Report 2020/21

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.



Over the last twelve months there have been a few changes to the Council and Officers. Councillor Bill Ayling sadly passed away in May having served the Parish for very many years. Councillor Sarah Sinclair resigned to give more time to other projects in the community and Councillor Bernie Nix has left the Council for personal reasons. We thank them all. We are pleased to welcome Justin Tate and Rob Wallace as new councillors.

Claire Thompson took on the role of Clerk to the Council but after six months decided that the job was not for her and the Lockdown situation with remote working did not help. Since then we have had a Locum Clerk, Helen Broughton who will hopefully be with us until we can recruit a permanent, qualified Clerk.

Covid has, unsurprisingly made it a strange and difficult year for the Parish Council! Officers, working remotely or alone in the office, have kept business going and all meetings have been via video conferencing. In the first Lockdown, Government rules meant that we closed all our facilities, even the children's playgrounds. Whilst that restriction was later withdrawn, sports facilities have been under frequently changing regulations and the Barn has been permanently closed.



**Social Club Covid Precautions**

All this has meant that we have had a huge reduction in our income from hires.

The Parish Council has tried to provide up to date information to local residents during a year of ongoing national change. We use our notice boards, Purley Parish News, the Parish Council electronic newsletter and our website. This year we have finished work to bring the

website up to the requirements of General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and Accessibility.

## Allotments

The Allotments are the Parish's only facility which has been unaffected by restrictions due to the virus. People have had more time to garden and many have developed their awareness of nature and the pleasure of growing so the allotments have become increasingly popular. We have improved the identification of each plot with new posts and signs.



**Allotments**

## Recreation

Recreation facilities have been open or closed to the public as advised by the Government and sports clubs' activities have been severely curtailed for most of the year. The Parish Council has offered support to clubs where possible by reducing or deferring their rentals.

The normal routines of maintenance, upkeep and inspections of facilities have continued to ensure we meet safety requirements, in particular for play equipment. A major project for the year has been the replacement of the Snake Adventure Trail in the Upper Goosecroft playground.



**Snake Trail**

Also at Goosecroft, parts of the access road, car park and the Burial Ground pathways have been resurfaced.

Looking to the future, the Parish Council has submitted a funding bid to West Berkshire Council for a project at Bucknells Meadow. The plan is to replace the time-expired Outdoor Gym equipment and provide additional play equipment for younger children.

The proposed extension of the Upper Goosecroft to provide additional sports pitch capacity has obtained Planning Permission and is being processed by the Council. This will be a large and expensive project that will require us to seek financial aid in the form of grants and will take several years to complete.



## The Barn

The Government rules on Covid have meant that the Barn has had to be closed since March 2020. On the 'up side' this has meant that we could have major works done without disruption to users. In the Summer we had a detailed survey of the

wooden structure of the Barn, some of its timbers being from the sixteenth century. A survey is scheduled for every ten years to ensure that the Barn is kept in good condition and safe for community use.

The findings this time required minimal maintenance work and this has now been completed. We have been successful in obtaining a grant of £2,000 from West Berkshire Council to enable us to buy resources to make the Barn and Parish Office Covid safe, when they are finally allowed to re open.

## Highways and Footpaths

During this very extraordinary year the number of visitors to the riverside has far exceeded the norm. In the hot weather this caused problems with litter, anti-social behavior and parking. Inconsiderate parking blocking the bus route resulted in the bus service being suspended from the lower village on a number of occasions. The Parish Council, together with the District Councillor, Reading Buses and our MP succeeded in getting double yellow lines installed in a very short time to alleviate this issue and, with the support of local residents this has had a good outcome.

The Parish Council provided more rubbish bins to cope with litter and was very grateful to the dedicated volunteers from the village who cleaned up each day. Heavy footfall continues to cause wear and tear to the fields and riverbank.



Discussions with West Berkshire Council about improvement to the access to Blount's Meadow at River Gardens, Mapledurham Drive and the lock have come to a temporary halt. However, work is still anticipated, hopefully in 2021.

*Rubbish collected on one day*

## The Future

It is more difficult than usual to plan for the future with the virus having such drastic effects on lifestyle, mental health and the economy. The Parish Council will do all it can to support local people and will work with West Berkshire Council to respond to necessary change. If West Berkshire Council need to make cuts to areas of their budget, 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.



Goosecroft Playing Fields, Social Club and Barn

Major projects for the coming year:

- Preparation for recreational use of the land adjacent to Goosecroft (Goosecroft Development Project).

- Major improvements to the children's play equipment and replacement of the Outdoor Gym at Bucknells Meadow. (Subject to additional grant funding from West Berkshire Council)

- Adoption of responsibilities that may be devolved by West Berkshire.

We wish to thank the Parish Council Clerks and Amenities Officer, the Councillors, contractors, West Berkshire Council and the Police. All these people provided services or have maintained village facilities and assets. The Parish Council has been unable to award a Villager of the Year but, instead, would like to applaud the wonderful efforts made by many Purley residents who have taken care of others' needs or worked to improve our environment.



VE Day 50th Anniversary

# Finance - how we use 'your' money

## • Income & Expenditure

The Council has a responsibility to use public money wisely and carefully.

Our reduced income from rentals and hires due to Covid has resulted in an income shortfall of £75,000 on our budgeted income. Spending has increased from £152,000 in 2019/20 to around £160,000 this year. This increase is in part because we have continued with much of our planned maintenance, improvement to our facilities and investing in our infrastructure. We also needed to spend on consultants' services to assist with our planning application and feasibility study for the Goosecroft Development project.

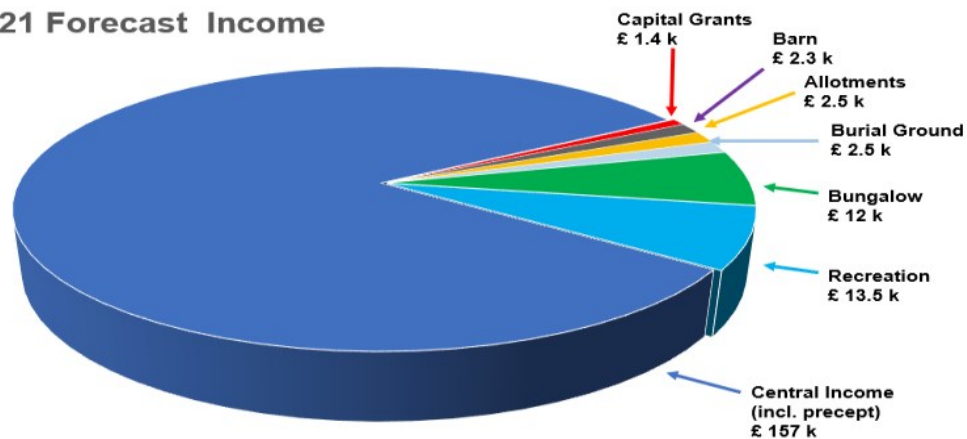
Nevertheless our expenditure is under budget, partly through careful management, because lack of use of our facilities has resulted in reduced costs for maintenance, cleaning, heating etc. and because the work to the Barn was not as extensive as we had budgeted for. We are therefore pleased to be able to transfer £30,000 into reserves despite the major income reduction.

Our main expenditures in 2020/21 have been:-

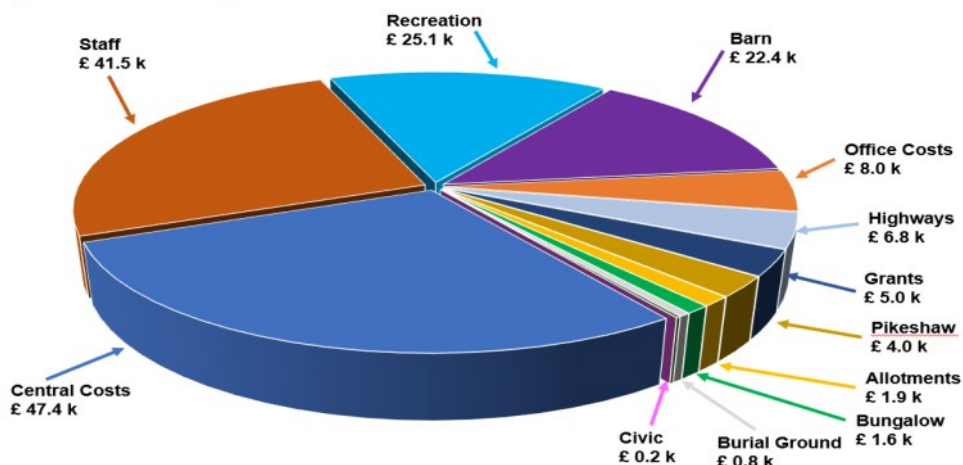
- Surveys, inspection, wood works and general maintenance in the Barn £11898
- Tarmac resurfacing in the Burial Ground, carpark and Goosecroft Lane £ 7221
- Snake Trail in the Goosecroft playground £ 5119
- Replacement (by LEDs) of 3 lamps on footpath 5 Pikeshaw £ 1393

These figures are provisional as at 12th Feb 2020, as our accounts will not be finalised until later in the year.

**2020/21 Forecast Income**



**2020/21 Forecast Expenditure**



Our need to maintain our assets, increases in our costs and the desire to support services no longer funded by West Berkshire Council continue to place demands on our finances. However, given the economic hardships imposed on many by the virus, we have decided to leave the precept for 2021/22 at the 20/21 rate.

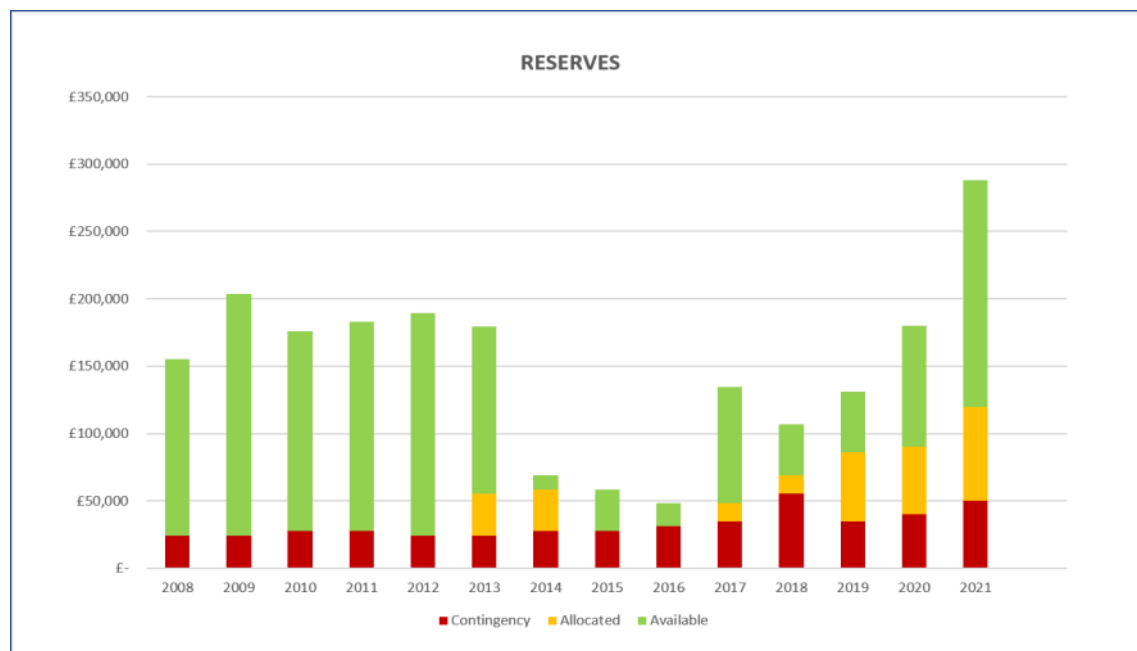
The precept is a small element of Council Tax charged to householders in the Parish, which for 2020/21 equated to £78.44 per Band D household. Rental of the bungalow, owned by the Parish Council, provides an additional source of income in the order of £10,000 pa after management costs.

Full accounts can be viewed at the Parish Office, or on the website when published. Our budget figures for 2021/22 can also be seen there.

## Reserves

The following chart shows how our reserves have changed over recent years. They are made up of three components:-

- Contingency - reserves we need to keep as a cushion against unforeseen demands on our normal running costs. We set this at 2 1/2 times our average monthly spending for the year.
- Allocated - reserves that we have earmarked for capital projects which we expect to be completed during the year.
- Unallocated - reserves we hold to enable new projects or to cope with unforeseen emergencies.



We were again able to restore some of our available reserves during the last year.

There is more of village interest on the Parish Council website:-

[www.purleyonthames-pc.gov.uk](http://www.purleyonthames-pc.gov.uk)

## How to contact us

Parish Office: Telephone: 0118 984 4507

Email: [clerk@purleyonthames-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@purleyonthames-pc.gov.uk)

Write: Parish Office, Goosecroft Lane, Purley on Thames, Reading, RG8 8BW

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

Clerk (Locum): Helen Broughton

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. During Covid restrictions please telephone before visiting the office.

## Members and Staff



Sue Briscoe  
Chair  
0118 945 6085



Martin Bishop  
Vice Chair  
& Recreation  
0118 945 3117



Gordon Adams  
Chair of Planning  
0118 942 8328



Pamela Beddoes  
Chair of Barn  
0118 941 4186



John Chapman  
0118 942 6999



Christine Collier  
0118 942 2951



Rick Farrow  
0118 962 4577



Neil Haughton  
0118 984 4507



Rick Jones  
(District Councillor)  
0118 962 3793



Jane Langford  
0118 984 4507



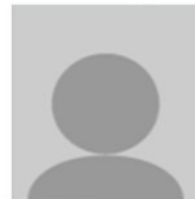
Justin Tate  
078 12 07 78 21



Rob Wallace  
079 58 48 29 68



Helen Broughton  
Locum Clerk  
0118 984 4507



Sarah Williams  
Assistant Clerk  
0118 984 4507



Colin Moses  
Amenities Officer  
0118 984 4507

Our District Councillors are Rick Jones, 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

<b>Purley Barn</b> (via Parish Office)	0118 984 4507
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<b>Memorial Hall</b>	07772 129 187
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### 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 <a href="http://www.reading-buses.co.uk">www.reading-buses.co.uk</a>	0118 959 4000
ReadiBus <a href="http://www.readibus.co.uk">www.readibus.co.uk</a>	0118 931 0000
Carebus	0118 930 4837