



Annual Report 2024/25

This report contains a brief summary of the activities of your Parish Council over the last financial year and outlines how we have managed the Parish Council's finances and assets. Join us at the meeting to find out more, ask questions and have your say.

**Annual Parish Meeting
Tuesday 29 April
7pm**

**at the Large Barn, Goosecroft,
Purley on Thames**

2024/25 has been a year of consolidation after the changes we saw last year when we had four new Councillors and a new Clerk.

Thanks

First of all I would like to thank our three officers Sharon Way (Clerk), Cathy Gainsford (Admin Assistant) and Colin Moses (Amenities Officer) for all their help and professionalism in managing our facilities.

The Parish Council would also like to extend our thanks to all the clubs, societies and



Purley Village

venues that provide the events that make Purley on Thames such a lovely place to live.

Bus Service

In July 2024 the 143 bus service was replaced by a new 43 bus service operated by Reading Buses. The Parish Council makes an annual contribution towards this service as we recognise that it is an important facility for the village.



Dance at the Barn

Neighbourhood Plans

The Parish Council would like to create a Neighbourhood Plan for Purley on Thames and thereby influence West Berkshire Council planning decisions.

A Neighbourhood Plan gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area. They can choose where they want new homes, have their say on what those new buildings should look like and what infrastructure should be provided, and influence planning permission for the new buildings they want to see go ahead. Neighbourhood planning provides a powerful set of tools for local people to plan for the types of development to meet their community's needs and where the ambition of the neighbourhood is aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area.



St Marys Church

This is because unlike the parish, village or town plans that communities may have prepared, a Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the development plan and sits alongside the Local Plan prepared by West Berkshire Council as the local planning authority. Decisions on planning applications will be made using both the Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan, and any other material considerations.

To create a Neighbourhood Plan it is essential that local people are involved in the process. A Neighbourhood Plan cannot be created by just the Parish Council. To date only a couple of people have indicated that they would like to take part and we need more parishioners to become involved.

If you would like to be part in creating a Neighbourhood Plan for Purley on Thames, please email our Clerk at clerk@purleyonthames-pc.gov.uk to register your interest.

Graham Rolfe
Chairman of Council



Recreation

The Recreation Committee has been busy throughout the year, working in conjunction with resident “user” clubs and organisations locally we have managed to improve and increase facilities for parishioners and visitors to the Village.

Major improvements centred on Bucknells Meadow with...

- Planned replacement of the Zip Wire
- Provision of a Basketball/Netball hoop on the Multi User Games Area (MUGA)
- Remarking of the MUGA to incorporate both basketball and netball markings.

Sadly we suffered from Arson of one of the Table Tennis tables provided at Bucknells Meadow in 2023/2024, however this has now been replaced with a concrete Table Tennis table to ensure that the scope of facilities available has been maintained.



Addition to MUGA

The normal “business as usual” routine of testing and maintenance of Play Equipment has been carried out by Parish Council staff along with our Contractors and ROSPA (Royal Society of Prevention of Accidents) ensuring that we effectively and safely maintain facilities.

The project for the Goosecroft Extension continues with particular emphasis on development of a Lease for the extension land with the Land Owner and pre contract work on improvements to the water supply and pressure to the whole Goosecroft site both making progress.



New Table Tennis table



New Zipwire

Looking forward for the coming year...

We are looking at the possibility of development of a leisure path around Bucknells Meadow to give access and in conjunction with the possible Purley Sustainability Group Orchard Project.

It is pleasing to report that our sports and recreation clubs continue to thrive and support value for money extensive recreational opportunities for all.

Martin Bishop
Chairman of Recreation

The Barn & Burial Ground

Improvements to The Barn

- the Barn has been re-varnished and the external doors and fencing painted;
- a screen has been installed to tidy and make visibly more attractive the 3 industrial-looking bins provided for those using the Barn and Burial Ground – I hope Parishioners will see that this presents a far more attractive view of our lovely Barn and Burial Ground;
- a broom cupboard has been fashioned out of the cupboards in each of the two Barn Halls, so that mops and brooms can be tidied away and not left to be unsightly for users (this is perhaps especially, but not exclusively, important when weddings are taking place)
- an additional storage facility is planned for the Spring at the back of the Barn. At about the time this report is published the land to be used will be cleared of barbed wire and other impediments to facilitate this with the storage facility itself, shortly to follow;



The Barn

- we have had a “Barn tidy” look at the Barn and removed and replaced many old useless notices, protected plaster with a dado rail and generally tried to improve and tidy the facility;

- a “Wall of Honour” has been formally identified on the Northern Wall of the large hall: This now displays as well as past glories some new glories notably:

- an annotated Picture of the King painted by friend from the Ukraine for a Purley Players recent production;
- the lamp which was lit to commemorate the 80th D-Day landings organised by Friends of Purley Barn. The event was a great success with inspiring help from a lone piper from the Scouts who held all spell bound.

Which leads me nicely into talking about the other great achievements of the Friends of Purley Barn (FOPB) who have raised money to help and support the Barn. So far recently they have supplied:

- new window blinds for both Barn halls;
- sundry cutlery, crockery, glasses and kettles;
- and raised other sums to assist the Barn in the future via their highly successful Christmas Market, complete with Fr and Mrs Christmas, a local Band and yours truly as a naughty elf offering to sell food so that children of all ages may feed the reindeer.

A special thanks to the Chair and Members of FOPB for these initiatives.

On behalf of the Barn and Burial Ground Committee and myself, I offer very grateful thanks to Angela Grindley the Friends of Purley Barn Chair and her wonderful team for their hard work and dedication to the Barn.

Burial Ground

I have monthly reviews with The Clerk and am pleased to report that her record-keeping is impeccable and we are compliant with all Burial Ground rules.

I am also grateful to the Clerk and to Cllr Bishop for accompanying me on a “Burial Ground Tidy” where we have identified and are gradually implementing actions to keep the Burial Ground tidy and up to standard. And may I also thank Cllr Bishop for his regular and committed work in keeping the standard of the ground high and ensuring our contractors are committed to do likewise.

Via this report I extend grateful thanks to our former Clerk Chris Thompson for sorting out the Burial Ground Rules and to our Current Clerk Sharon Way for ensuring that all relevant funeral directors know about them and are compliant.

Jane Langford
Chairman of Barn & Burial Ground



Daffodils in the Burial Ground

Highways and Footpaths

Allotment and Village Amenities



The Allotments

Local allotments are a fantastic community space that provide sustainability, well-being and social connection. They provide homegrown produce, reducing reliance on supermarkets, and cut down on food miles.

Gardening is great for mental and physical health, offering relaxation, exercise and a sense of accomplishment. Allotments are a wonderful way to reconnect with nature and your local community.

We are very fortunate to have our very own allotments in Purley on Thames.

More recently, a questionnaire was sent out to our allotment holders tabling various initiatives proposed by some holders. All allotment holders were invited to a meeting in February, where lots of discussions took place, suggestions put forward around green houses, community areas, a toilet, security of the allotment site and many more ideas. A very well attended meeting.

Feedback from the allotment holders was very positive.

Litter Picking

The PSG organised a “litter picking” earlier in the year around the village, they collected well over 20 bin liners of rubbish.

Pikeshaw

Pikeshaw continues to flourish, more recently we received some free saplings/shrubs from Greenham Trust, some of these have been planted at Pikeshaw.



Pikeshaw

Streetlighting

Most streetlighting in the village is owned and managed by West Berks Council, however, the Parish Council does have a few streetlights it pays for and maintains around the village. Any issues with lighting can be reported to West Berks.

Speeding

The speed limit in the village is 30mph, something we all need to be mindful of.

Snowdrop

Have you notice the snowdrops that have started to appear on some of the grass verges round the village. These were planted in 2023 with funding from the Platinum Jubilee. It is hoped that the snowdrops will multiply over time.

Maria Abrams
Chairman Highways & Footpaths



Finance & Governance

The committee meets every month to review current and forecast performance against the budget and to review certain items required by law. It also regularly reviews and makes recommendations to make sure the internal rules and processes of the Council are working efficiently. A major role is to assist the other committees with their planning for long term and large budget items which may be outside the level of their usual annual budget.

Finance - how we use 'your' money

- **Income & Expenditure**

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

The last year has seen a return to normal after the Covid years. Inflation has fallen from circa 8% to 2% but seems to be increasing again and the overall picture is one of continued financial turbulence.

In our budget last year we forecast that outgoings would exceed income by approx. £27,000. Our current forecast for year-end 2024-25 is a smaller overspend of approx. £1,000, as although outgoings (£ 281,000) are forecast to be very close to budget, income has been significantly higher (£ 280,000) than budgeted, largely due to higher than forecast Barn & Burial Ground receipts and lower Central expenditure.

In 2024-25 there was an increase in the precept from £168,000 to £180,000 - an increase of 6.92%. Although inflation is lower than last year, we are still seeing increases of over 5% in construction and maintenance contracts. Therefore, for 2025-26 we have raised the precept to £ 190,000 which amounts to an annual increase for a band D householder of £4.78, an increase of 5.45%.

We expect to expend approx. £ 307,000 against a forecast income of £ 285,000 with £22,000 being moved from reserves. The major new item in the budget will be the first stage of the desperately needed upgrade of the water supply to the Goosecroft Recreation Ground.

These figures are provisional as at 1 February 2025, as our accounts will not be finalised until later in the year.

Figure 1: Operating Income 2024-25:

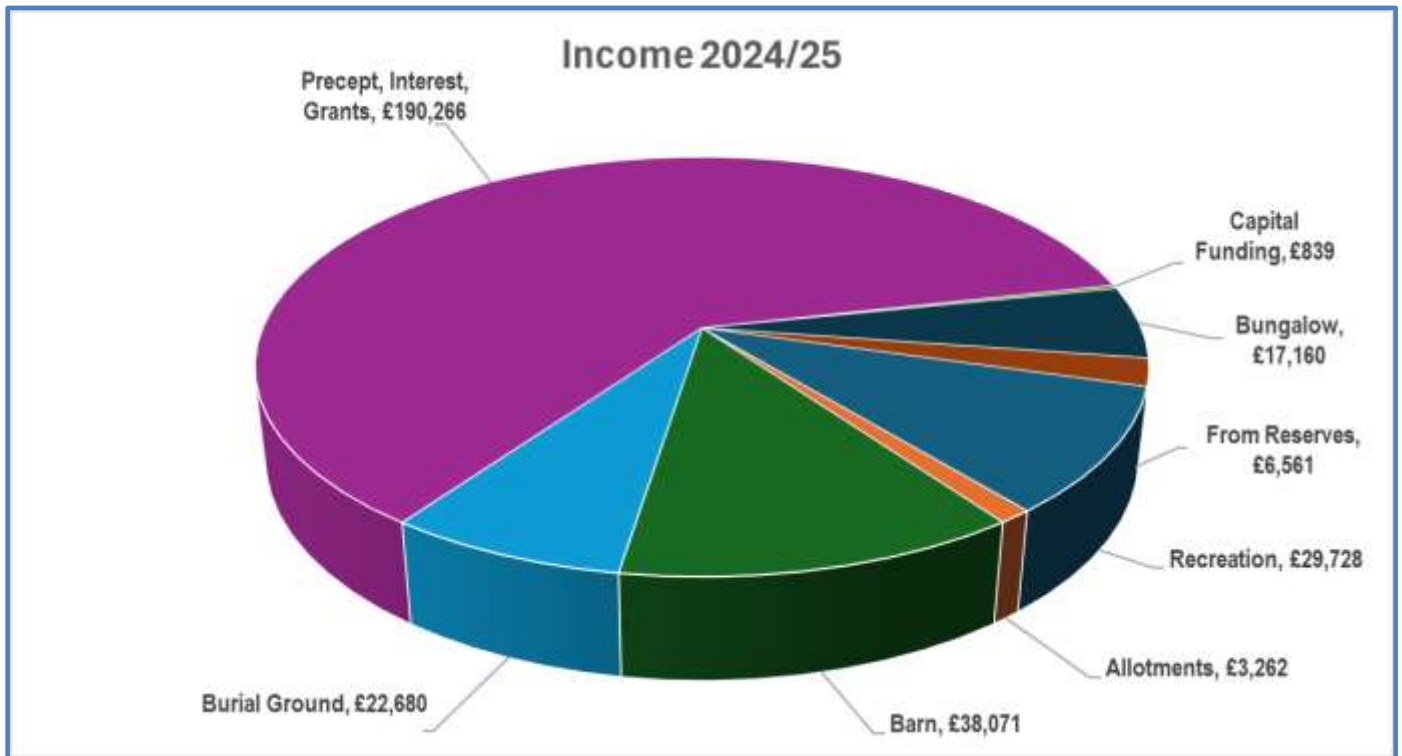


Figure 2: Expenditure 2024-25:

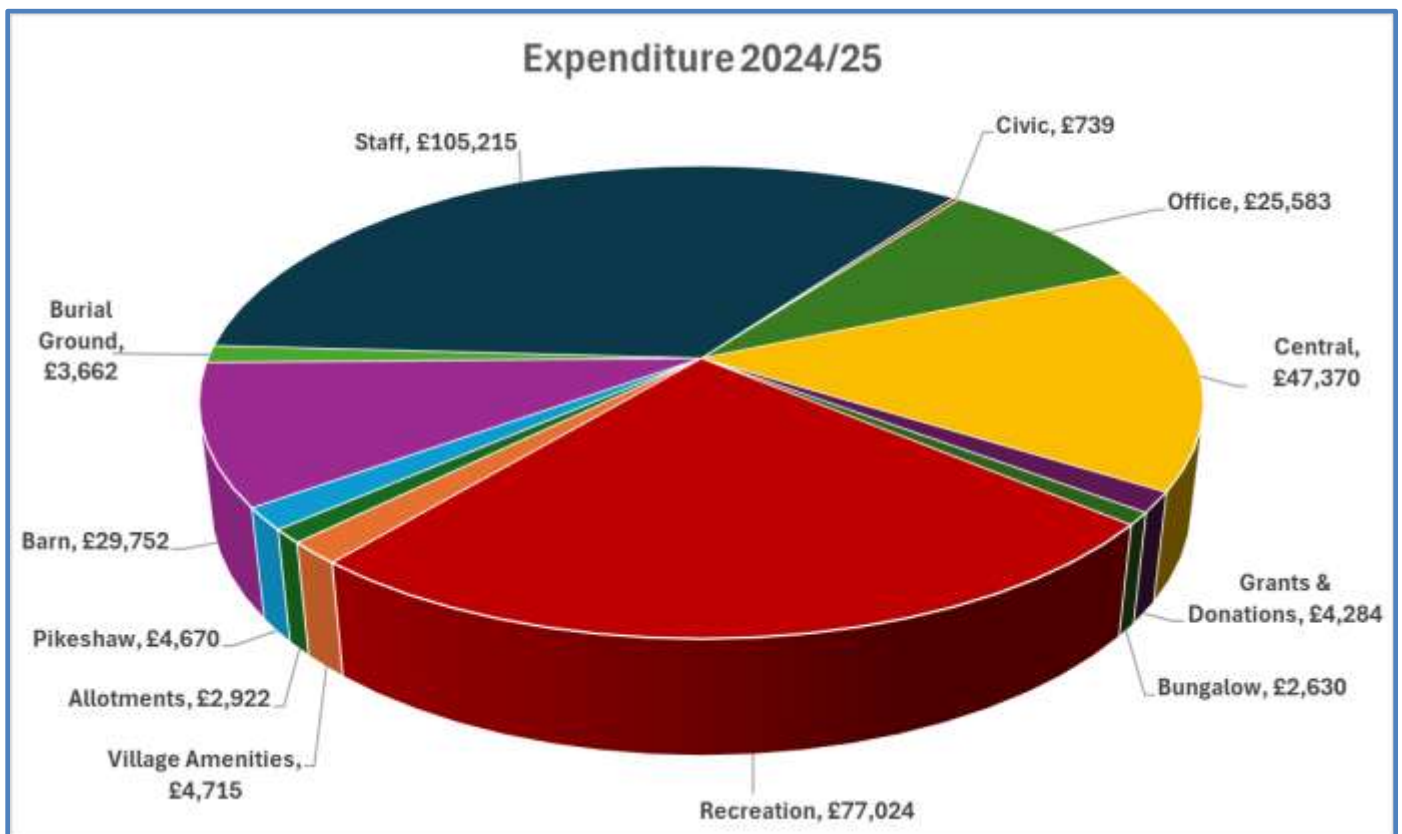
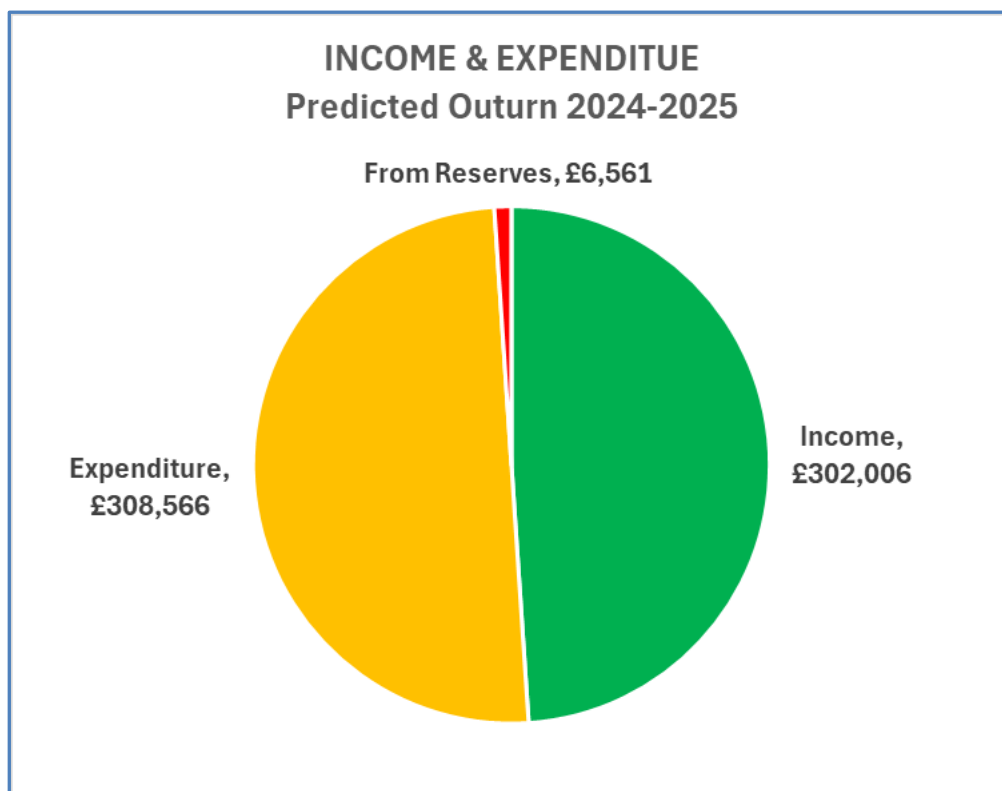


Fig. 3: Income & Expenditure 2024-25



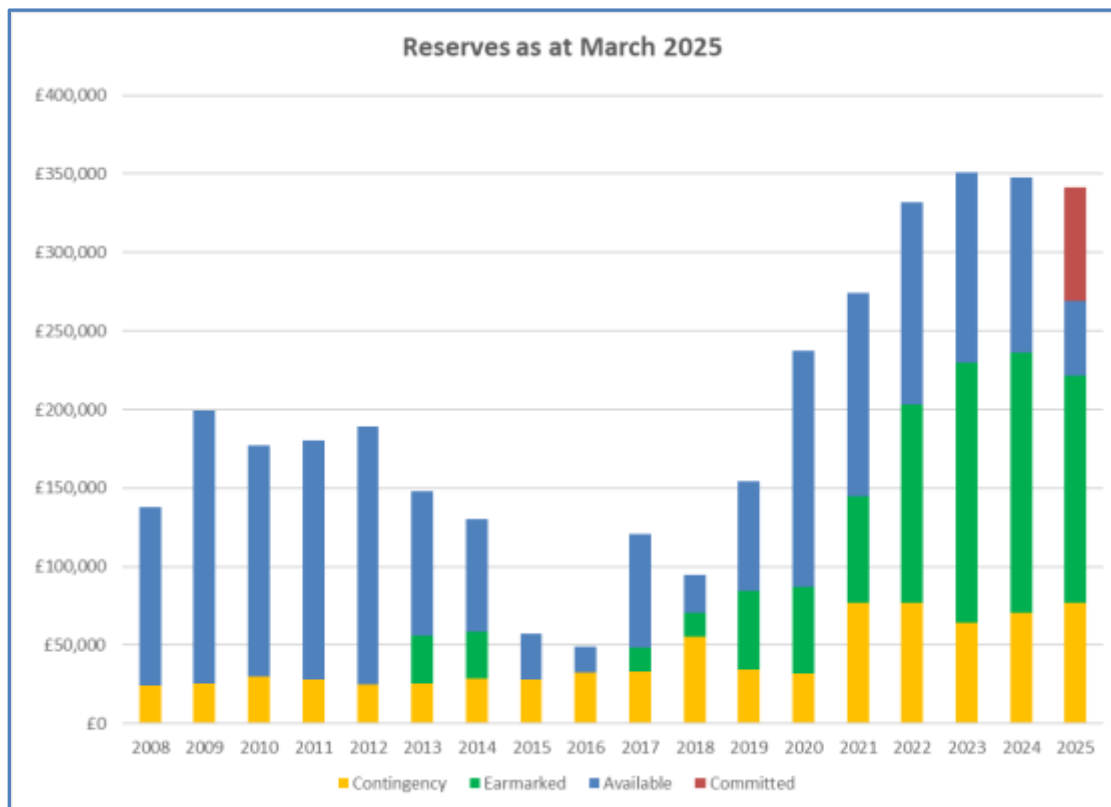
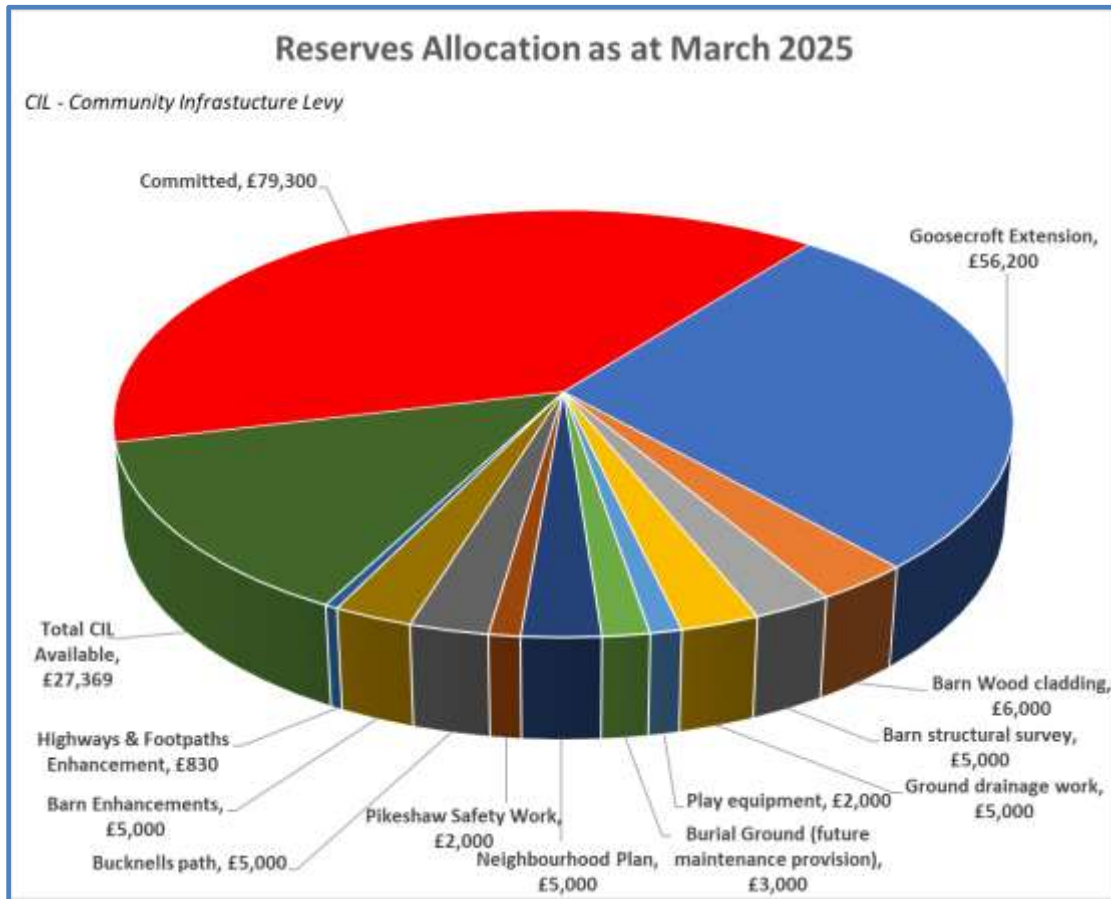
- **Reserves**

Additional costs this year have led to a planned decrease in the level of reserves. We face the possibility of having to finance several very large projects over the next few years. Whilst the major costs associated with the Goosecroft expansion have slipped, items such as upgrading the water supply to the whole of the Goosecroft, resurfacing the car park and improving and replacing facilities at Bucknall's Meadow are all very expensive and require careful management of reserves and cash flow.

Internally, our committees are now looking at 10 year plans to assist in managing reserves and finances.

Our reserves are made up of several components:

- Contingency – reserves, which we set at 25% of our annual forecast expenditure, needed to keep as a cushion against our spending.
- Allocated – earmarked for specific projects. These projects could be major repairs or large infrastructure changes.
- Available – reserves we hold to enable flexibility to cater for long term projects, additional opportunities and emergencies. It includes monies ring-fenced.
- Committed – funds on projects which are contracted or about to be contracted but not yet invoiced.



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

Rob Wallace
 Chairman of Finance & Governance

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 8BW
Website: www.purleyonthames-pc.gov.uk (lots of contacts and
information)

Clerk: Sharon Way
Administrative Assistant: Cathy Gainsford
Amenities Officer: Colin Moses

Opening hours


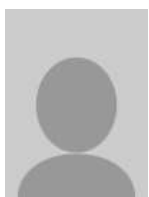


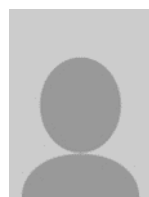


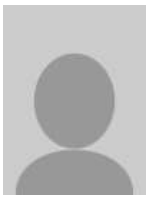


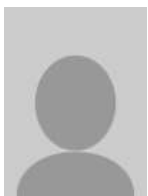
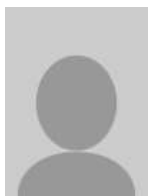
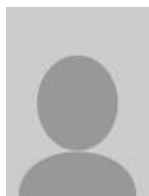



The Parish Office is now open to the public during the following hours:

Monday (except bank Holidays) 9.30am to 2.30pm

Thursday 2.30pm to 5.00pm

Councillors can be available for consultation on Thursday evenings,
between 4.00pm – 5.00pm, or at other times by appointment.

Councillors and Staff 2023/24

 Graham Rolfe Chairman 0118 941 7247	 George Nyamie Vice Chairman (via office)	 Martin Bishop Chairman Recreation (via office)	 Jane Langford* Chairman Barn (via office)	 Maria Abrams Chairman Highways (via office)	
 Rob Wallace 07958 482968 Chairman Finance	 Pamala Beddoes 0118 941 4186	 Judy Evans (via office)	 Virginia White (via office)	 Alex Benedict (via office)	
 Larry Grady (via office)	 Angie Grindley (via office)	 Vacancy	 Sharon Way Parish Clerk 0118 984 4507	 Cathy Gainsford Admin. Asst. 0118 984 4507	 Colin Moses Amenities Officer 0118 984 4507

* Also, our District Councillor. Our other District Councillors were Janine Lewis and Paul Kander.

Useful Numbers

Community Safety:

Police Non-Emergency	101
Lock Keeper (no permanent attendance)	0118 941 7776

District Council:

West Berkshire Council	01635 551111
West Berkshire Council emergency out of hours	01635 551111
Streetcare	01635 519234

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 Specialist SEN 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 6113
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		