

**Purley on Thames Parish Council
Minutes of the Council Meeting
Held on Tuesday 18th March 2025**

In the Small Hall at The Barn, Goosecroft

Commencing 6:00pm and concluding at 6:58pm

Present: Councillors G Rolfe (Chairman), M. Abrams, P. Beddoes, M. Bishop, A. Benedict, J. Evans, L. Grady, A. Grindley (left meeting at 6:47pm), J. Langford, G Nyamie, Rob Wallace, V White and G. Sillitoe (co-opted from 6:15pm)

In attendance: Sharon Way (Clerk)

P 25/29 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

P 25/30 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

P 25/31 PUBLIC FORUM

No members of the public were in attendance.

P 25/32 MINUTES OF MEETING

Cllr Rolfe invited comments on the minutes of the council meeting held on Tuesday 11th February 2025. No comments were made.

Following a proposal from Cllr Grindley and seconded by Cllr Nyamie it was:

RESOLVED: Approval and adoption of the minutes of the meeting, Tuesday 11th February was AGREED.

The minutes of the meeting, Tuesday 11th February were duly signed by the Chairman.

P 25/33 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF 11th FEBRUARY

Cllr Langford requested consideration that the date and time of the full council meeting should be changed in order to facilitate better attendance by councillors. The poll of members carried out by the Clerk which had determined that the current arrangement was favoured by the majority of councillors was discussed. The advantages and disadvantages of other options such as alternating between Mondays and Tuesdays was also discussed. Cllr Rolfe stated that the current arrangement had the support of the majority of councillors, but constructive proposals should be brought to the Clerk prior to the next meeting.

P 25/34 MOTIONS FOR RESOLUTION

P 25/34-1 Mr Sillitoe made a statement in support of his application to become a parish councillor. Mr Sillitoe then left the room while his application was discussed.

Following a proposal from Cllr Rolfe and seconded by Cllr Nyamie it was:

RESOLVED: The co-option of Mr Gerald Sillitoe to fill a vacancy on the parish council was AGREED.

Mr Sillitoe re-joined the meeting and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

P 25/34-2 Cllr Bishop provided an overview of the motion paper P25/34-2, circulated with the agenda. Cllr Bishop stated that the installation of floodlighting would benefit the Tennis Club by increasing the potential operating hours, and that the cost of the application and any subsequent floodlighting would be borne by the Tennis Club. Cllr Grady declared an interest and abstained from voting.

Following a proposal from Cllr Bishop and seconded by Cllr Langford it was:

RESOLVED: To grant approval for the Tennis Club to seek planning permission for the installation of floodlighting around the tennis courts, as recommended by the Recreation Committee (P24/24-2) was AGREED, with one abstention.

P25/34-3 Cllr Langford stated that the costs for this project would be taken from the Barn & Burial Committee budget and that the compound should be seen as a resource for the whole of Goosecroft. The Clerk confirmed that it was planned to install a 4m x 4m structure, and that this size had been permitted on the certificate of lawful development.

Following a proposal from Cllr Langford and seconded by Cllr Wallace it was:

RESOLVED: To approve an increase in the budget for the wooden compound to be positioned behind the barn, from £8,500 (as agreed under resolution P24/104-1) to £10,500 excluding VAT was AGREED.

P25/34-4 Cllr Rolfe stated that it had been agreed at the time the grants were awarded that the remaining budget would be available for further applications, subject to council approval. Cllr Rolfe stated that the proposed grant is within the available budget. Cllr Grindley confirmed that the Grants Working Group supports the application.

Following a proposal from Cllr Grindley and seconded by Cllr Langford it was:

RESOLVED: To award the Singing For Fun community group the sum of £598 to assist them to purchase specified musical equipment with which to help existing and new members, most notably older people to participate thereby helping their mental, physical and social wellbeing was AGREED.

P25/34-5 Cllr Rolfe provided an overview of the proposed project, outlined in motion paper P25/20-4, circulated with the agenda. Cllr Rolfe stated that the project was for the installation of a 90mm water main from Beech Road to a location adjacent to the playground. The project is needed because the current 15mm pipe is inadequate to serve the current facilities at Goosecroft and the planned playing field expansion. The Clerk stated that the project did not include connection to the Goosecroft facilities, and that this would be undertaken as a subsequent project. Cllr Rolfe stated that the project would be partly funded from reserves earmarked for water upgrade works, and partly from funds earmarked for Goosecroft Expansion. Cllr Bishop stated that this was in line with previous council decisions regarding planned development on the Goosecroft site.

Following a proposal from Cllr Rolfe and seconded by Cllr Bishop it was:

RESOLVED: To approve the appointment of Company C to install a water main extension from Beech Road to the boundary of the Goosecroft Recreation Ground, as outlined in the motion backing paper, with a maximum budget of £68,000 which includes 15% contingency was AGREED.

P 25/35 DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

Cllr Langford had prepared a report and distributed it to members.

Cllr Langford confirmed that discussions were ongoing regarding the merging of WBC, South Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse District Councils, and the five other Berkshire unitary authorities, and that the potential effects of this change were causing concern. Cllr Langford discussed the possible increase in ward size, leading to fewer district councillors with an increased workload. Cllr Langford noted that the proposed changes may result in more workload being devolved to parish councils. Cllr Rolfe stated that the WBC paper on this matter would be made available to members on the council's OneDrive.

Cllr Evans expressed concern that the new arrangements will dilute council services to residents.

P 25/36 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Cllr Rolfe thanked members for their kind thoughts while he was away.

Cllr Rolfe congratulated Cllr Beddoes for receiving a 'Highly Commended' Lifetime Achievement award at the WBC Community Champion awards.

Cllr Rolfe stated that a draft of the Annual Report had been circulated to members and requested feedback to enable the report to be finalised, printed and distributed prior to the Annual Parish Meeting.

P 25/37 CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk summarised the content of the report circulated to members.

The Clerk stated that the VAT return for the third quarter has been submitted, and the internal auditor is scheduled to conduct the end of year audit on 19th May.

The Clerk stated that the council's contribution to bus route 43 has been paid.

The Clerk stated that the Clerk, Administrative Clerk and Amenities Officer will receive a one increment pay rise effective 1st April 2025 in accordance with contract terms and council resolutions.

The Clerk stated that the domain transfer should be completed in March and the final DP Solutions invoice is also expected in March.

The Clerk stated that the current bungalow tenants will vacate the property on 8th April with the new tenants moving in on 1st May. The Clerk noted that the outgoing tenants are leaving the shed and the new tenants wish to retain the use of it.

The Clerk stated that work to reinstate the disabled toilet is nearing completion with costs expected to be in line with the quotation.

The Clerk stated that the CCTV installation will start 20th March and is expected to be completed by 25th March.

The Clerk stated that as agreed at the February council meeting a payment of £13,180 ex VAT has been made to Thames Water for the connection of the planned new water main extension.

The Clerk stated that the installation of the protective framework to the solar panels should be carried out week commencing 24th March.

Cllr Rolfe stated that the Clerk had been instructed to have the bungalow professionally cleaned before the new tenant moves in.

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COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Barn and Burial

Cllr Langford requested questions on the circulated report; no questions were raised.

B. Finance and Governance

Cllr Wallace requested questions on the circulated report; no questions were raised.

C. Goosecroft Development

Cllr Bishop stated that there was positive progress on both the lease negotiations and the water improvement works.

D. Allotments and Village Amenities

Cllr Abrams stated that the allotment holders' meeting was well attended. Two matters were being taken forward – greenhouses and improved security. A formal set of rules for greenhouse installations is currently being drafted which will form a contractual agreement between the council and the allotment holder. Cllr Rolfe suggested holding an allotment holder meeting every six months, and that the horticultural society may be interested in attending.

E. Planning

None.

F. Recreation

Cllr Bishop stated that the Recreation Committee was looking at possible changes to the pavilion loft to provide increased, safer, storage. Cllr Bishop reported that a Football Association official had visited site and had stated that the Goosecroft pitches were better or as good as any seen in inspections across Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire, for the level of club. Additionally, the official stated that the Pavilion facilities were well maintained. Cllr Bishop suggested that the officer may be a point of contact when seeking official endorsement for the Goosecroft expansion plans.

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WORKING GROUP REPORTS

A. Climate change

None.

B. Emergency planning

None.

C. Grants

Cllr Grindley noted that approximately £900 remained in the grants budget.

D. Human Resources

Cllr Rolfe stated that the Clerks' appraisal was nearing completion.

E. Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Rolfe stated that a large part of the Chairman's section of the Annual Report was about this matter, and it could not go ahead without the active support of parishioners.

F. IT

None.

G. Purley Outreach Post Office and Shop

None.

H. Tennis

None.

I. Villager of the Year (Award Replacement Group)

None.

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COUNCILLOR REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS

A. AWE Liaison

None.

B. BALC / NALC

The Clerk stated that following issue of the NALC model financial regulations, the council's Financial Regulations will be updated for approval at the May council meeting.

C. Friends of Purley Barn

Cllr Langford stated that two small actions are being taken forward by Cllr Grindley to ensure compliance with the organisation's constitution.

D. Memorial Hall

Cllr Beddoes stated that a spring sale will be held at the coffee morning on Tuesday 1st April, all proceeds to the Dutchess of Kent Hospice.

E. Neighbourhood Action Group

Cllr Langford stated that the last NAG meeting was attended by herself, Cllr Abrams and the Clerk. Cllr Langford noted that a Public Spaces Protection Order was being put in place in Pangbourne Meadows and, if this proved successful, the measure could potentially be extended to other areas.

F. Pangbourne Volunteer Group

Cllr Beddoes agree to ask the Pangbourne Volunteer Group whether they would like to advertise for volunteers in the parish newsletter.

G. Purley Park Social Club

None.

H. Purley Sports and Social Club

Cllr Bishop stated that a fundraising event was being planned in support of Marie Curie. Cllr Bishop stated that the council would be discussing with PSSC the location and the potential screening of their refuse bins.

I. Purley Sustainability Group

Cllr Evans stated that the PSG AGM would be held on 7th May in the Memorial Hall with guest speakers from Wild Tilehurst. The community lunch event would take place on 5th September and an apple pressing event would take place on 5th October, both at the Memorial Hall.

Regarding the orchard, Cllr Evans stated that the planned survey did not take place due to the high cost quoted by the contractor. The survey is currently being requested by three contractors.

J. Trenthan Bowling Club

Cllr Bishop stated that the club had received a grant for adapting the steps to the green to improve accessibility.

K. Other Ad-Hoc Councillor Reports

None.

P 25/41 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Currently scheduled for Tuesday 13th May 2025 – Annual Parish Council Meeting – *this is subject to change.*

P 25/42 MEMBERS' ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

Cllr Rolfe requested that any items for the agenda are submitted to the Clerk a minimum of 14 days before the meeting.

The meeting was formally closed at 18:58 pm.

Signed:

Date: 13th May 2025