



NEWSLETTER

June 2025, Issue 92

Project Purley – VE 80 Celebration Event

5 May 2025



About eighty Project Purley members, members of the community and guests attended Project Purley's VE 80 event in the Barn on 5th May. The Barn was festooned with bunting for the occasion and the tables decked with union jack tablecloths and poppy table centres. Wartime recruitment posters decorated the walls and the between exhibition display boards. In the background – music and on the screen in the gap between the talks – images of the war from around the world.

The afternoon comprised of an exhibition on Purley during the war, a talk in two halves by local historian, Mike Cooper, on why Germany lost the war in 1945, tea and cake and during refreshments, live music from the period played on the keyboard by Chris Rayers.

We were delighted to be joined by some very special guests. Our MP Olivia Bailey and her father joined us for the first period, looking at the displays and memorabilia



Speaker Mike Cooper with Olivia Bailey

tables and chatting with the attendees and event organisers. Olivia made a heartfelt short speech and clearly enjoyed the occasion as the very next day she raised a point in the Houses of Commons about the fantastic work of local community groups across the county who were organising VE 80 events, including Project Purley, whose event she had attended the previous day. We even got recorded in the Hansard transcript for the day. A first for the Society and something very different for the archive.

Graham Rolfe, chairman of both the Parish Council and the Memorial Hall Trustees, also joined us and concluded the afternoon for us by lighting a lamp of peace.

Poignantly, we were also joined by some of the descendants and relatives of those from Purley who had served or died, whose stories were told on boards around the room. A nephew and great niece of Edward Reed of Glebe Road came. Edward was a regular soldier who was taken POW when Singapore fell to the Japanese. He ended up in the workcamps on the notorious Thai-Burma railway where he died due to the atrocious living and working conditions. Edward was one of two Purley men who died in Japanese camps during the war.



Ernest Beswick with pipe



Patrick Stevens

The daughters of Ernest Beswick of The White House on Beech Road also joined us, travelling up from Kent and Hampshire for the occasion. Ernest moved to Purley to work for the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries in Reading and died in the People's Pantry bombings on 10 February 1943. The daughters, Gillian and Jane, were just four and two respectively when their father was killed.

Eight members of the Stevens family came, three generations, the youngest just eleven. Patrick Stevens, their father, grandfather or great grandfather, was one of three brothers who all served in the war, Patrick in the RAF. He ended up as a POW to the Germans at Stalag Luft III, the camp from where the “great escape” happened – immortalised in the book by Paul Brickhill and the film of the same name. Patrick was part of the team who organised the tunnelling but wasn’t one who managed to escape by the tunnel on the night in question. Tragically of those who got out, only three made it back home and fifty were executed by the Germans in retribution for their actions.



Other boards told of the home front in Purley, of rationing, the various war work, including the making of parts for spitfires at Purley Garage, the growth of the River Estate, evacuees, and the continual fund raising which went on. Alongside the display boards, we also had tables of memorabilia provided by David Downs and Rita Denman which proved to be of great interest and provoked memories with some present.

Overall, I hope that we did Purley’s wartime community justice and celebrated their courage, endurance and community spirit. Project Purley’s archive of Purley during the war has grown over recent years but is by no means complete. So, if anyone reading this has any memories of Purley during this time we would love to listen to your stories. Please do get in contact with Catherine Sampson via her email clspurley@aol.com.

Thank you to everyone who made the day so special and who put so much work into celebrating and remembering Purley’s very special wartime community.

Local News

Reporting problems

West Berkshire Council deal with the resolution of all sorts of problems from potholes, dog fouling, streetlights, graffiti, etc. You can report any issues that you have online via the WBC website. Just follow this link: [Problem Reporting](#).

Planning Applications

West Berkshire Council invites Purley on Thames Parish Council to comment on planning applications within the parish. The Parish Council's input is not binding upon West Berkshire Council, but comments may be considered in reaching a decision.

You can also see the details of any planning application via the [Planning Portal](#) on the WBC website. If you scroll down to the bottom of the Planning Portal webpage you will find a map showing recent planning applications in WBC. You can zoom in on the map to just see Purley on Thames. Also, an orange notice should be displayed at the boundary of any property/location subject to a planning application.

Any individual can comment on a planning application, both for and against, direct to WBC by [email](#).

The Parish Planning Committee meets about every two weeks. The meeting is open to the public and there is opportunity for you to comment on any particular application. To see the agenda for the next meeting, which details the planning applications to be considered, see [Planning Committee meeting](#).

West Berkshire Council has introduced a free online service to allow residents to check to see if planning permission is required for any possible building alterations. This service will make it easier for residents to understand if they need to submit a planning application for items such as solar panels, loft conversions, adding an outbuilding or adding a dropped kerb. You can access this new service on the West Berkshire Council ["Do I need Planning Permission?"](#) webpage.

West Berkshire Council also offer planning pre-application advice service for which a fee is chargeable. More information about this can be found on the West Berkshire Council's [pre-application advice service](#) webpage.

At **your** service
Pangbourne & District Volunteer Centre



Going to see the doctor, dentist, optician or attending a hospital appointment?
Pangbourne & District Volunteer Centre have been providing transport for our
senior citizens and less mobile neighbours since 1984.

Maybe we can help you too.

For further information contact our friendly office staff between
9-30am - 11.30am Monday to Friday on: 0118 984 4586
There is no charge for this service but we do invite donations.

Got some time to spare?

We are actively recruiting volunteer drivers and office staff. Drivers will be asked
to provide two referees, have an appropriate roadworthy vehicle, a current driving
licence and permission from their insurer to undertake voluntary transportation.

Mileage is reimbursed at 45p per mile.

Volunteering with the Pangbourne and District Volunteer Centre is one of the most
rewarding ways of serving your community.

You are free to do as many runs as you are able and it is OK to say no.

For further information telephone: 0118 984 4586
or email: pangbournevoleunteers@outlook.com

Area covered: Pangbourne, Whitchurch, Sulham, Tidmarsh, Purley on Thames,
Upper & Lower Basildon, Parts of Tilehurst,



From Your Parish Office

Don't forget the team in the Office are happy to help where we can. Office opening hours are now:

Monday 9.30 am – 2.00 pm

Thursday 2.00 pm – 5.00 pm

(except for Bank Holidays)

However, it is a good idea to phone ahead if you want to see someone to avoid a wasted visit in the event of the team having other commitments.

Alternatively, you can telephone on 0118 984 4507 or email the Clerk at clerk@purleyonthames-pc.gov.uk

Local Sports Activities

PURLEY JUBILEE F.C. – Season 2024-25

As the 2024-25 football season comes towards its conclusion, Purley Jubilee F.C. can reflect on the fact that it has been a positive season for most of their teams in terms of league performances.

The U14's Panthers have produced some excellent football this season and have won their league and reached a cup final which is due to be played on 23rd of May.

There were also notable league successes for U12's Pumas (winners) and the U18's All Stars (runners up). There were also cup successes for U13's Royals, U11's Panthers and the U7's.

With eleven of the Purley Jubilee teams based at Goosecroft this season, it remains our spiritual home with around 100 home fixtures being completed during the season.

The Purley Jubilee F.C. Presentation Day is scheduled to take place at the Barn at Goosecroft on Saturday, 7th of June 2025 where both team and individual player performances will be celebrated.

Purley Jubilee F.C. remain committed to maintaining the standards required of a F.A. Charter Standard Football Club by providing a safe and encouraging environment

whereby youngsters can enjoy playing football and being the best version of themselves.

Purley Jubilee F.C. are most grateful to the Parish Council for continuing to maintain the Goosecroft Recreation Ground in a good condition and helping to facilitate the provision for junior football to be played within our local community.

Report on behalf of PJFC by Rick Farrow

Local Club Events

Wanted: Bell Ringers

Bell Ringing Group, St Mary's



CHURCH BELLS AT ST MARY'S

Did you hear the bells ring out on Easter Sunday?

Why not come and join us.

The Bell Ringing Group at St Mary's **is in need of new people** to train to ring the bells. We shall be holding a taster session on Thursday, 26 June between 6.00 and 7.00 pm so come along and have a go! Please call Marjorie on 0118 941 8856 or Anne on 0118 941 3259.

We look forward to seeing you on the 26 June.

Bell ringing is a team activity that stimulates the brain and helps keep you fit. It also makes a glorious sound!

Ringers come from all walks of life and range in age from ten to those in their eighties.


www.thamesvalesingers.org.uk


Songs for a Summer Evening

Friday 5 July 2024
 8.00pm Pangbourne Village Hall
Saturday 6 July 2024
 8.00pm St Mary's church, Purley

Tickets: £12, under 16s: £6)
 On sale from: Tuesday 3 June 2025
 Tel: 0118 942 4372
 or email: tickets@thamesvalesingers.org.uk
 or Online:
www.ticketsource.co.uk/thames-vale-singers
 (booking fee £0.50)






Sheridan's The Rivals

LANGUISHING LOVERS, CHAOTIC COMEDY,
 DEADLY DUELS AND... MRS MALAPROP

The Barn, Purley on Thames
 Fri 20th June at 7:00 pm
WWW.RAINORSHINE.CO.UK

Friday 20th June – Rain or Shine Theatre Company “The Rivals”

7pm, doors open 6.15pm

The Barn, Goosecroft

Tickets £16 (adults), £8 (under 15s)

Tickets from David Downs (0118 942 4167, cash only) or the Rain or Shine ticket line (03306 600541, card only) or the Rain or Shine website www.rainorshine.co.uk (card only)

When fashionable 18th century London society comes to take the waters in the spa-town of Bath, comic confusion, daring duels and romantic entanglements abound. At the centre of it all is heiress Lydia Languish, who is determined to elope with the penniless Ensign Beverly rather than marry the eligible Jack Absolute. Come and sample the sparkling wit and whirlwind plot of *The Rivals*, a Restoration Comedy which has delighted audiences for over 250 years with its collection of comic characters, including the formidable Mrs Malaprop, a creation so famous for the way she mangles the English language that her name is now immortalised in the dictionary.

This brand-new adaptation combines Richard Brinsley Sheridan’s masterpiece with Rain or Shine’s fast and furious comic flair.

We would like to provide information of any activities that local clubs or societies are undertaking within the village or that might be of interest to residents of Purley on Thames. These can be regular or one-off events. If you would like us to include a bit about your event, please email [Cathy our Administrative Clerk](#) with the details.

Other Events

Purley Sustainability Group

PSG had a great Annual General Meeting on 7th May 2025 – we enjoyed a very interesting talk from Wild Tilehurst. They are a local group formed last year, with aims to support, protect and increase Tilehurst’s biodiversity, promoting awareness of wildlife in local areas, identification, surveying and recording. They share their knowledge and encourage wildlife experiences and sightings.

Wild Tilehurst shared the activities they have been doing since they formed - Bat walks, Moth trap evenings, Identification walks: birds, invertebrates, flora, fungi, trees, mindfulness, Community Nature Fair, Citizen Science e.g. FIT count, and they have partnered with the local 12th century church to manage, improve biodiversity and hold

surveys and events on their land. We all learned so much and PSG look forward to collaborating closely with them in the future.

In addition, Wild Tilehurst shared what they had planned which we are all excited about - More Bat Walks which would be in Purley, and a fascinating Worm Charming event – best we all get practicing!

Wild Tilehurst share all their events and PSG will ensure that they are also shared in Purley.

PSG took everyone through the plans and appointed the committee for the coming year.

We enjoyed some wonderful local cheese from The Cheese Shop in Pangbourne and had some lovely local wines and beers – a particular favourite was the red wine from Wallingford, purchased from Waitrose.

Our thanks go to everyone who attended the AGM and to everyone who supported the planning and organising.

Dates for the diary:

Recycling/ Terracycle – Sunday 8th June at 7 Beech Road.

Repair Café – Saturday 14th June 3pm to 5pm at The Mad Duck, Wintringham Way.

Community Lunch – Saturday 6th September – noon at Purley Memorial Hall, Glebe Road

Apple Pressing – Sunday 5th October at Purley Memorial Hall, Glebe Road

Purley Sustainability Group (PSG) is a community sustainability group for Purley on Thames. We are passionate about enhancing community wellbeing through projects that bring people together to improve our local environment and encourage sustainable living.

For more information:

www.purleysustainability.co.uk

info@purleysustainability.co.uk

Facebook – Purley Sustainability Group & Purley on Thames Repair Café

Please do get in touch if you want to learn more or become a volunteer at the allotments, or at the repair café or want to subscribe our newsletters and keep abreast of events.

Wild Tilehurst www.wildtilehurst.org.uk

Repair Café



You can find further information regarding dates and times for the [Repair Café/Other Events](#) and [Recycling](#) on the PSG website.

If you have feedback to give Your Parish Council or wish to provide an article on what interests you: an item or person of interest, a plea for a Charity or not-for-profit business but not a commercial business, your input would be most welcome, subject to editorial rights. It would be very helpful, if possible, if you could supply any copy in Word (12 pt Calibri) and/or picture format. Submissions as pdfs may be rejected. Please email your copy to [Cathy](#) by close of play on the 20th of the month.

Many thanks - Editor

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The Editor is Cathy Gainsford – Administrative Clerk, Purley on Thames Parish Council