



NEWSLETTER

October 2025, Issue 96

Introduction

My name is Alex Benedict and I have been a resident in Purley-on-Thames for over 30 years. I was invited to join the council and accepted. My reason for joining the Parish Council was from a mindset of “don’t moan about something you are not willing to do anything about”.

I have been interested in services since I left school. My career covers many roles and sectors giving me a wide range of knowledge in business. During this time, I also continue to study, gaining qualifications in health and safety as well as Yoga and other energy modalities.

13 years ago, I made a bold decision to start my own business. This mainly came from what I had witnessed within business and in my Yoga classes. I believe in the fundamental principle of health and safety, that no one should be hurt going to work. One risk I saw being overlooked for the bigger risks was how we sit at our desks. Through my studies I know the impact sitting can have on the body, now research and studies have concluded that this has a big impact on health and productivity.

I do think the term health and wellbeing has been overused within business and marketing. However, it is the correct term for what I deliver. Health and wellbeing is more than what happens in the office or workspace, it is your home life and the area you live that also plays a part. I am hoping by being part of the Parish Council I can help keep Purley-on-Thames a desirable place to live.

Councillor Alex Benedict

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.



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

Campanologists Wanted



The bells at St Mary's, Purley on Thames, are in danger of ringing no more!

The Bell Ringing Group are planning to hold a "taster session" in October and if you are interested in becoming a bell ringer, please register your interest by telephoning Marjorie on 0118 941 8856 or Anne on 0118 941 3259.

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

PHS Gardening Club

Our Trading Store in the Memorial Hall Car Park, Glebe Road, is open on Saturday mornings from 10 am until 11 am until the end of October, selling composts, growbags, fertilisers & pesticides, canes, watering cans and a variety of other gardening products.

As an RHS affiliated society we hold a card that provides a 50% reduction on the normal adult rate to any of the RHS gardens for one paid -up member of the PHS gardening club and one guest . If you require further details or would like to borrow the card, please contact Tom Gallagher on 07806 507576.

The **Late Summer Show** on 6th September was a great success despite very difficult growing conditions and the Memorial Hall was full of horticultural, cookery and handicraft exhibits and packed with visitors. Our thanks to all those who entered, and congratulations to the winners of the main awards.

AWARDS

Banksian Medal	Ray Lewis
Reg Ayers Memorial Trophy	Paul Humphreys / Ray Sewart
PHS Perpetual Challenge Cup	Nancy Massie /John Thomson
Purley Women's Institute Cup	Pat Roper
Neil Buckle Trophy	Wendy Chapman
Purley Homecraft Salver	Pat Roper
Purley Home & Garden Bowl	Ray Lewis
Frankston Vase	Pat Roper
Golden Jubilee Cup	Bejamin Corderoy
Mrs Fairfoull's Trophy	Nancy Massie

Dates for your diary:

On 15th October@ 7.30 for 8.00 pm, Linda Humphreys-Evans will tell us about The History of Caversham Court Gardens.

On 19th November @ 7.30 for 8.00 pm, Iain Tolhurst of Tolhurst Organic will tell us about Stockfree Organic Vegetables.

All our events are held at the Memorial Hall, Glebe Road, RG8 8DP. Guests are very welcome and will be asked for a £2 contribution towards the cost of speakers and overheads.

New members are very welcome – join at the Trading Store, or at one of our events; membership is only £4.00 per year and attracts discounts at Englefield Garden Centre and Collins in Pangbourne. Members can also obtain 50% discount on seed purchases from Suttons.

Local Events



VILLAGE

CONCERTS

St Mary's, Purley on Thames RG8 8BJ
7pm Doors & Bar, 8pm Music

Emma Stevens in Concert
Saturday 4th October 2025



Life has been something of a whirlwind for the down-to-earth surfer chick from Guildford, since embarking on a solo career in 2012 and bursting onto the scene with her distinctively catchy pop melodies, fused with folk instrumentation and a touch of country. Bringing a refreshing glimmer of hope and an abundance of heart and positivity, Emma Stevens' music breathes life and honesty. After 4 radio 2 playlists, an iTunes single of the week, and over 40 synchs on TV in the UK, Emma's profile then exploded in China following her track, A Place Called You being featured on a prime-time TV show watched by over 75 million viewers. The late great Sir Terry Wogan and Chris Evans have been fans - we're sure you will be too!

"Just Magical" – Sir Terry Wogan



Duo in Concert
Saturday 1st November 2025

Ben Bruant and Will Cashel are duo – playing guitar in a style fusing flamenco, pop and classical music. Together the band has recorded five albums and two EPs and performed to audiences including British and European royalty and at venues such as Liverpool Philharmonic, BBC Good Food Festival, G-Live, Newbury Spring Festival, Folk on the Dock, Goodwood and the F1 Grand Prix. Their music is featured regularly on Scala Radio and on BBC Radio 2...

We are excited to welcome Duo to Village Concerts in November!

Tickets: Earlybird Adult £12, Youth £8; Full-price Adult £15, Youth £10
www.villageconcerts.co.uk



CHRISTMAS MARKET

**PURLEY BARN and PURLEY SPORTS & SOCIAL CLUB,
 GOOSECROFT, PURLEY ON THAMES RG8 8BW**

Purley's magical Christmas market is back,
 bigger than ever and once again
 Santa has brought his reindeer with him!





SATURDAY 29th NOVEMBER 2025
10.30AM - 3.30PM
FREE ENTRY & FREE PARKING

**Hand-crafted quality gifts - Christmas decorations - Ceramics
 Accessories - Jewellery - Art - Home bakes - Glassware - Fashion
 Babywear - Books - Beverages - Confectionery - Cakes
 Refreshments - Mulled wine - Games - Pangbourne Silver Band
 Silent Auction - Grand raffle**

In aid of Friends of Purley Barn

In association with:






Project Purley Local History Society



A visit by the Queen of Spain to Oliver Dixon's stables in Reading

Friday 17th October at 7.30pm

The large Barn at Goosecroft

A talk by Caroline Piller "Horse Dealing in Reading"

Guests and visitors - £5

Members - Free

Horse dealing was an extremely important trade in town and country. Caroline will describe how the well-known horse dealers of Reading in the 19th and early 20th centuries carried out their business, which could be quite lucrative.

The last dealers in Reading were Oliver Dixon Ltd, of Crescent Road Repository at Mockbeggar Farm in Earley. They were rewarded with royal patronage and worldwide fame but were forced to give up their premises in 1941. Oliver Dixon was well known in Reading, mixing socially with Sol Joel, the Palmers, Arthur Hill, and Vincent and Dick Francis of Emmbrook.

Find out more in this fascinating talk.

Visitors and potential members are always welcome.

Berkshire Family History Society

The Society has a number of events coming up in October, two of which are highlighted here. Events are open to members and non-members alike. You can find full details of all of our events and pre-book can be found at <https://berksfhs.org/>

Berkshire Family History Society CIO is a registered charity, number 1204390.

**Tuesday 7th October – 10.30am – Victoria Park Area, Reading, walk with guide
Terry Dixon - £5 – pre-booking required**



Image: Decorative brickwork, Rosalind Mitchell, Reading, CC BY-SA 2.0

Join Terry Dixon for this walk around an area that is not well known. Bordered by the railway to the north, North St., Chatham St., to the east & Oxford Road to Reading West Bridge. It covers growth from 12th Century Abbey Lands, through Victorian times to an important residential area & much more!



**Thursday 23rd October – 2pm - Online Talk
“White Waltham Airfield and the ATA” by Dr
Richard Marks - £5 – pre-booking required**

The Second World War was the first conflict in which aircraft played a major role.

The Royal Air Force expanded hugely in the late 1930s in anticipation of a probable global conflict and needed massive numbers of new state of the art aircraft. Losses would also need to be replaced quickly, with aircraft to be delivered

directly to squadrons ready for service. But how was this to be done? The system used in the First World War of sending a pilot to collect a new aeroplane from an aircraft park just would not work. So, something

else was needed. The Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA) was created in 1940 to support the RAF by ferrying new, damaged and repaired aircraft to where they needed to be. The men and women of the ATA were expected, and did, fly anything that the RAF was using with little training other than a copy of the pilot's notes. This is their story, and the story of the ATA headquarters at White Waltham Airfield.



Berkshire Gardens Trust's Autumn Lecture by Alex Denman, Show Director of the Royal Windsor Flower Show

THE HISTORY OF RHS CHELSEA AND OTHER FLOWER SHOWS

Friday 10th October 2025, 7.30 at

The Barn, off Beech Road, Purley on Thames, RG8 8DR

The lecture will be preceded by our AGM starting at 6.30pm. If you would like to know more about the Berkshire Gardens Trust, do come to our AGM.

Refreshments will be served from 6.15pm.

Alex Denman is an experienced horticulturist and was the RHS Chelsea Flower Show Manager and then Head of Shows Development, from 2006 to 2014.



His Royal Highness King Charles, Alan Titchmarsh and Alex at the Royal Windsor Flower Show 2025

You will hear how Chelsea grew from a small but respected show in the Inner Temple to the world's greatest flower show that spans 5 days. Alex will focus on her days as Show Manager, highlighting the lengths the show team and exhibitors go to create original and inspiring content each year.

Tickets are £15 for BGT members, £18 for non-members including refreshments. Please book via TicketSource on our website

www.berkshiregardenstrust.org/2025-agm-presentation-discussion by the 2nd of October. Venue details will be sent to you via your email address. Please contact Kim Hacker or Bettina Kirkham at Berksgtenquiries@gmail.com if you have any queries.

PSG Serve Up More Than Meals at Community Lunch

The delicious smell of homemade food and freshly baked bread filled the grounds of the Memorial Hall on Saturday 6th September, as almost 70 residents came together for the annual community lunch ahead of the PHS & WI Late Summer Show. At the heart of it all was a wonderful team of volunteers and residents who made the day possible.

From early in the morning, volunteers were busy chopping vegetables, stirring pots, baking, and setting up canopies and tables. By midday, the hall grounds had been transformed into a welcoming space full of chatter, laughter and, luckily plenty of sunshine—despite the odd gust of wind!

But the lunch wasn't just about the food. It was about spending time together catching up with friends from the Parish Council, Tuesday Coffee Mornings, WI, Project Purley, Thames Valley Singers, Post Office, The Gardening Club and more! And taking the time to make new ones too.

Nearly all the produce came from the allotments PSG have in Winston Way. This reminded us of the hard work and dedication that goes into growing food. Those who tend the allotments week in, week out—planting, watering, weeding and harvesting—to those who baked, cooked, served plates and set up and cleared up afterwards. The fact that only a tiny bag of rubbish was left at the end was a real bonus (we'll gloss over the mountain of washing up that replaced it!).

As the last plates were stacked away and the hall grounds grew quiet, one thing stood out: this community lunch filled more than just our stomachs.

Thanks to the commitment of Purley's residents, friends and volunteers, it filled our hearts with a sense of belonging that will last long after the tables are packed away. PSG were lucky to receive some donations so a big thank you. These donations allow other projects to be achieved within Purley.

Check out <https://www.purleysustainability.co.uk/lunch> for the delicious recipes and see the photos of the day.

Dates for the diary:

Repair Café – Saturday 11th October 3pm to 5pm at The Mad Duck, Wintringham Way.

Recycling/ Terracycle – Sunday 12th October at 7 Beech Road.

Repair Café – Saturday 8th November 3pm to 5pm at The Mad Duck, Wintringham Way.

Recycling/ Terracycle – Sunday 9th November at 7 Beech Road.

Residents' Meeting for the Orchard – Saturday 15th November at 2.30 – 3.30pm at the Memorial Hall

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.

Repair Café



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

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.



Purley Memorial Hall



AUTUMN FAYRE

Saturday 11th October
11am to 2pm
Refreshments
CASH ONLY




New & Nearly New Clothing At Greatly Reduced Prices
(Clothing, Uniform & Pyjamas donated by Tesco, Portman Road)

Raffle, Bottle Tombola, Lucky Dip, Jewellery, Toys, Books & Plants




FREE ENTRY – ALL WELCOME

All proceeds to Duchess of Kent Hospice

Purley Memorial Hall is located in Glebe Road, RG8 8DP

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