

**Purley on Thames Parish Council
Minutes of the Council Meeting
Held on Monday 15th September 2025**

In the Large Hall at The Barn, Goosecroft

Commencing 6:00pm and concluding at 6:54pm

Present: Councillors G. Rolfe (Chairman), M. Abrams , P. Beddoes, M. Bishop, J. Evans, L. Grady, A. Grindley, J. Langford, R. Wallace.

In attendance: Sharon Way (Clerk)

P 25/109 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr V. White.

P 25/110 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

P 25/111 PUBLIC FORUM

No members of the public were in attendance.

P 25/112 MINUTES OF MEETING

Cllr Rolfe invited comments on the minutes of the council meeting held on Tuesday 29th July 2025. No comments were made.

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

RESOLVED: Approval and adoption of the minutes of the meeting, Tuesday 29th July was AGREED.

The minutes of the meeting, Tuesday 29th July were duly signed by the Chairman.

P 25/113 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF 29th JULY

None.

P 25/114 MOTIONS FOR RESOLUTION

P 25/114-1 Parish Council Insurance

The Clerk stated that the insurance quotation is approximately £700 higher than the previous year's price, however there had been several claims within the year.

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

RESOLVED: That the Parish Council agrees to renew its insurance policy with Hiscox Insurance Company Limited under a three-year binding Long Term Agreement (LTA), with the 2025/26 premium of £12,583.79, as set out in the insurance renewal document circulated with the agenda was AGREED.

P 25/114-2 Financial and Governance Risk Assessment

Cllr Wallace stated that there is a financial risk associated with the local authority reorganisation, but there is insufficient information currently available to assess this risk. It will be necessary to try to establish details during the reorganisation consultation period. Members discussed the forthcoming consultation meetings, organised at the Memorial Hall and the Large Barn, Goosecroft.

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

RESOLVED: That the Council adopts the Financial Risk Assessment, as recommended by the Finance & Governance Committee, as circulated with the agenda was AGREED.

P 25/114-3 Grants Policy

Cllr Grindley stated that there were only a small number of updates to the Grants Policy.

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

RESOLVED: To resolve to adopt the updated Grants Policy, circulated to the Grants Working Group for comment and updated accordingly was AGREED.

P 25/115 BUCKNELLS MEADOW

Cllr Bishop updated members on the history of vandalism at Bucknell's Meadow. Cllr Bishop stated that a bench had recently been uprooted from its slab, placed next to a recycled material bench and set alight. This had completely destroyed both benches and has also resulted in fire damage to the children's play equipment in the vicinity. Cllr Bishop stated that in order to prevent a further arson attack, the replacement bench would probably have to be concrete, which could cost in the region of £2500-£3000. The Clerk stated that the incident had been reported on the day it occurred but no response had yet been received from the police.

Cllr Rolfe stated that an article on the incident had been included in the Parish Newsletter, which had covered the high cost of replacement and the effect on the council budget and precept.

Cllr Bishop noted an incident had also occurred the previous week. The Queens Jubilee bench adjacent to Mapledurham Drive had been removed from its fixings and moved into the hedge line of the adjacent field.

Cllr Langford noted the appearance of graffiti on the New Hill railway bridge, and discussed the risk of graffiti increasing in the village if this is not quickly removed. Members stated that the matter must be reported and the Clerk agreed to do this.

Cllr Bishop stated that the vegetation around the New Hill bridge was becoming significantly overgrown. The Clerk agreed to report this matter to the relevant authority.

P 25/116 UPCOMING STOP SMOKING CAMPAIGN FOR WEST BERKSHIRE RESIDENTS

Cllr Rolfe stated that WBC had requested that the council places 'stop smoking' campaign posters on its bus shelters and notice boards, and asked members if this was acceptable. No objections were raised. The Clerk agreed to progress this with WBC.

P 25/117 DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Cllr Langford referred members to the report previously circulated. Cllr Langford noted that there was an article in Newbury Weekly News by Jeff Brooks, Leader of West Berkshire Council, regarding the potential local government reorganisation.

P 25/118 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Cllr Rolfe stated that the Clerk will be producing a financial report from Rialtus in order to facilitate budget planning for 2025/26.

P 25/119 CLERK'S REPORT

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

The Clerk stated that the AGAR had been received back from the external auditor (PKF Littlejohn), who have confirmed that Sections 1 and 2 are in accordance with Proper Practices and raised no matters of concern regarding legislation or regulatory requirements.

Receipt of the completed AGAR was formally noted by members.

The Clerk stated that the Goosecroft Development lease had been signed and the next steps would be discussed at the next Goosecroft Development Committee meeting.

With regard to the water main upgrade works, the Clerk stated that the appointed contractor had attended site and had started planning the works, however redesign costs for the Thames Water element of the works were still awaited.

The Clerk stated that the office filing cabinet had toppled over and needed to be replaced at a cost of circa £400.

The Clerk noted that blind installation and cupboard painting works had been carried out in the Barn. A date for the installation of double glazing is to be agreed. The electrical issues had been resolved and pest control have confirmed that there are no rats or mice present.

The Clerk noted the completion of tree works at Goosecroft, and that permission requests for the required tree work at Pikeshaw have been submitted to WBC.

The Clerk stated that the last NAG meeting had not taken place because the police were called away to an incident. A new date is being arranged in conjunction with the police.

The Clerk noted that the annual service of the church clock will be arranged.

P 25/120 COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Barn and Burial

Cllr Langford summarised the recently completed and planned improvements to the Barn. Cllr Langford discussed the response to two public complaints, the first regarding grass being left across the path by the grounds maintenance team, and a second complaint regarding the appearance of the compound. Both matters are being addressed.

Cllr Langford stated that the committee will be considering replacement of the Barn chairs.

B. Finance and Governance

Cllr Wallace noted that it was 30 years since the Barn was relocated to Goosecroft. Cllr Wallace noted that the financial paper had been circulated to members.

C. Goosecroft Development

Cllr Bishop stated that the lease had been signed for the Goosecroft Extension land and that the next steps would be discussed at the following Goosecroft Development Committee meeting.

D. Allotments and Village Amenities

None.

E. Planning

Cllr Rolfe discussed one application which had initially been refused planning permission, but following an appeal had been approved by the planning inspector.

F. Recreation

Cllr Bishop noted the change from summer to winter sports on the recreation ground, and also noted the generally good performance of the new grounds maintenance contractor.

P 25/121 WORKING GROUP REPORTS

A. Climate change

None.

B. Emergency planning

None.

C. Grants

Following approval of the policy, the Clerk confirmed that the invitation for grant applications would be launched and the parish website updated accordingly.

D. Human Resources

None.

E. Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Grady discussed the effect on Neighbourhood Plan preparations of uncertainty caused by the proposed local government reorganisation, and the need to canvass the opinion of Purley residents in order to create a vision for the development of the village over the next 20-30 years.

Cllr Grady discussed the potential use of Mentimeter software to facilitate the anonymous collection of opinions and views at public meetings. Members agreed that this should be trialled.

F. IT

None.

G. Purley Outreach Post Office and Shop

None.

H. Recognition Group

Cllr Rolfe suggested the potential to use Mentimeter to progress the Recognition Group award.

A. AWE Liaison

None.

B. BALC / NALC

None.

C. Friends of Purley Barn

Cllr Grindley stated that the preparations for the Christmas Market were progressing well and thanked the Purley Park Trust for their contribution.

Cllr Grindley stated that a Facebook Group had been set up on which people could volunteer for roles at the Christmas Market. A link to the group would be forwarded to members.

D. Memorial Hall

Cllr Beddoes stated that the coffee morning continued to go from strength to strength with 20-30 people regularly attending. An Autumn fair will be held at the Memorial Hall on 11th October in support of the Duchess of Kent Hospice.

E. Neighbourhood Action Group

None.

F. Pangbourne Volunteer Group

None.

G. Purley Park Social Club

Cllr Langford stated that the name of the club had been changed to 'Purley Riverside Club'. Significant decorative improvements had been made both externally and internally.

Cllr Langford noted that the Mad Duck café had been named by Olivia Bailey MP as one of the favourite businesses in the village.

H. Purley Sports and Social Club

Cllr Bishop stated that a meeting with PSSC will be held on 16th September. The Clerk stated that this meeting will start at 7pm. Cllr Rofle stated the need for the PSSC to maintain safeguarding of its users.

I. Purley Sustainability Group

Cllr Evans stated that a successful community lunch was held at the Memorial Hall on 6th September, with 70 people attending.

Cllr Evans stated that there has been a change of PSG leadership. A business plan for the Community Orchard has been put in place and there is now a need to raise a minimum of £5000, via grant applications, to fund the orchard with a plan to commence planting in Autumn 2026. Cllr Evans stated that the parish council grant had contributed to soil sampling and obtaining a certificate of lawfulness. The PSG is also currently consulting on requirements for irrigation and maintenance of the orchard.

Cllr Evans stated that PSG would be holding a 'Future Projects' meeting on 15 November, 2.30 – 3.30pm, at the Memorial Hall, to inform local residents about the Community Orchard and the work of the PSG. Flyers for this event have been distributed around the village and are also available from the parish office.

Cllr Evans stated that a 'bat walk' will be held on 18th September. Twenty people are currently signed-up for this event.

Cllr Evans stated that on 21st September 2-4pm the annual apple pressing event will take place at the Whitchurch Maze in partnership with the Whitchurch sustainability Group.

Cllr Evans stated that a wreath-making event will take place. A tentative date for this event 6th December, to be confirmed.

Cllr Evans stated that the PSG has been shortlisted for a BBC Berkshire Community Award, which will take place on 17th September.

J. Trenthan Bowling Club

None.

K. Other Ad-Hoc Councillor Reports

None.

P 25/123 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.

P 25/124 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 7th October 2025 Parish Council Meeting

The meeting was formally closed at 6:54 pm.

Signed:

Date: 7th October 2025