

NEWSLETTER

February, Issue 99

Introduction

Welcome to the first Parish Council Newsletter of 2026

A roundup of news, updates, and opportunities in our parish

Water Main Improvement Works at Goosecroft

Many of you will have noticed the recent works taking place at Goosecroft, which are now nearing completion. We wanted to take this opportunity to explain a little more about why these works were needed and what they mean for the site.

Goosecroft is home to a number of important community facilities, including the Parish Office, historic barn, burial ground, Purley Sports and Social Club, sports pavilion, playground, and sports fields. Over time, although use of the site has grown significantly, the water supply has never been upgraded to reflect the increased demand. This has resulted in frequent occurrences of very low water pressure.

Following discussions with Thames Water, it became clear that the water supply comprised original domestic service for the site. It was therefore recommended that a new, larger, water main should be installed to provide a more suitable and reliable supply for our community buildings and facilities, whilst also providing scope for further expansion should it be required.

These improvements will help ensure that Goosecroft continues to function effectively as a key community space, with a more robust and reliable water supply to support current activities and future needs.

District Reorganisation – Survey Results as of 16 January 2026

Thank you to everyone who has taken part in the Parish Council's survey on the district reorganisation proposals. The response so far has been excellent and shows a strong level of engagement with this important issue.

As of 16 January 2026, we have received 507 responses, with 392 from residents of Purley on Thames, 95 from Tilehurst, and 20 from other areas (including Calcot and Pangbourne).

The results to date show a strong preference for the ‘Ridgeway Council’ proposal, with 88.2% of respondents supporting this option. 10.3% of respondents favour the Reading Council proposal to amalgamate with Reading, while 1.5% have indicated no overall preference.

If you haven’t yet had your say, there is still time to take part, and we would encourage you to do so. You can access the survey here: [District Council Restructuring Survey](#). The final results will be shared once the survey has closed and all responses have been fully analysed.

The Parish Council has also shared these preliminary survey results with our local Member of Parliament, Olivia Bailey, and our former MP, Alok Sharma.

Here’s to an informative first edition of 2026 – enjoy!

*Sharon Way
Clerk, Purley on Thames Parish Council*

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

Local Sports Activities

Women's Walking Cricket



* Tuesdays, 12:30-13:30, 21st Apr, 28th Apr, 5th May and 12th May

* Purley on Thames Cricket Club
Goosecroft Recreation Ground
Goosecroft Ln, Reading RG8 8BW

* Interested? Please call Karen on 07849 203780

Played at walking pace, these coaching sessions deliver cricketing skills to new or existing players and are an exciting way to keep active.

If you enjoy the coaching, our normal sessions run from 11:00 until 13:00 on Wednesdays starting from 22nd April.



Potterers

Very kindly
supported by:



Version 1.2

Local Club Events

Project Purley



Image courtesy of Dave Hall

Reading's Trolleybuses – a talk by Dave Hall

Friday 20th February

7.30pm

The Large Barn, Goosecroft, Purley on Thames

Members free, non-members £5

Our talk this evening begins by briefly looking into the early days of public transport in Reading and the reasons behind the decision in 1934 to replace the remaining tram routes with trolleybuses. It will then move on to the post war years when further routes were converted to trolleybus operation and features many photos showing both the trolleybuses and various shops/buildings and cinemas that have long since disappeared. The decision taken in 1966 to cease trolleybus operation in the town and their demise will also be covered. Finally, it takes a brief look at those Reading trolleybuses that are preserved and operate at The Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft, North Lincolnshire.

Guests and visitors very welcome. Membership of the Society costs just £26 for two people at the same address or £18 for one person and lasts until the end of December 2026.

Berkshire Family History Society

As usual, events are open to members and non-members alike. Full details of all can be found at <https://berksfhs.org/> and you can also book tickets here.

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



Image: Pam Brophy / Peasemore Church, CC BY-SA 2.0

Tuesday 3rd February 2 – 3pm - Tour of St Barnabas Church, Peasemore - £5 – pre-booking required

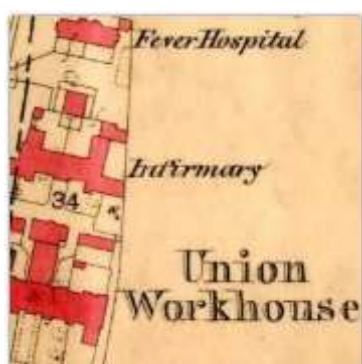
The current church dates from 1842, but this isn't the first religious building built on this site, so we will also hear about its predecessors, including the earliest, a chapel built about 1089 by Richard de Peasemore, and dedicated to St Peada. We will also learn about the parish and its notable families and people.



Image: An AEC Regent motorbus No.76 in London Street in the summer of 1962, courtesy of Dave Hall

Thursday 19th February 2.30 – 3.45pm – Talk – “Reading’s Buses” by Dave Hall - £5 – pre-book or pay at the door, Abbey Baptist Church, Abbey Square, Reading RG1 3BE

This photo-rich talk will look at Reading Corporation's motorbus services from their launch in 1919 until the end of the century, 1999. We will see how the design of the vehicles progressed, and the many routes that were introduced.



Thursday 26th February 2 - 3.15pm – Online Talk “Social Care in Reading: the Middle Ages to 1900” by Mike Cooper - £5 – pre-booking required

Our ancestors often fell on hard times, and this talk looks at how Reading provided housing, relief and care for its people, long before modern concepts of “welfare” came in. Mike will include the work of the Abbey, alms houses and the Corporation.

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



CONCERTS

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



James Kirby
Saturday 7th February 2026

Having experienced a packed audience & a standing ovation at previous Village Concerts, we're delighted to welcome back acoustic singer / songwriter James Kirby, as part of his World Tour! His beautiful & melodic songs captivate audiences of all ages and, with his unique style of guitar playing and beautiful vocals, he is not to be missed! Only a few tickets left – book soon!

"Beautifully written songs" – BBC Radio Merseyside

Annie Dressner
Saturday 14th March 2026



Back by popular demand, we're delighted that Annie Dressner is returning to Village Concerts! Born and bred in the heart of NYC and inspired by icons like Simon & Garfunkel, Carly Simon, and Ben Kweller, Annie began crafting her own melodies, often humming her thoughts like a secret soundtrack to city life. Her music over the years has been played on BBC Radio 2 and BBC 6 Music, and has seen press support from titles such as American Songwriter, Folk Radio UK and American UK, while gaining a nomination for Female Artist of the year from FATEA.

"Her words are intense and personal, contrasting with her understated, almost conversational, singing style." – AmericanaUK

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

Community Orchard Update

Together, we've started something special for the Purley community!



The Journey So Far

- Identifying a suitable location – Bucknell's Meadow
- Progressing through the planning process
- Completing the necessary formal surveys
- Sought advice from the experienced Blewbury Orchard Team, The Parish Council and our enthusiastic residents and committee
- We ordered 13 trees – a mix of apples, pears and plums
- We dug holes, and planted the trees in December with help from residents
- We have been fortunate to receive sponsorship of all the trees in this Tranche



Thank You - A heartfelt thank you to all **volunteers**, past and present, Rotary Club, Purley Park Trust, our donors and the **Parish Council** for the continued support

What's next....

- We're optimistic about the success of this trial orchard, and we'll continue to monitor progress carefully and cost effectively
- We need everyone to keep a watchful eye on the trees and any antisocial behaviour and report anything that may be untoward.
- We will hopefully plan future purchases of more trees to continue to build on the Orchard and will seek further donors shortly.

www.purleysustainability.co.uk

info@purleysustainability.co.uk

REPAIR CAFE

The Mad Duck Café, Wintringham Way, Purley, RG8 8BG

Bring any broken domestic items for advice, repair, and learn how to fix them yourself with help from local volunteers

CLOTHES | ELECTRICALS | BICYCLES | TOYS & MORE

2026 Calendar

Saturday 10th January

Saturday 14th February

Saturday 14th March

Saturday 11th April

Saturday 9th May

Saturday 13th June

Saturday 11th July

Saturday 8th August

Saturday 12th September

Saturday 10th October

Saturday 14th November

Saturday 12th December

Monthly - every 2nd Saturday 3pm - 5pm

www.purleysustainability.co.uk

info@purleysustainability.co.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

Purley on Thames Parish Council does not take responsibility for articles provided by non-Council Members and would encourage you to go to the website for the article provider and check dates, times and details.

Purley on Thames Parish Council is not responsible for the content of third-party websites.

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