

**Purley on Thames Parish Council
Minutes of the Council Meeting
Held on Tuesday 7 October 2025**

In the Small Hall at The Barn, Goosecroft

Commencing 6:00pm and concluding at 7:23pm

Present: Councillors G. Rolfe (Chairman), M. Abrams, P. Beddoes, M. Bishop, J. Evans, J. Langford, G. Nyamie, G. Sillitoe, R. Wallace.

In attendance: Sharon Way (Clerk), one member of the public.

P 25/125 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs L. Grady and V. White.

P 25/126 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

P 25/127 PUBLIC FORUM

A member of the public requested that the photographs on the parish council's website should be of locations within Purley on Thames.

The member of the public expressed support for the Goosecroft Extension project.

The member of the public encouraged the establishment of a riverside development committee.

The member of the public stated that footpaths in the parish are in a poor condition, many becoming boggy and muddy following rain, and blocked by brambles and other vegetation, and encouraged the parish council to take action to rectify this.

The member of the public stated that the vegetation and trees on the WBC owned land near Lister Close have become extremely overgrown and are presenting an obstruction to vehicles.

The member of the public stated that committee meetings should be held more frequently.

The member of the public stated that the goal posts in Bucknell's Meadow should be relocated, as discussed at previous council meetings.

P 25/128 MINUTES OF MEETING

Cllr Rolfe invited comments on the minutes of the council meeting held on Monday 15th September 2025. No comments were made.

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

RESOLVED: Approval and adoption of the minutes of the meeting, Monday 15th September was AGREED.

The minutes of the meeting, Monday 15th September were duly signed by the Chairman.

P 25/129 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF 15th SEPTEMBER

None.

P 25/130 MOTIONS FOR RESOLUTION

P 25/130-1 Co-option to Goosecroft Development Committee

Cllr Rolfe stated that this was a major development and the committee would therefore benefit from increased councillor representation.

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

RESOLVED: To approve the co-option of Councillor Jane Langford and Councillor Gerard Sillitoe to the Goosecroft Development Committee, in accordance with the committee's Terms of Reference, to serve as members for the remainder of the municipal year, was AGREED.

P 25/131 DISTRICT RESTRUCTURING

Cllr Rolfe stated that a public meeting had been held on Monday 29 September at which Cllr Jeff Brooks, Leader of West Berkshire Council, had presented plans for local authority restructuring.

Cllr Rolfe referred to the public survey being carried out by the parish council, and stated that, to date, 227 responses had been received. The majority of responses received favour the Ridgeway proposals, with a minority favouring the Reading proposals.

Cllr Rolfe stated that the current results of the survey will be publicised in the Parish News, the Newsletter and on the parish council website, including a reminder that the survey is still open.

Cllr Rolfe stated that a formal poll of parishioners is currently being considered. Cllr Wallace stated that a poll would be expensive and questioned whether it would generate significant turn-out by the public. Cllr Wallace also stated that the public would expect the result of a vote to determine the outcome, but that this would not be the case with respect to the restructuring proposals.

Cllr Rolfe stated that Theale Parish Council was currently considering holding a poll and the outcome of this would be awaited before Purley Parish Council takes any action.

Cllr Beddoes asked whether the agreed leaflet drop had been carried out. The Clerk responded that a leaflet drop had been planned to publicise the WBC meeting held on 29 September, however sign-up was already popular, and there were concerns regarding the Barn's capacity, so the drop had not yet been carried out.

Cllr Beddoes stated that a leaflet drop should be carried out to ensure the community are aware of the proposed restructuring.

P 25/132 DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Cllr Langford referred members to the report previously circulated.

P 25/133 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

None.

P 25/134 CLERK'S REPORT

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

The Clerk stated that the VAT return for Q1 of the current financial year had been submitted, the final instalment of the precept had been received, and the internal auditor will attend the office on 4 November to carry out the mid-year audit.

The Clerk stated that the Goosecroft Development Committee met on 16th September and that the main focus of the group is now to secure up-to-date quotations and funding for the project.

The Clerk stated that the newly leased land is covered under the public liability section of the council's insurance policy.

With respect to the water main upgrade works, the Clerk stated that due to minor changes to the design, a refund of approximately £5000 will be issued by Thames Water for the non-contestable works. The Clerk stated that the earliest date to start the works is mid-November, however due to the potential for disruption to events over the Christmas period, the Clerk recommended that the works are programmed to start in January 2026.

The Clerk stated that the new double glazing for the Barn should be installed at the end of October/early November.

With respect to Pikeshaw, the Clerk stated that permission to carry out the tree works had not yet been received from WBC and that reports had been received of antisocial behaviour. There had also been fly-tipping in the area and a request had been made to WBC for assistance in removing it.

The Clerk stated that applications for Parish Council Grants for 2025/26 are now open, and the council website has been updated accordingly.

The Clerk stated that the graffiti on the New Hill railway bridge has been reported and the Queen Elizabeth memorial Bench has been moved from Bucknell's Meadow to Goosecroft.

The Clerk stated that painting and minor repairs will be carried out to the bungalow fence with expenditure from the bungalow maintenance budget.

The Clerk stated that the Health and Safety at Work Act requires the council to ensure that its buildings are safe for the public to use. A Legionella risk assessment has therefore been arranged for Thursday 9 October, at a cost of £425 from the health and safety inspection budget.

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COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Barn and Burial

Cllr Langford provided an overview of recent developments and improvements at the Barn including obtaining planning permission for Sunday events, new blinds, broom cupboards, dado rail, painting works, new shed for storage with lit path access, barn names and lights, replacement hooks, and new double glazing in progress. Cllr Langford also noted the work carried out to improve the general environment around the Barn and Burial Ground and thanked Cllr Bishop for assistance with this work. Cllr Langford noted that the wisteria is not in good health and this is being looked into by the grounds maintenance team.

B. Finance and Governance

None.

C. Goosecroft Development

Cllr Bishop referred to the committee meeting which had taken place on 16 September and the subsequent actions reported by the Clerk. The next committee meeting will be held in November. Cllr Wallace stated that the signing of the lease should be publicised on Facebook and the council website. Cllr Wallace also stated that noticeboards should be used to publicise events in the Barn.

D. Allotments and Village Amenities

Cllr Abrams noted that whilst three committee meetings are held in the year, matters and actions related to allotments and village amenities are discussed by committee members on a regular basis.

With respect to an allotment boundary issue, the Clerk stated that a letter had been sent to the landowner, giving the councils considered opinion, and proposing a meeting is held to reach an agreement. It was agreed that this meeting should be held as soon as possible.

Cllr Abrams stated that complaints had been received regarding an allotment holder. The allotment holder has been contacted and a response is awaited.

Cllr Abrams noted recent Facebook posts concerning the overflowing dog waste bin on Sulham Lane. Cllr Abrams noted that this bin is not the responsibility of the council, but it is clear that members of the public assume that it is the council's responsibility and this is generating significant negative publicity. The Clerk agreed to contact Sulham & Tidmarsh parish council regarding this matter. Members noted that the bin had subsequently been emptied.

With respect to footpaths, Cllr Rolfe noted that responsibility for their maintenance often lies with WBC or the landowner, depending on their location, for example, footpaths near the sewage works are the responsibility of Springs Farm. Cllr Rolfe noted that in order to save money WBC are not maintaining their footpaths within the parish, and action to address this may have to be taken by the council.

Cllr Abrams noted at Blount's Meadow that a number of the barns that had been built against the fences had been taken down, and that this was improving the appearance of the area.

E. Planning

None.

F. Recreation

Cllr Bishop stated that a letter had been received from Trentham Bowling Club regarding the yew trees overhanging the A329. The root barrier installed a number of years ago appears to be failing and the trees are now affecting the bowling green. Options being considered are a severe cut back or complete removal of the yew trees, or the installation of a deeper root barrier. The council does not consider that it is responsible for the cost of this work and will write to the Bowling Club outlining its position.

Cllr Bishop stated that a purchase order has been raised for the relocation of the goal posts at Bucknell's Meadow.

P 25/136 WORKING GROUP REPORTS

A. Climate change

Members agreed that the climate change working group would be discontinued.

B. Emergency planning

Cllr Wallace stated that the next meeting will take place in November.

C. Grants

Cllr Rolfe noted that this had been discussed in the Clerk's Report.

D. Human Resources

None.

E. Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Rolfe stated that it has been difficult to get any interest in the neighbourhood plan from parishioners, and without public engagement no progress can be made on this item.

F. IT

None.

G. Purley Outreach Post Office and Shop

Cllr Wallace stated that discussions with Sulham Estate are ongoing.

H. Recognition Group

Cllr Rolfe stated that this group was established to develop a replacement to the 'Villager of the Year' award. No meeting has yet taken place.

P 25/137 COUNCILLOR REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS

A. AWE Liaison

None.

B. BALC / NALC

None.

C. Friends of Purley Barn

Cllr Langford stated that the planning for the Christmas Market is going well and initial plans are being made for the 2026 Christmas Market. Cllr Langford thanked Friends of Purley Barn for funding the new blinds in the Large Barn.

D. Memorial Hall

Cllr Beddoes stated that the warm hub continues to be a success. An Autumn Sale will be held in the Memorial Hall on 11 October from 11am to 3pm in support of the Duchess of Kent Hospice.

E. Neighbourhood Action Group

Cllr Abrams stated that the last NAG meeting was cancelled because the police were attending an incident. The Clerk is liaising with the police to arrange a new date. Cllr Rolfe noted that the recent arson attacks would be raised. Cllr Langford stated that at the last NAG meeting it had been agreed that arson would be added to the police statistics.

F. Pangbourne Volunteer Group

Cllr Beddoes stated that the group was going well but there was a shortage of drivers.

G. Purley Riverside Club

Cllr Nyamie stated that a recently held fete had raised £4000 and that more villages are using the club since the recent renovation.

H. Purley Sports and Social Club

Cllr Bishop stated that a meeting had been held with PSSC on 16 September, and that communication between the club and council was improving. Cllr Bishop noted that the PSSC had sent emails to its members to remind them of the need to supervise their children. Cllr Langford stated that Friends of Purley Barn are working in close collaboration with PSSC on the Christmas Market and that the PSSC are planning to replace the double glazing and fascia boards on the front aspect of the premises.

I. Purley Sustainability Group

Cllr Evans stated that Cllr Bishop, Cllr Rolfe and herself had attended a meeting with the newly organised Orchard Group, and had discussed a recent visit by the group to the Blueberry Community Orchard, which is similar in scope to the proposed community orchard at Bucknell's Meadow. Cllr Evans stated that the Orchard Group are planning to plant a small number of trees at Bucknell's Meadow this autumn, as a trial. If this is successful additional trees will be planted in autumn 2026. Cllr Evans stated that the Orchard Group had also informed councillors that fruit trees are available to plant in other suitable locations within the parish.

J. Trenthan Bowling Club

Cllr Bishop stated that the club was very well organised with many members, and the relationship with the council was good.

K. Other Ad-Hoc Councillor Reports

None.

P 25/138 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 25/139 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 7th October 2025 Parish Council Meeting

The meeting was formally closed at 7:23 pm.

Signed:

Date: 15th December 2025