

Purley on Thames Parish Council
Minutes of the Extraordinary Council Meeting
Held on Thursday 27 November 2025

In the Parish Office, Goosecroft

Commencing 6:00pm and concluding at 7:05pm

Present: Councillors G. Rolfe (Chairman), M. Abrams, P. Beddoes, J. Evans, L. Grady, A. Grindley (left meeting at 6:40pm), J. Langford, R. Wallace and V. White.

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

P 25/140 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Benedict and Nyamie.

P 25/141 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

All members noted their residency in Purley on Thames. Cllr Grady declared an interest as a member of the Purley Park Trust.

P 25/142 PUBLIC FORUM

The member of the public made a statement, expressing concern about the local government reorganisation including:

- That the information was only being provided by the existing councils in Berkshire and other counties, which had the resources to do so.
- That most people in Purley did not wish to be absorbed by Reading.
- That there are other proposals for local government reorganisation, but those promoting them do not have the resources to present them to the public.

The member of the public discussed the history of local government in the Purley on Thames area, emphasising the importance of parish councils to this history. The member of the public also discussed the government white paper and the role of county and district councils, with the aim of the white paper being that one level of government delivers services.

The member of the public stated that for Purley on Thames to have its service delivery based in Abingdon would not be a good development and referred to the Redcliffe-Maude Report.

The member of the public stated that they favoured a proposal which merges Reading Council, Wokingham, Henley, and Bradfield RDC, to create a new authority focussed on service delivery. It was also noted Wokingham Borough comprises multiple parish councils.

The member of the public stated that the council should reject the Reading proposal as the worst option, but that the Ridgeway proposal was the second-worst option.

The member of the public stated that money should not be wasted on a parish poll, and that the commission in 2026 would be likely to result in an alternative option.

P 25/143 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW

Cllr Evans spoke about her experience working on Berkshire's reorganisation into the six unitary authorities, and questioned whether the unitary authorities have the resources to provide services to their residents.

Cllr Grady stated that the Purley Park Trust's analysis favoured being close to an urban centre. Cllr Grady questioned whether it was the role of the parish council to determine a position on the alternatives currently proposed. Cllr Grady stated that the role of the council should be to inform residents of where to obtain relevant information and await the consultation period from the commission in 2026.

Members discussed the parish survey. Members noted that there would not be a public vote on the proposals.

Members discussed whether the parish council should carry out a poll. Cllr Langford noted that a parish poll could be carried out in January 2026 and the result would be available in March 2026 to feed into the commission's consultation. Members discussed whether a poll would influence the result of the consultation.

Cllr Grady suggested that a Parish Meeting could be organised in January or February with speakers from the local authorities and potentially Olivia Bailey MP. Cllr Wallace stated that a Parish Meeting was potentially less representative than a survey. It was noted that a Parish meeting would be required to hold a poll, and that the poll question would be determined at the meeting.

Cllr Rolfe proposed that the survey results could be sent directly to Olivia Bailey MP, and that based on any response received, a Parish Meeting may be called. Cllr Evans expressed support for a Parish Meeting to be held as it would be useful for the community.

Cllr Langford suggested that a Parish Meeting could be held for the purpose of informing the public about the proposals.

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

RESOLVED: To send a letter summarising the results of the Parish Survey on District Reorganisation (as of 23 November) to Olivia Bailey MP and Lord Alok Sharma for information was AGREED.

The Clerk stated that a copy of the letter would be circulated to all members.

Members agreed that a discussion on holding a Parish Meeting in the New Year would be added to the agenda for the next council meeting.

P 25/144 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING
Monday 15th December 2025

P 25/145 MEMBERS' ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING
Cllr Grady requested an agenda item to discuss Mentimeter software.

The meeting was then closed to the press and public and there being no confidential business the meeting was formally closed at 7:05 pm.

Signed:

Date: 15 December 2025