



# NEWSLETTER

May 2026, Issue 102

## Local News

### Mapledurham Lock Project Update

We're pleased to share the latest progress on the Mapledurham Lock project.

Many in the local community will fondly remember the Lock area as it once was—full of flowers, colour, and of course, those much-loved ice creams. There is now growing momentum to restore that charm and bring the space back to life.

A dedicated community organisation, Mapledurham Lock CIC, has been formed with six directors leading the initiative. Over the past year, the team has held a series of constructive meetings with the Environment Agency. February 2026 marked a significant turning point, with a more positive direction, clearer options and agreed actions now in place.

Since then, the CIC team has:

- Completed site measurements to determine whether a Flood Risk Activity Permit (FRAP) is required;
- Begun reviewing historic planning consents to identify the most efficient and viable route forward;
- Engaged and consulted with local landowners;
- Sought advice from similar CICs.

We are also delighted to have secured two local grants from Veolia and Purley Parish Council. These have enabled the launch of our new website — [www.mapledurhamlock.co.uk](http://www.mapledurhamlock.co.uk) — which acts as a central hub for project information and features fantastic imagery contributed by the local community. A suite of policies is now also in place to support project delivery.

Our sincere thanks go to Purley Parish Council and Veolia for their support.

## What's Next?

The next phase will focus on:

- Re-engaging with the Environment Agency to progress a lease agreement and with local landowners;
- Refining the scope of works;
- Moving decisively toward demolition and site transformation.

In parallel, we will continue to seek additional funding to maintain momentum and deliver the project at pace.

If you have any questions or would like to get involved, please visit [www.mapledurhamlock.co.uk](http://www.mapledurhamlock.co.uk) for more details.

Thank you for your continued interest and support—we look forward to the next stage of progress

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## News from Purley C of E Primary School

Life at Purley Church of England Primary School continues to be busy, joyful and firmly rooted in our Christian values of love, courage and wisdom.

As a small village school at the heart of the community, we are proud of the wide range of opportunities we provide for our pupils. This has been especially evident in recent weeks, as our children have taken part in a variety of exciting events—truly showing that we are *small but mighty*.

World Book Day was a particular highlight, with our creative “Eggstravaganza” bringing stories to life in a wonderfully imaginative way. Pupils designed and decorated eggs inspired by their favourite books, producing fantastic results that showcased both a love of reading and impressive artistic flair.

Sporting success has also been a real strength. Our Year 3, 4, 5 and 6 pupils represented the school brilliantly in local small schools’ cross-country events, demonstrating determination, teamwork and resilience. At the other end of the scale, we also took part in the much larger Newbury Showground cross country event, where nearly 2,000 runners competed. We were incredibly proud to see one of our pupils achieve an outstanding 5th place—an amazing accomplishment in such a competitive field.

Football has been another recent highlight, with our team achieving an excellent 2nd place in a tournament held at Pangbourne College. The team was coached by one of our Governors, reflecting the strong support and commitment we benefit from across both staff and our governing board.

As part of our Christian life, we marked the end of the Spring Term by celebrating Easter together at a special service in St Mary's Church—an important opportunity for reflection and for coming together as a school community.

Our Early Years pupils have also been making the most of their wonderful outdoor area, which was redesigned following a very generous contribution from FOPS two summers ago. We hope to organise 'Stay and Play' sessions soon, giving families the chance to come and experience this provision for themselves.

All of these experiences reflect what makes our school so special. We may be small, but our pupils are given every opportunity to grow, achieve and shine.

We currently have spaces available in our Nursery class for this term and for September, as well as limited places in most year groups. There are also limited spaces available for the September Reception intake. For families seeking a smaller, nurturing environment where every child is truly known and supported, Purley C of E Primary School offers a warm welcome.


**PLACES AVAILABLE**  
NURSERY CLASS (3+)  
MON&TUES 8.50-3.20  
THURS AND FRI 8.50-1  
RECEPTION CLASS:  
SEPTEMBER 2026

**PURLEY C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL**  
LEARN TO LOVE, LOVE TO LEARN

# JOIN THE PURLEY SCHOOL FAMILY

Visit our small, nurturing village school - where every child shines.

purleyschool.co.uk 0118 9842384  
office@purley.w-berks.sch.uk  
purleyceprimaryschool

   
GOOD

 **Ofsted**  
Good Provider  
2021

## 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](#).

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## 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](mailto:clerk@purleyonthames-pc.gov.uk)

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## Dates for the diary

The following table gives advance notice of dates for some events that may be of interest to you.

Date	Time	Event	Location
16 May 2026	11:00-17:00	Centenary Community Festival	Whiteknights Campus, Reading University
13 June 2026	12:00-19:00	Pangbourne Village Fete	Pangbourne Meadows and Recreation Grounds
19-20 September 2026		Newbury Show	Newbury Showground
4 November 2026	12:00-14:00	Christmas Charity Market	St. James the Less Church, Pangbourne
28 November 2026	10:30-15:30	Christmas Market	The Barn, Purley on Thames

## Local Sports Activities



## Local Club Events

### Purley On Thames Women's Institute - April 2026

This month we welcomed our speaker Ben, who talked to us about his career in fitness. He explained that it is never too late to feel the benefits of increased exercise for balance and mobility. Our members joined in with a range of exercises demonstrated by Ben. It really was a very enjoyable and informative evening.

Looking forward to the month ahead, we shall be visiting the gardens at Lower Bowden Manor and attending the Berkshire Federation W.I. Conference at The Abbey School.

Purley will be well represented with entries in county competitions and a good few members attending. Our Pang Valley event later in the month will see several very local Women's Institutes come together for an evening at The Barn.

In addition, we have our regular member clubs, including the book club, Scrabble club, craft club and lunch club.

We are always delighted to welcome guests/potential new members.

Our next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 13th May at 7:30 pm in the Memorial Hall.

For further information, details of events, and much more, please visit our website and click on the menu.

[www.purleyonthameswi.org.uk](http://www.purleyonthameswi.org.uk)

Jacqueline Powell

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## Rain or Shine Theatre Company presents

**The Pickwick Papers**

**Friday 26<sup>th</sup> June**

**Performance starts - 7pm (doors open 6.15pm)**

**The Barn, Goosecroft Recreational Ground, off Beech Road (RG8 8DR)**

**Tickets: £18 adult and £8 children (under 15s)**



**Charles Dickens'**  
**THE Pickwick PAPERS**  
A FRIVOLOUS PURSUIT OF NOVELTY!  
RIOTOUS COMEDY

**The Barn, Purley on Thames**  
**Friday 26<sup>th</sup> June at 7:00pm**  
Tel: 03306 600541  
[www.bit.ly/Pickwick-Purley](http://www.bit.ly/Pickwick-Purley)

[rainorshine.co.uk](http://rainorshine.co.uk)  
[theatre@rainorshine.co.uk](mailto:theatre@rainorshine.co.uk)

The Rain or Shine Theatre Company is back for its annual summer performance in Purley, courtesy of Project Purley. If you haven't yet seen this talented professional theatre company, then you're in for a treat. Join the lovable Mr. Pickwick and his eccentric band of companions as they bumble their way through confusing courtships, courtroom shenanigans, questionable duels and carriage rides gone terribly wrong. Expect fast-paced wit, slapstick, more multi-rolling mayhem and a cast of larger-than-life characters in this brand new and hilarious adaptation.

Secure your seat and prepare for an uproarious adventure with the Pickwick Society—where the only certainty is a thoroughly good time to be had by all!

Tickets are available from:

- David Downs on 0118 942 4167 (cash only)
- The ticket hotline 03306 600541 (card only)
- Website (booking fee applies, so the ticket price including fee will be £8.67/£19.51) [www.bit.ly/Pickwick-Purley](http://www.bit.ly/Pickwick-Purley) (card only)



**PURLEY PLAYERS**

PRESENT A...

**DEATH AT THE SHANGRI-LA**

BY ROGER LEE

MURDER MYSTERY EVENING

FRIDAY 12TH - SATURDAY 13TH JUNE 2026

**PLACE:** THE BARN, PURLEY ON THAMES, RG8 8DR  
**TIME:** 7.30PM (DOORS OPEN AT 7PM)  
**TICKETS:** £20 PER PERSON INCLUDES 2 COURSE MEAL AND COFFEE  
**BOX OFFICE OPENS:** 1<sup>ST</sup> MAY 2026

**TEL:** 0118 941 8856  
**EMAIL:** marjoriebutlerjcw@gmail.com

CARD & CASH BAR FOR WINE, BEER AND SOFT DRINKS

ALL PROFITS WILL BE DONATED TO 

for  
the  
rest  
of  
your  
LIFE

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](mailto:Cathy@purleyonthames.org) with the details.

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## Other Events

### Berkshire Family History Society

*Catherine Sampson*

Our events programme continues to be busy, with lots of talks, workshops and courses planned. Visits ahead include Caversham Chalk Mines (selling fast), Shottesbrook Church and the former Fair Mile Hospital. As usual, events are open to members and non-members alike. Here are a few which are coming up. Full details of all can be found at [berksfhs.org](http://berksfhs.org)

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



**Monday 18th May 2 – 4pm – Online Advice Sessions – Free – pre-booking required (Zoom)**

Are you just getting started in family history and wanting guidance? Or are you stuck at a particular “brick wall”? These family history advice sessions are online, 1:1, free and available to all. We’ll provide whatever help and suggestions that we can within the time frame and book a follow-on session with you if needed. Four, 25-minute, 1:1 slots are provided.



**Tuesday 19th May 2pm – Tour of the former Fair Mile Hospital in Cholsey - £5 – pre-booking required**

The Fair Mile Hospital was until relatively recently Berkshire’s county lunatic asylum. Opened in 1870, it aimed to tackle mental illness head-on through compassion, diligent care and research. Ian Wheeler’s guided tour will take us around the site with a site plan to help visualise the hospital as it once was.



**Thursday 21st May 2pm** – Talk “The Silk Industry in Reading” by David Cliffe - £5 – pre-book or pay at the door, Abbey Baptist Church, Abbey Square, Reading RG1 3BE

The silk industry existed in Reading for over 200 years and employed over 500 people in the early 19th century. Yet nowadays few have heard of it. David will describe the different processes involved in silk production, how the industry in Reading was run, some of the firms involved, and whereabouts they operated.



**Thursday 28th May 2pm** – Online Talk “Postcards from a Different Front Line” by Helen Baggott (Zoom), £5, pre-booking required.

Illustrated with postcards sent during the First World War, this talk shares the stories of air raids, lost love and how our ancestors faced the challenge of surviving the war and beyond. Helen shares uncovered stories from the past.

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## Purley Sustainability Group

Volunteers in Purley on Thames have made a remarkable difference to our local environment after a successful community litter pick on Sunday 29th March. With more than ten heavy bags of rubbish collected, the effort highlights both the scale of the problem and the power of people coming together to care for their surroundings.

Many local volunteers of all ages turned out, equipped with gloves, litter pickers and a shared determination to improve our village. Guided by PSG focus on environmental responsibility, community action and long-term sustainability, volunteers worked across footpaths, green spaces like Bucknell’s and Blount’s Meadows, and our streets - clearing everything from plastic bottles and food packaging to general waste – plenty of hub caps and a pickaxe!

The impact was immediate. Areas that had once been cluttered with litter were transformed into cleaner, more welcoming spaces. Residents commented on how much nicer the area now looks, making it more enjoyable for walkers, families and visitors alike. The clean-up also reflects PSG belief that small, consistent actions can lead to meaningful change over time.

Local wildlife has benefited too. Removing litter reduces the risk of animals being harmed by ingesting or becoming entangled in waste. With habitats now cleaner and safer, birds, insects and small mammals are better able to thrive—an outcome that sits at the heart of PSG's values.

Beyond the physical results, the event strengthened community spirit and reinforced a shared commitment to protecting the local environment. Purley Sustainability Group hopes that initiatives like this will inspire others to take pride in the area and adopt more sustainable habits, ensuring that Purley on Thames remains a cleaner, greener place for everyone.

PSG do have a set of litter pickers and gloves that can be borrowed by groups wanting to organise their own litter pick event. Get in touch if you want to borrow them.

A huge thank you to the volunteers and the Parish Council for making the event a success.

Dates for the diary:

Repair Café – Saturday 9th May 3pm to 5pm at The Mad Duck, Wintringham Way.

Recycling/ Terracycle – Sunday 10th May at 7 Beech Road.

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](http://www.purleysustainability.co.uk)

[info@purleysustainability.co.uk](mailto:info@purleysustainability.co.uk)

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# Repair Café



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

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***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 20<sup>th</sup> of the month.

Many thanks - Editor

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