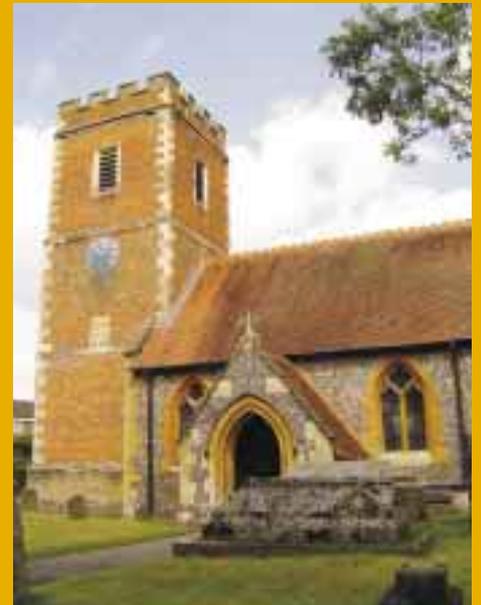


# Purley on Thames Village Plan 2004



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**The Parish Office  
Goosecroft Lane  
Purley on Thames**

September 2004

**They said it couldn't be done....**

'Purley isn't really a village. It's too large. It's too spread out.' 'You won't get a grant.' 'You won't find anybody prepared to take on the work.' Those were just some of the comments made when the Parish Council first considered a Village Plan exercise.

Fortunately, most of us felt differently.....that Purley people had a strong sense of community and a great deal of concern about the future. To cut a long story short, we were proved right. Volunteers came forward, grants and sponsorship were secured and interest was high – confirmed by an exceptional 61 per cent response to the Village Plan questionnaire. This remarkable document is the result. I believe it to be a robust Plan, based as it is on the views of the widest possible spectrum of Purley people.

The responsibility for taking the Plan forward now falls, first and foremost, on the Parish Council. It is a responsibility which we are happy to accept. Some of the proposals can be implemented fairly easily and quickly; others will take longer and require cooperation with local and outside organisations, neighbouring parishes and West Berkshire District Council; a few will require substantial external funding.

Above all, we will take an inclusive approach, seeking to build on the sense of purpose and involvement which has been so evident throughout the production of the Plan and continuing to work hand in hand with Purley people and Purley organisations on its implementation. I have no doubt that many of you will want to play a part.



David Betts  
Chairman, Purley on Thames Parish Council

**Contents**

- 1. The Village Plan – a Framework for Purley, 2005-15**

**CONSULTATION**

- 2. Public Consultation**
- 3. Youth Consultation**
- 4. Local Organisations**
- 5. Key Findings from Consultation**

**BACKGROUND**

- 6. Background and History of Purley on Thames**
- 7. Demographics**
- 8. Geography of Purley on Thames**

**ISSUES**

- 9. Services and Facilities**
- 10. Litter**
- 11. Transport Issues**
- 12. Policing, Law and Order**
- 13. Youth Issues**
- 14. Communication**
- 15. Development**
- 16. The Village Design Statement**

There will be some important changes to Purley on Thames over the next few years; already the parish has seen considerable population growth and housing development, giving rise to more traffic and a demand for more services and facilities. With those trends likely to continue for the foreseeable future, a Village Plan provides a framework within which to view the changes and respond to them effectively. A Village Plan is a vehicle for identifying parish opinion and then for ensuring that it is taken into account at key decision points.

In 2003 the Parish Council decided that, if there was sufficient support from residents, a Village Plan should be prepared for Purley on Thames in response to the government initiative on Vital Villages. Other parishes were beginning to develop their own plans and it was important that Purley be part of the process, because it was clear that a Village Plan was an effective way of influencing authorities of importance to the parish. To be without such a Village Plan would put Purley on Thames at a potential disadvantage.

Consequently a small group of volunteers, including several Parish Councillors, began to develop proposals for a Village Plan and successfully obtained funding for it from the Countryside Agency.

Once the decision was taken, the first stage was public consultation with the aim of asking every resident of Purley for his or her views. The present document describes the process of consultation, sets down the findings and (in sections 9-15) highlights key issues. The Plan sets out an initial action plan to ensure that the issues raised by the residents of Purley are followed up. Future Parish Council meetings will include an agenda item on the Village Plan through which the Council will monitor progress. With the publication of the present report the Village Plan Steering Group will be wound up and the responsibility for follow-up will devolve to the Parish Council.

A meeting to launch the Village Plan will be held at the beginning of November at which residents will be invited to comment upon the priorities in the Plan, make suggestions for additional or different actions or volunteer to help with individual actions. At the same meeting residents will also be asked for feedback on the proposed approach to the Village Design Statement.

Anyone requiring the full analysis of the findings of the Village Plan Questionnaire or the Youth Questionnaire should contact the Parish Clerk.

## 2. PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The views of the residents of Purley were obtained in a variety of ways. First, through two events in late summer 2003 residents were introduced to the idea of the Plan and asked what their priority issues were. In addition, to the two main events at Fun Day and the Horticultural Society's Late Summer Show, there were also sessions at meetings of some of the local organisations.

Once the unprompted priorities had been reviewed these served as the starting point for developing a detailed questionnaire. The questionnaire was delivered to all the households in the parish of Purley on Thames and more than 61% of households (936) returned the questionnaires completed.

In addition, there were several initiatives specifically designed to gain the feedback of young people in Purley and these are described in more detail under the next section of this report.

All this information was considered by teams of volunteers who used the feedback from residents to identify priority issues and to propose initial action plans. These action plans will give rise to further initiatives as they are progressed.

### 3. YOUTH CONSULTATION

Several special initiatives were adopted to obtain the views of the younger members of Purley's community. Very early in the life of the Village Plan exercise, an initial consultation took place through the two Purley schools (Purley Infants' School and Long Lane Primary School). Children were invited to indicate what they liked about Purley and what changes they would like to see. They provided their answers in words and pictures. One request was for a hole (or a safety glass window) in the bridge on New Hill so that smaller children could see the trains.

The pictures were entered into a competition, which a local artist kindly judged, and the winners received prizes.

Towards the end of the public consultation period, further special consultation with young people was arranged through the Youth Consultation Project. This was undertaken using four different methods:

#### **Planning For Real Model**

*Age Group: 3-14/197 young people*

A 3-D model of the village was constructed by young people and taken to various youth groups who were asked to highlight what aspects they liked about living in Purley, aspects they didn't like and their suggestions for the future. The model was constructed by the 1st Purley and Pangbourne Beaver Scouts (6-8 year olds) and they were the first to comment. Other age ranges within the Scout Group (Cubs and Scouts – 8-14 year olds) were then consulted.

Children from Purley Pre-School were involved in discussions and the model was also taken to both local schools: Purley Infants' School and Long Primary School. Here the majority of the young people living in Purley aged 5-11 years old were consulted.

#### **The Event**

*Age Group: 11-18/Approx. 30 young people*

This was aimed at young people between the ages of 11-18 years old who were invited to come and give their views. It was held at The Barn in April. Flyers advertising the event were distributed through known networks including contacts given through the local youth service. The young people attending were invited to comment on some photographs of positive and negative aspects of Purley, to respond to some statements about Purley by writing on a Graffiti Table, to use the Planning for Real Model and to talk about Purley.

#### **Photographic Project**

*Age Group: 10-16/10 young people*

Ten young people were identified – primarily from The Event – and asked to take photographs of Purley, each using a disposable camera provided to them. They also completed a log which highlighted their reasons for taking the photographs and their comments. The photographs and their comments have been collated into a 'Scrap Book' and comments used in analysing the issues. Some of the photographs appear in the centre pages of this Plan.

#### **Youth Consultation Questionnaire**

*Age Group: 11-15/62 young people*

This was a questionnaire drawn up specifically for young people. It was supplied to the pupils at the local secondary school (Denefield), which is where the majority of Purley young people (11-18 year olds) attend school. Sixty two questionnaires were completed covering an 11-15 year old age range.

### St Mary's Church

"The Church is a living organism, the Body of Christ on earth and its local expression in the community. It exists to bear witness to God's care for everyone as evidenced by the life, death and resurrection of Christ; to express love of God through service to the community; to call people to give God His rightful place in their lives and to come together to worship Him; to be in the words of Jesus "salt" and "light" in the community.

"While the Holiday Clubs have been growing recently, as has community involvement at Harvest time, there has been a decline in regular Church attendance. This may be the result of a number of factors including the mobility of residents, the privatisation of faith, negative Press reports, the age profile of church members, Sunday trading and working and the availability of Sunday sporting activities. It may also be due in part to the dormitory nature of the community with many residents not relating strongly to the village where they live (perhaps because they spend little waking time here).

"St Mary's is of importance to many people in Purley, not simply to regular churchgoers. The Church Hall provides a venue for many activities (including youth work); the Parish News, produced by St Mary's, is the best read source of local information and the Holiday Clubs provide summer activities for children of the parish."

*Roger Howell, Rector*

## 4. LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

Purley is served by a wide range of organisations which support a broad spectrum of community activities. As part of the process of gathering information for the Village Plan, a survey was conducted to establish the purpose and well-being of these organisations.

Brief questionnaires were sent to thirty eight organisations. Thirty four of these completed the questionnaire. The organisations were asked what changes they had experienced over the last few years. The results were as follows:

Local Organisations	Number	%
Grown in size	15	46.9
Stayed about the same	12	37.5
Contracted	5	15.6

Two of the organisations did not indicate how they had changed over the last few years.

One of the reasons given by those organisations which have contracted is that they have an ageing membership and there is limited availability of housing for the elderly in Purley. Some groups, such as Thames Valley Artists, say they have a very stable membership.

Limitations on organisations which have stayed about the same size include children leaving at a younger age (Purley Pre-school), the need for a permanent location to stage their productions (Purley Players) and people getting busier and having less time for leisure activities (Crazylegs). The organisations which have grown in size mention the good facilities in Purley (Purley on Thames Cricket Club, the Family Health Clinic, Purley Jubilee Football Club and the Yoga Class), the importance of word of mouth to attract new members (Purley Pathfinders and Project Purley) and being able to offer a friendly welcome to new members (Thames Vale Singers). Both the Barn and the Memorial Hall report an increase in their bookings and usage.

There is no similar information for other villages, for comparison, but in Purley these organisations are clearly fulfilling an important need and most of them are either expanding in size or are stable.

Nearly all the organisations expressed an interest in making use of or having a linkage to a Purley on Thames website. Details of these organisations are contained in Section 17 near the end of this document.

## 5. KEY FINDINGS FROM CONSULTATION

The people of Purley like living in the parish because they like to be near the river and the countryside. The most visited feature of Purley on Thames appears to be Mapledurham Lock and the Thames Path.



*Mapledurham Lock*

The sort of things which Purley residents would like to see include:

- a pharmacy;
- a local swimming pool;
- a farmers' market;
- wider pavements in Purley;
- a lower speed limit on Purley Rise;
- more cycle paths;
- more adult education opportunities;
- more local police presence; and
- more consultation about policing issues.

Residents made it clear that they do not want to see more housing developments in Purley, but, if such development cannot be stopped, then priority should be given to small family homes and sheltered housing for the elderly.

There were other issues which emerged from consultation. People felt a need for a pub and/or restaurant in Purley. They wanted the opportunity to recycle a very wide range of materials including cardboard, directories, plastics and green waste. 27% said there were areas of Purley where they did not feel safe and almost one third have been victims of crime or anti-social behaviour in the last three years. There was also an underlying feeling from some of the comments that while the council tax payments are very high, the benefits which Purley residents receive in return for their council tax are not equally high. While many people were willing to see small increases in council tax to bring clear improvements, a significant number commented that they felt they were not receiving value for money for their existing payments and they wondered why improvements could not be funded by the large council tax sums already collected from them.

## 6. BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF PURLEY ON THAMES

*(Much of the material in this section is reproduced by kind permission of Project Purley and John Chapman. More detail can be found in the booklet "Purley on Thames at the Millennium" compiled by John Chapman for Project Purley)*

Physically, the key features of Purley on Thames are the River Thames, the railway (the main London-Bristol and South Wales line) and the A329. These three "corridors" now form significant physical barriers and in some respects the village can be regarded as being at least three different areas: the area between the railway and the river, the area between the railway and the road and the area south of the road.

Purley stretches from the hills upon which Tilehurst is situated to the water meadows of the Thames and from the Reading boundary to the countryside. On two sides it is surrounded by the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Farming is still practised in Purley and, although the vineyard has gone, arable farming, dairy and livestock farming still exist in the parish.

The village developed originally on a low mound in the Thames marshes and has been a permanent settlement since Saxon times. At this time there were three focuses of settlement within the present Purley: Purley Magna (subsequently Purley Park); Purley Parva, about a mile West of Purley Magna in the Westbury Farm area and Purley La Hyde in the Sulham Lane area, subsequently replaced by Purley Hall.

During the war between Stephen and Matilda, Purley's Saxon church is believed to have been destroyed by Matilda's forces and in the mid-12th century was replaced by a stone church in the Norman style.

By the 14th Century, Purley seems to have developed into a prosperous village able to modernise its church and to build a road across the marsh so that farmers could take their corn

to the mill at Mapledurham by means of a wooden bridge across the Thames. However, an attempt to drain the marsh and irrigate Purley Magna was stopped by the Lord of Mapledurham because he claimed it was diverting water from his mill.

In the 17th century the church was again rebuilt, but soon afterwards the country was plunged into the Civil War. Purley was on the parliamentary side while the North of the River was Royalist.



*St Mary's Church*

Also in the 17th century, Anne Hyde was buried at St Mary's, Purley. Anne Hyde was the granddaughter of the Lord of the Manor of Purley Magna and also the first wife of Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon (who was subsequently father-in-law of James II and grandfather of two British Queens).

## 6. BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF PURLEY ON THAMES

The major social and economic changes of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries impacted only slowly on Purley. Purley Park was built on the hill and its predecessor closer to the river was demolished. Until this time, Purley had a pub, the Red Lion, but it vanished around 1800. It is not known exactly where it was situated, though there are at least two references to it. It is thought to have been on the old main road. This road, which wound down the hill from the Roebuck to the church, was closed and the main road moved further south to make room for the new Purley Park and New Hill was built for access.

When the railway arrived in 1837 it had a major impact. The cutting split the parish in two and also split Purley Park from much of its lands. From 1902 onwards, pieces of the Purley Park land were sold off or leased. The development of the old Purley Magna lands had begun and it is still ongoing.



*Purley Park*

During the 1930s, land alongside the ferry was sold to campers for £5 a plot and these plots were used by Londoners as a weekend retreat. During and immediately after the Second World War, when there was a shortage of housing stock and building materials and when people were glad to leave London during the bombing, these plots began to be occupied permanently



*A house in Mapledurham Drive*

and the "homes" were often old railway carriages, buses, huts or whatever was available. Many of these homes suffered badly in the floods of 1947. Since the war, these dwellings have been progressively upgraded and are now subject to a Guidance Plan to try to ensure that the dwellings are flood-proof and of a suitable standard. From the Second World War onwards, the position of Purley as a dormitory for London, Reading and Bristol became increasingly important, the pace of development being accelerated after changes in the definition of the Green Belt enabled developers to build upon much of the land within Purley.

Population increased quickly after the Second World War, having been relatively static particularly through the nineteenth century. In 1676, there was a recorded population of 80 in Purley which had grown to 153 in 1801. By 1946 this had risen to 867 and it is now well over 4,000 (even after a significant reduction in the parish area in 1991).

Purley today is a village of more than 1,500 households and is still growing. There is no doctor's surgery, no pub, no police station, no cash dispenser/ATM, no petrol station and only a limited mobile library service. It does have a highly valued Post Office on the main road and another shop in Colyton Way.

## 6. BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF PURLEY ON THAMES

About one third of the dwellings are North of the railway line, mostly on the flat water meadow land and some of them potentially subject to flooding. A further 40% of the dwellings are South of the A329.

Purley on Thames may be fragmented by the road and railway and it may have few amenities in the way of shops or facilities. However, it does have a very strong sense of identity and supports a very large number of special interest organisations and groups. These are described elsewhere in this report and include a local history society (to whose publications this summary owes a great deal), a ladies' walking group, a drama society, a WI and a bell-ringing group among many others.

The church is an important focal point for the parish (the ecclesiastical parish is not co-terminous with the civil parish, having not undergone the various local government reorganisations). The recreation facilities at Goosecroft are also an important focus for the community as is the Sports and Social Club located there. The Purley Memorial Hall was built after the Second World War in lieu of a war memorial and was built by the community itself. The Memorial Hall, the eighteenth century Barn at Goosecroft which is used as a community facility and the church hall between them provide venues for many local organisations and activities.



*The Barn, Goosecroft*

There are two recreation grounds, a cemetery, allotments, a bowling green and Pikeslaw (a "wild area" between Simons Close and Huscarle Way for use by local residents). There is also a number of footpaths enabling walks to be taken by the river or through Sulham Woods.

The Purley Parish News, produced by St Mary's Church, but read by a wider audience than simply the active churchgoers, provides an excellent vehicle for keeping parishioners informed. About 800 copies are regularly distributed. Almost 58% of the respondents to the Village Plan Questionnaire say they use it as a source of information on what is going on in Purley.

Purley on Thames has two schools within the parish, an infants' school and a primary school. There is also a special school (Brookfields, for children from 3 to 19 years) on the Purley/Tilehurst boundary (just in Tilehurst) and this school has achieved a national reputation. There is a secondary school (Denefield) close to the boundary of Purley, but within Tilehurst, and many of the Purley children attend this school. A plan is under consideration to redevelop the Denefield School site, possibly by merging Denefield, Brookfields and Long Lane Primary Schools on one site and this could have an impact on the AONB, but could also release land within Purley for redevelopment. Even before the plan to merge the three schools, there was already a recognised need to redevelop both Denefield and Long Lane Schools to update their buildings and provide more capacity.

Since the Second World War, Purley Park has provided a home for people with learning disabilities. The main house, a mansion designed in 1800 by Wyatt, has been used to house a number of those with learning disabilities, even while much of the land has been progressively sold for development. Now the main house is being converted into flats and those with learning disabilities have been re-housed in "family" groupings in newly built accommodation on the Purley Park land.

## 7. DEMOGRAPHICS

Full information at parish level is still not available from the 2001 census, but West Berkshire Council has provided some of the 2001 data for this Plan. 1991 figures are shown for comparison and the changes over the ten year period seem to show a slowly ageing population and more single person households, in line with national trends. At the 2001 census, there were 4,232 people resident in Purley on Thames, almost equally split between males and females. Of the 1,532 households (10% up on 1991), 246 households (27% more than in 1991) were single person households and 377 households had two people resident (compared with 436 in 1991).

There were 220 (255 in 1991) in the 0-4 age group and 668 (755 in 1991) in the 5-15 age group, so 21% of the population was under 16 years in 2001, compared with around a quarter in 1991. In 2001, almost 58% of the population was between the ages of 25 and 64 and 10% was in the age group 16-24 years. In 2001 484 people were over 64, compared with 390 in 1991 of pension age or over.

2,272 people were economically active in 2001, 1,264 men and 1,008 women. Most of these were employees. It is notable that the figure for economically active females has fallen by more than a third since 1991.

At the 1991 census date the figures for those who had retired from work were small in number – 126 men and 158 women.

Information on those moving at around the time of the 1991 census shows that most moves were not long distance, they were either within Purley or its neighbouring parishes. Of the 94 moves recorded, 67 were within the county.

Comparison with the ages of respondents to the Village Plan questionnaire suggests that (unless there has been a large change in the make up of the population since 2001) the groups with the lowest response rates to the questionnaire were households with children aged 5-15 and residents aged 25-44. In all age groups, however, households who did respond accounted for at least 50% of the population at 2001.

## 8. GEOGRAPHY OF PURLEY ON THAMES

For the purposes of the public consultation Purley was split into five geographical groups, intended to reflect the different nature of each element of the parish.

These five groups were:

- i) The River Estate, representing the housing close to the river, built on water meadows. This area is concerned about the Flood Alleviation Scheme, the retention of the Village shop, vandalism, youth issues and traffic on St Mary's Avenue and New Hill.
- ii) Purley Village including Westbury Lane and the AONB north of the railway line. This area represents the heart of the old village and contains the infants' school. It is a mixed area with many priorities and views represented. The residents here gave a farmers' market the highest priority of all the areas.
- iii) The area between the railway and the A329, including Purley Beeches, Purley Park and the relatively newer housing of Westridge Avenue and Nursery Gardens. Residents were markedly in favour of a doctor's surgery and pharmacy in Purley. They were almost as concerned about speeding traffic as those in the River Estate.
- iv) The Oxford Road/Purley Rise and its environs, including Beech Road and Glebe Road. This is an area of generally somewhat older housing (excepting the Trenthams estate and Roebuck Park) and includes the Post Office. In this area there is more than average worry about housing development which encroaches on the countryside. Here, also, the residents use Sulham woods more than those living in other areas of Purley.
- v) Tilehurst borders and the AONB south of the A329 includes the Long Lane area and the roads around Pikeshaw, between Knowsley Road and Long Lane, as well as Ullswater Drive. This area has a housing stock of mixed age and style. Residents here are less concerned about housing developments beyond the edge of the settlement boundary and less worried about speeding traffic than residents in other areas.

The five areas are set out beside the map on the centre pages.

## 9. SERVICES AND FACILITIES

The rapid development of Purley on Thames has resulted in an imbalance between housing and amenities in the area. In the eighteenth century, Purley could boast a pub and a forge; a few years ago Purley had an additional shop and a garage; the amenities have reduced even as the housing stock and population have risen dramatically and no attempt has been made to provide new amenities to support the additional housing. Two important amenities which Purley does have are access to the river and a good sports field at Goosecroft. There are three halls in the parish – the Barn, the Memorial Hall and St Mary’s – but none has the flexible accommodation which is likely to be needed in future.



*Playing Cricket, Goosecroft*

This imbalance between development of housing and amenities is reflected in the responses to the Village Plan questionnaire. The respondents to the consultation indicate clearly that there are certain services and facilities which they want to see in the parish. 72.7% want to see a swimming pool, for example; 71.5% want a pharmacy and 63.8% of those who replied want a doctor’s surgery in the parish. 61.5% want an indoor sports centre, 59.1% want a cash dispenser and 54.2% want a farmers’ market.

When asked what activities they would attend if they were available in Purley, 70.8% say swimming, 31.1% say adult education – computing. The percentage saying they want

computing education is only a little higher than the percentage who say they would attend adult education in languages (27.2%) and other adult education (29.5%); 29.7% said they would play badminton if they could do so in Purley.

To achieve a new sports facility will require substantial investment and such large scale infrastructure projects will need the support of West Berkshire Council and will be sited to benefit the whole of the Eastern Area of the Council’s district, not solely to benefit Purley residents. Parish and district councillors will need to work with neighbouring parishes in the development and implementation of an Eastern Area Action Plan which WBC has already recognised as necessary. This Eastern Area Action Plan will provide a new context and opportunity to work towards a better infrastructure of services and facilities for the eastern end of the Council’s area, including Purley.

### **Aim**

To achieve a better balance of facilities/services and housing within Purley and its immediate vicinity, by bringing new amenities to Purley and its environs.

### **Monitoring**

The success of activities to improve the availability of services and facilities in Purley and its immediate environs will be judged on the basis of achievement of additional amenities in the area. However, many of the actions in this section will not bring short term results.

### **Swimming Pool**

At present there is no funding for a pool, although it has been agreed in principle for some years that one is needed in the eastern side of West Berkshire Council district. It seems likely that the possibility of achieving a swimming pool locally is closely related to the redevelopment of the Denefield School site, which is located on the boundary of Purley, just inside Tilehurst.

Actions to be taken will be to:

- keep up pressure on West Berkshire to support development of a swimming pool in the area;
- work with neighbouring Parish Councils towards large scale infrastructure improvements which benefit the area as a whole;
- review the possibility of obtaining funding from elsewhere;
- ensure that in the negotiations about Denefield School, the swimming pool remains on the agenda.

### Adult Education

The consultation called for more courses in computing, languages and other things. Reading College recently ran a series of “tasters” which were rather poorly attended. The parish council will work with the college to try to understand the reasons for the poor attendance at the taster sessions, given the enthusiasm shown in the Village Plan consultation exercise. Problems may relate to the venue, time of day or skill level being targeted.

It will be important to review the possible reasons for lack of take up with the providers and to work with West Berkshire Council/Newbury College and with Reading College to ensure there is the offer of courses which meet the needs as expressed and to see that the availability of these courses is well communicated to residents.

### Sporting Facilities

As with the swimming pool, the possibility of future sporting facilities (indoor and outdoor sports facilities) is closely tied to the future of Denefield School just over the boundary in Tilehurst. These needs will be followed up with West Berkshire Council and the Eastern Area Forum.

Concerns have also been expressed at the possible future loss of Cotswold Centre, which the questionnaire shows to be much used by Purley residents of all ages. While among young people the share of the total using Cotswold is highest, in terms of overall use there are far more older people (25-64) from Purley using Cotswold than there are young people so the facility needs to be retained for all ages. West Berkshire Council has indicated that there are no plans to limit the use of the centre to the younger age groups, as had been rumoured. A new management contract for the Centre has been let to Parkwood Leisure, a company which will be refurbishing the fitness suite and upgrading the centre as a whole.

### Additional Social Facilities

In comments on the questionnaire the lack of a pub or restaurant in Purley was frequently mentioned. There is also a need for a suitable venue for services requiring a confidential interview room, such as a doctor or a Citizens’ Advice Bureau. At present, there is no suitable venue in Purley.

It is felt that of the existing venues, the Memorial Hall is best placed geographically to become the community hub of Purley and the Parish Council will be working with the Memorial Hall committee to see whether it will be possible to expand the hall and make available more flexible accommodation, with a view to using the Hall as a community resource centre.

The scope for bringing a pub into Purley seems limited at present because of lack of a suitable site. The Village Design Statement will be used to try to ensure that there is no loss of sites suitable for leisure and social activities and to take opportunities for dedicating any potential new site for these purposes. New developments will be monitored to see whether or not there is any scope to introduce a pub or a social centre into them.

### Recycling

Almost 55% of the respondents said that they would like to see more articles recycled than are possible at present through kerbside recycling. Top of the list for additional recycling were plastics and cardboard, although a very wide range of materials was mentioned.

West Berkshire Council (WBC) is planning a Public Finance Initiative (PFI) commencing 2005/6 which will (it is hoped) ultimately provide kerbside recycling of everything. Before the start of this initiative there is no Council money for anything new. It will therefore be for local short term initiatives to fill this gap. Representations will be made to Reading and West Berkshire Councils to try to obtain expanded recycling facilities at existing sites in the locality.

### Green Waste

Garden waste was frequently mentioned in questionnaire responses. Various options are being considered for improving the scope for recycling green waste through a local initiative. Contact has been made with Community Composting and the possibility of developing a local arrangement for green waste (at least for the period until the PFI comes into effect) will be looked into in detail and options (including the encouragement of home composting) will be considered.

The approach being taken in Oxfordshire, using Community Action Groups, will be reviewed to see what can be learned from Oxfordshire's experience. Pangbourne is also interested in such an initiative and there is the possibility of working with them to achieve a result and to source funding.

### Pharmacy, Doctor's surgery

There is currently in Purley a chiropodist visiting the Memorial Hall on Friday afternoons and a baby clinic at St Mary's on Thursdays, but residents are seeking a doctor's surgery and pharmacy. Discussions will be held with the Area Health Authority/Primary Care Trust and with Pangbourne Medical Practice to ascertain whether or not there is the possibility of an outreach surgery on a regular basis.

Meanwhile for those who find it difficult to reach a surgery or pharmacy, there is help available from Pangbourne and District Volunteer Centre transport.

### Cash Dispenser

Although this was much requested by respondents, it was felt that the scope for providing a cash dispenser in Purley is quite limited, because there seems to be no suitable site. Discussions will take place with banks in the hope that one may be identified, but in the meantime residents should be aware that they may change the cheques of most major banks at the Post Office during opening hours.

### Farmers' Market

Contact has been made with Thames Valley Farmers' Markets (which runs most of the local markets) and a proposal for a Saturday market in the Barn is being considered by them. If this approach is not successful, other ways of achieving a result will be considered.

## 9. SERVICES AND FACILITIES

<b>SERVICES AND FACILITIES</b>			
<b>Aim</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Key contact</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Better balance of services and housing in Purley	Keep up pressure on WBC and Denefield regarding new sports facilities and swimming pool	District Councillors; Eastern Area Forum; Six Parishes Group; WBC planning officers; Youth and Education Services; Denefield School	Ongoing
Better balance of services and housing in Purley	Work with Reading College and Newbury College/WBC on the range of courses on offer in Purley and at Denefield; work with them to improve communication of the activities available	Reading College; Newbury College; WBC	Jan 2005 and ongoing
Better balance of services and housing in Purley	Influence and work with Memorial Hall with aim of improving facilities	Memorial Hall Committee	Ongoing
Better balance of services and housing in Purley	Be aware of any opportunity to include a pub or restaurant in new developments	WBC planning officers; Developers	Ongoing
Doctor's surgery, pharmacy	Work with Pangbourne Medical Practice and the local Health Authority to seek ways of bringing an outreach surgery to Purley	Pangbourne Medical Practice; Area Health Authority; Primary Care Trust	
Farmers' Market	Seek to bring a Farmers' Market to Purley	Thames Valley Farmers' Markets	June 2005
Cash Dispenser	Discuss with banks; seek suitable location	Local banks	During 2005
Improve recycling opportunities	Consider local initiatives to fill gap until PFI is in place	Reading Borough Council WBC	By mid 2005
Improve recycling opportunities	Investigate possibilities for local initiative on green waste	Community Action for West Berkshire (CAWB) Pangbourne PC; Community Composting Network; Oxfordshire recycling officers	End 2004

## 10. LITTER

The Parish Council provides litter bins in a number of locations through the parish, concentrating mainly on areas which are likely to attract groups of people, such as footpaths, Pikeshaw, Bucknell's Meadow. The Parish Council contracts with either West Berkshire Council or another contractor to empty these bins regularly. Recently several bins have been upgraded to inhibit vandalism to them and to provide more capacity for litter.

The responses on litter in the questionnaire, both whether or not Purley has a litter problem and what might be done about it, varied by geographical area. Young people in the youth consultation also raised the question of litter. Some respondents felt that the solution to litter

was to educate people not to drop litter, but unfortunately that solution is outside the scope of a Village Plan.

The responses to the question, "do you think there is a litter problem in Purley?" showed that there was most concern with litter in the River Estate and least in the Oxford Road area. Both the area between the railway and the Oxford Road and the Oxford Road area itself felt on balance that there was not a litter problem. Other areas did perceive a problem. The breakdown is shown below.

The solutions favoured for tackling the litter problem also vary by area as the second table shows.

### Summary of questionnaire responses on litter

<b>Do you think Purley has a litter problem?</b>	<b>Oxford Road %</b>	<b>Tilehurst borders %</b>	<b>Village and Westbury Lane %</b>	<b>'Twixt Road and Rail %</b>	<b>River Estate %</b>
Yes	40.7	45.7	46.3	41.9	63.2
No	48.4	38.3	41.0	47.8	31.4
No opinion	10.9	16.0	12.7	10.3	5.4

<b>What action should be taken?</b>	<b>Oxford Road %</b>	<b>Tilehurst borders %</b>	<b>Village and Westbury Lane %</b>	<b>'Twixt Road and Rail %</b>	<b>River Estate %</b>
Pay for litter warden	35.0	32.5	27.8	36.3	35.0
Pay for roadsweeper	40.6	45.7	30.4	33.9	33.0
Put up notices	30.6	21.4	8.9	21.2	31.8
Best Kept Village competition	30.6	26.4	36.7	27.3	25.8
Group of volunteers	30.0	25.4	31.6	29.1	29.2
Other	14.4	19.6	13.9	24.8	19.2

## 10. LITTER

### Aim

To reduce the litter in Purley and to improve the perception of Purley residents regarding the problem of litter.

### Actions

A review of the present provision for litter bins and collection arrangements will be carried out by the Parish Council.

Discussions will be held with West Berkshire Council on how to improve the situation.

Options supported by residents will be considered, especially those for which there was an overall parish-wide response of over 30% in favour (paying for a litter warden and paying for a road sweeper), but all options will be reviewed.

### Monitoring

Success of the project will be judged by feedback from residents and from monitoring the state of litter in the parish, regularly undertaken by parish councillors.

<b>LITTER</b>			
<b>Aim</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Key contacts</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Reduce litter and improve perception of litter problem	Investigate possibility, cost and funding for litter warden and roadsweeper	Other parishes; WBC	By June 2005
Reduce litter and improve perception of litter problem	Parish Council will review litter bin provision	WBC and contractors	By Dec 2004

Purley is situated on the edge of Reading, on the main road to Pangbourne and Wallingford. It is surrounded on two sides by the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the larger part of the parish, geographically, remains countryside even after the considerable development of recent years. In addition to the A329 (Reading to Pangbourne road), the parish also contains Long Lane, an important road to Tilehurst and Sulham.

There are a number of footpaths in the parish as well as the Thames Path along the river bank.

### Findings

The most significant responses from the Questionnaire which relate to transport are:

- fewer than a third of the respondents think there is a traffic problem in Purley;
- 60% of those responding want more cycle paths and about half that number want more footpaths;
- where there is a traffic problem identified, it relates most often either to Purley Rise/Oxford Road or to Long Lane, the two main roads in the parish;
- just under two thirds of the responses favour a reduction of the speed limit near the two schools;
- somewhat over one third want the speed limit on Purley Rise/Oxford Road to be reduced;
- almost half of the respondents want improvements to the frequency of the bus service in to Reading and want a more direct route;
- almost 35% of the respondents asked for wider pavements (primarily along the Oxford Road and Purley Rise).

### Aims

To ensure that speed limits and other traffic measures in the parish support a safer environment for local residents, to provide additional cycle paths and wider pavements and to ensure that the bus service meets the needs of residents as far as possible.

### Monitoring

Progress will be reviewed regularly by the Parish Council. Some of the actions will take some time to reach fruition, and will involve negotiating with or otherwise influencing third parties, but a regular check will be made to ensure that activities remain "on track".

### Improve the quality and frequency of the bus service to Reading

Respondents who were regular users of the bus wanted to see greater frequency and more reliability in the bus service to Reading (and to a lesser extent to Pangbourne). A better service might attract more users. Contact will be made with Reading Buses to discuss service frequency and routes.

### More cycle paths in the parish

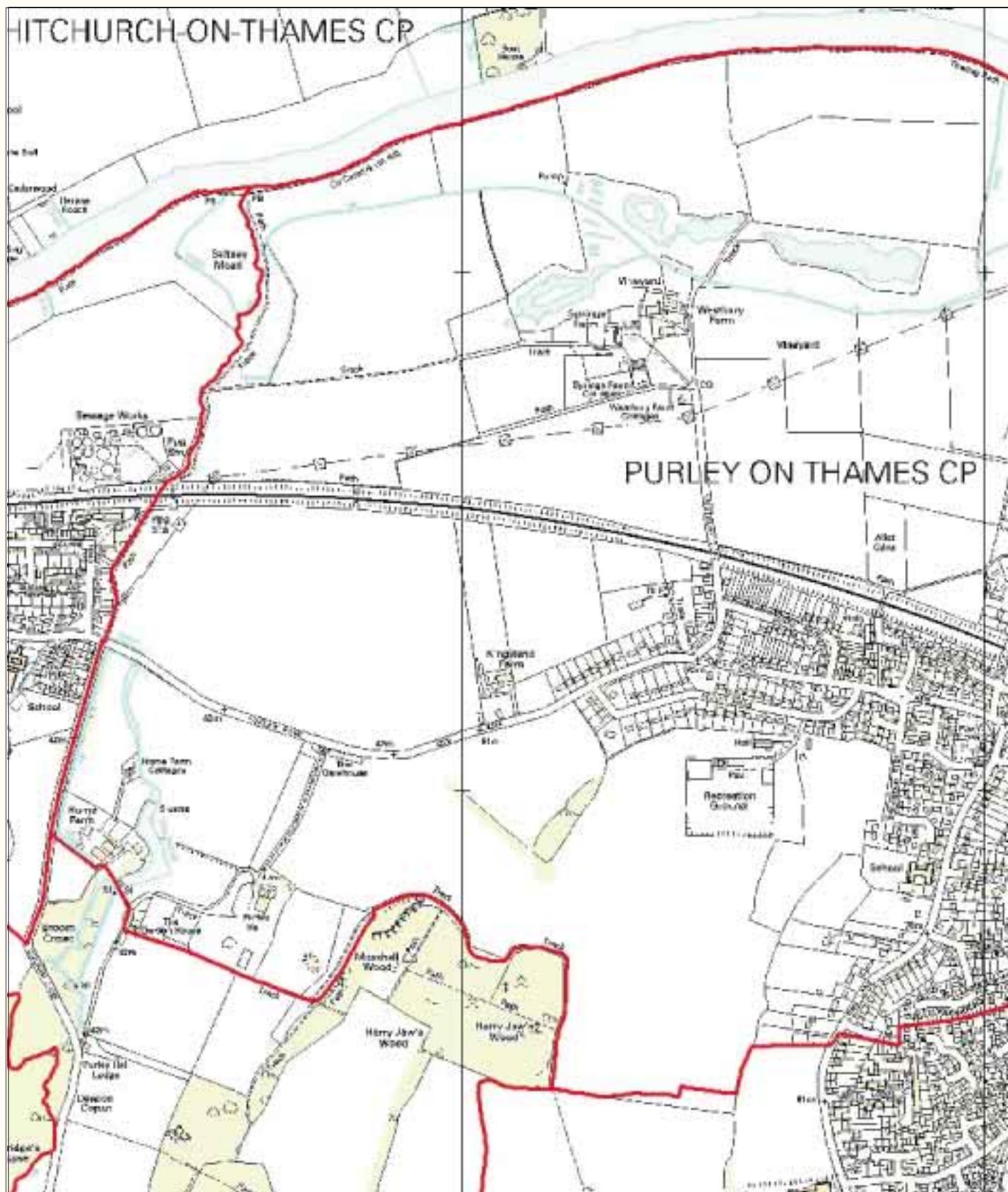
There was a desire for cycle paths to Tilehurst Station and to Pangbourne. In the past, cycle paths to Pangbourne and to Tilehurst Station have been on the agenda of West Berks Council (WBC), but at present these have no priority. The responses from the Village Plan will be used to raise this issue again with WBC and try to find a way forward.

In the planning discussions relating to Long Lane and its development, cycle and footpaths will be part of the discussion.

*Transport Issues continues on page 23.*



# Geography of Purley on Thames



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West Berkshire District Council.



**Purley Village and Westbury Lane**

Purley Village  
Purley Lane  
Purley Lodge  
Lister Close  
Farm Close  
Westbury Lane

**Between railway and A329**

Hornbeam Close  
Marshall Close  
Huckleberry Close  
Duncan Gardens  
Hazel Road  
Purley Park  
Skerrit Way  
New Hill  
Farmiloe Close  
The Holt  
The Glade  
Nursery Gardens  
Westridge Avenue  
Allison Gardens  
Winston Way

**Tilehurst Borders**

Ullswater Drive  
Goodliffe Gardens  
Knowsley Road  
Kernham Drive  
Menpes Road  
Huscarle Way  
The Hydes  
Simons Close  
Long Lane  
Cecil Aldin Drive  
Claremore Gardens  
Highfield Rd  
Orchard Close  
Apple Close  
Carew Close

**River Estate**

Primrose Close  
St Mary's Avenue  
Lilac Close  
Chiltern View  
Thames Reach  
Marina  
Waterside Drive  
Church Mews  
Mapledurham Drive  
Oak Tree walk  
The Short  
Park Walk  
Colyton Way  
Brading Way  
Wintringham Way  
River Gardens  
Chestnut Grove

**Oxford Road area**

Oxford Road  
Roebuck Rise  
Theobalds Drive  
Glebe Road  
Purley Rise  
Durant Way  
Goosecroft Lane  
Beech Road  
Sherwood Rise  
Bowling Green Lane  
Bryant Place  
Belleisle  
Trenthams Close  
Sherwood Place  
Elyham  
Sulham Lane  
Saunders Court

Selections  
from the  
Youth Consultation  
Photographic Project



The Lock: 'Very nicely kept'



Village Shop: 'Good sweets but  
nowhere to put bike'



Phone booth: 'Helpful but  
always broken glass'



Memorial Hall: 'Good for Purley events'



Marina: 'Why can't we view the boats?'

### Measures to Alleviate Traffic Problems

Although overall fewer than one third of residents apparently believe there to be a traffic problem in Purley, there are some trouble spots identified. These are primarily:

- traffic in St Mary's Avenue;
- road safety near local schools;
- Long Lane;
- Purley Rise.

The actions will include:

- investigate traffic calming for St Mary's Avenue;
- investigate reduction of speed limits by Purley Infants' School and Long Lane schools;
- discuss Long Lane traffic arrangements and the unpopular traffic calming measures there as part of the consideration of Long Lane developments;
- liaise with Tilehurst Parish Council and WBC concerning the traffic calming in Knowsley Road and Long Lane;
- seek to reduce the speed limit in Purley Rise.

### Wider Footpaths

This appears to be an issue in two areas, along the Oxford Road to Tilehurst Station and along Purley Rise to Pangbourne. Some contact has already been made by the Parish Council with West Berkshire Council officers regarding the footpath and possible cycleway to the railway station and this will be followed up. Options will be discussed with WBC.

### The Thames Path

No issues specifically relating to the Thames Path were raised in the responses. However, central government, through the National Trails Office, is developing a new section of the Thames Path in Purley to bring the path back to the Thames at River Gardens instead of Mapledurham Drive. There are a number of issues relating to access for this new path and these are being progressed by West Berkshire Council; to date there is no resolution between WBC and Mapledurham Estates concerning the gate to be provided at the end of River Gardens. This must allow disabled access, ensure the safety of stock and have regard to the low point near the gate from which flood water can run off.

## 11. TRANSPORT ISSUES

<b>TRANSPORT</b>			
<b>Aim</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Key contacts</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Traffic measures support safe environment	Ensure reduction of traffic calming and imposition of speed limits are considered as part of Long Lane planning discussions	WBC; Developers; Long Lane School	Ongoing
Traffic measures support safe environment	Investigate traffic calming for St Mary's Avenue	WBC Highways Department	By March 2005
Traffic measures support safe environment	Review the traffic calming in Knowsley Road	Tilehurst PC; WBC	By March 2005
Traffic measures support safe environment	Seek reduction in speed limit in Purley Rise	WBC	By Dec 2004
More cycle paths	Raise with WBC and ensure it is part of planning discussions	WBC	Ongoing
Wider pavements	Review options with WBC and where possible work with developers regarding Section 106 agreements	WBC; Developers	Review by March 2005 and ongoing
Bus services which meet needs of residents	Contact Reading Buses about routes and frequency	Reading Buses	By March 2005

## 12. POLICING, LAW AND ORDER

### Background

Purley lies within the Pangbourne sector of the West Berkshire area, which is one of ten areas covered by Thames Valley Police throughout Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. The sector is headed by an Inspector and policing is from Pangbourne Police Station, twenty four hours a day seven days a week.

The Pangbourne sector includes a community policing team. Consulting and communicating with community leaders such as Parish Councillors and Head Teachers and involving Youth workers and Neighbourhood Watch groups is an activity that the Pangbourne sector is eager to progress. There is a proposal, which Purley supports, to set up a Neighbourhood Action Group (NAGs) across seven local parishes. This proposal was developed following a successful pilot in Burghfield and would set up a NAG which would consist of police and parish representatives and representatives of schools, youth services and Neighbourhood Watch. The NAG covering Purley is likely to commence during September.

The geographic coverage of the new NAG (potentially covering Theale, Sulham and

Tidmarsh, Pangbourne, Holybrook, Purley, Basildon and Tilehurst) is much more extensive than the pilot, and Purley's NAG representative will work hard to ensure that Purley issues are addressed by the NAG. Perhaps it may even prove helpful to set up a group relating to Purley alone which can feed information and ideas to and take back actions from the overall NAG. The progress of the NAG will be monitored and the need for any such a subsidiary local group reviewed.

West Berkshire Council's responsibilities include community safety projects and Parish Councils have guidelines and information to help on Crime and Disorder matters.

### Findings

Only 3.2% of 1,992 respondents feel that Police coverage of Purley is good, 30.5% feel that it is reasonable and 47.4% feel that it is poor.

The following table shows the percentage of people concerned about particular types of crime and then the priority that they consider the police should give to targeting those crimes.

View on crime	Concerned %	High priority %	Medium priority %	Low priority %	No opinion %
Vandalism	74.3	53.7	29.3	5.4	3.4
Burglary	61.9	78.3	11.1	1.1	1.8
Car crime	50.3	47.3	32.3	5.0	2.9
Theft from gardens & sheds	36.6	18.5	35.6	23.0	5.9
Drunkenness	31.0	21.8	29.8	21.2	6.7
Drug abuse	29.7	48.3	21.4	7.4	6.0
Mugging	15.9	50.8	14.4	6.2	6.8
Fraud	4.3	11.4	21.3	23.2	17.0
No specific concerns	11.1	-	-	-	-

## 12. POLICING, LAW AND ORDER

The biggest concerns are vandalism, burglary and car crime.

589 people (31.1% of respondents to that particular question) answered that they had been a victim of one of the crimes listed but, of these, only 417 had reported the crime to the police. This result will be compared with information from the police and West Berks Council to gain a better understanding of the whole picture.

Of 1,871 respondents 508 people (27.2%) said that there were areas in Purley where they felt unsafe. Comments associated with this finding related in particular to the fear of groups of youths and the difficulty in the dark, especially in "alleyways", where there was no or inadequate street lighting.

### Aims

To reduce all types of crime in Purley by encouraging more members of the community to take an active part in crime prevention initiatives backed by the police.

To obtain and inform residents of crime statistics on a regular basis to see how the actual crime rates match perceptions.

To support education on the effects of the misuse of drink and drugs.

To communicate to residents their responsibility to report crimes to the police.

### Actions

Immediate actions will include:

- to work with Neighbourhood Watch to extend the coverage;
- to work with existing providers to extend the activities for young people to reduce number of groups on the streets;
- to obtain information on crime in Purley;
- to use CLIVE (community learning and information vehicle) as an exhibition for law and order matters;
- to ensure that the relevant authorities are informed of the attitudes to street lighting and perceptions of safety.

In the longer term there will be a wider range of actions taken:

- consider the possible use of Neighbourhood/Street Wardens and how they might be funded;
- work with the new NAG to improve community involvement in the safety and security of Purley residents;
- build on the results of the CLIVE experiment, either by further use of a mobile facility or by a more permanent exhibition;
- communicate the availability of activities, responsibility of residents and information on the incidence and clear-up rates of crime;
- consider what actions might be taken to improve drink and drug education and awareness.

## 12. POLICING, LAW AND ORDER

<b>POLICING, LAW AND ORDER</b>			
<b>Aim</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Key contact</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Reduce crime	Work with NAG	Police and adjacent parishes	Ongoing from September 2004
Reduce crime	Work with Neighbourhood Watch	Neighbourhood Watch	Ongoing
Reduce crime	Consider street wardens, their role and funding	Police; CAWB; WBC	By June 2005
Reduce crime	Promulgate information on perceptions of safety, street lighting etc. as relevant	WBC; Police	Ongoing
Inform community about crime statistics	Obtain information from WBC and police and disseminate it to community	WBC; Police	By December 2004
Communicate responsibility for crime reporting	Undertake CLIVE experiment or other form of exhibition	WBC; Police	By June 2005
Educate community on drink and drug misuse	Undertake CLIVE experiment or other form of exhibition	Specialist drug abuse agencies	By June 2005

## 13. YOUTH ISSUES

### Background

Purley has a number of organisations and clubs for the population in general, many of which cater for young people as part of their remit. There are, however, few that cater only for the young. Opportunities exist for many activities through schools and through the youth services department. The Parish Council provides two playgrounds for young people at Bucknells Meadow and Goosecroft recreation ground and the Goosecroft sports clubs cater specifically for the young.

West Berkshire Council has a culture and youth services department, with a youth worker (part-time) dedicated to working with young people in Purley. Until recently this work has not been consistent and so has achieved little. The youth club which used to run at the Barn has been wound up, though there are still some activities run by the church.

There is the possibility of using the ARFA bus (Area Resources For All) to supplement local youth provision. ARFA is an old bus which has been converted into a youth centre, primarily to support young people in the Downlands villages of West Berkshire. It could be available for use in Purley.

### Findings

An analysis of the 936 households who returned the questionnaires, in the table below, gives information on the age and sex of household members who were under 18.

Age	Male	Female	Total Responses
<b>Number of Responses</b>			
0-4	87	66	153
5-10	81	80	161
11-15	89	86	175
16-17	33	31	64

Much effort was put into a specific consultation with these age groups with help from Denefield, Long Lane Primary and Purley Infants' schools,

the local Beaver and Scouts groups, Purley Pre-school and a drop in event (see Youth Consultation section above for detail). In addition, a group of young people conducted a photographic survey of Purley and collated a scrap book which will be used to back up their views. All these sources have been taken into account in considering the issues relating to youth.

In addition, the responses to the main questionnaire have indicated a number of concerns by adults about the behaviour of the young people in Purley and the lack of facilities available for them. Adult comments have painted a picture of groups of youths exhibiting rowdy and drunken behaviour roaming the streets, using foul language and taking part in vandalism. While this almost certainly reflects the actions of only a very few young people, the perceptions of adults need to be addressed in addition to ensuring that there are activities for young people to enjoy.

Responses to the main questionnaire have also suggested that the presence of groups of youths is one of the reasons why some people feel unsafe in parts of Purley.

The views expressed about sports and social facilities available for the young by people of all age groups is summarised in the next table.

Facilities for Age Groups	Good	Reasonable	Poor	Total
<b>Number of Responses</b>				
0-5	173	410	242	825
5-10	126	500	283	909
11-16	75	362	577	1014

Responses from those **aged between 11 and 24** as to what new facilities they would like in Purley show that a large percentage would like a swimming pool and both indoor and outdoor sports centres. These results mirror those across all age groups.

## 13. YOUTH ISSUES

The younger groups are strongly in favour of facilities such as a skateboard park and BMX track in Purley, whereas the older age groups are less positive as can be seen from the table below. The 11-24 age groups give considerable support to the introduction of these facilities, while those in the older groups are on balance opposed (although many have “no opinion”).

There is stronger support for a skateboard park than for a BMX track as evidenced by the percentage figures below. There are also slightly fewer responses to the BMX question than for the skateboard park.

Percentage in favour of:	11-17 age group %	18-24 age group %	Total other age groups %
Skateboard park	55	41	31
BMX track	49	32	21
Squash courts	36	49	33

The picture for squash courts is less clear because in all age groups there is a large “no opinion” share of the response. If “no opinion” is eliminated from the calculation, then all groups on balance support the introduction of squash courts, but the greatest support is from those aged 18-24. (The large no opinion response in all the older groups suggests that, at least for these groups, squash courts may be desirable, but not a high priority.)

### Aim

To give the young people of Purley on Thames the opportunity to take part in a wide range of activities in a safe environment and with easy access.

### Actions

The following actions will be considered and followed up as appropriate:

- work with schools and West Berkshire Youth services to promote existing activities;
- encourage local clubs and organisations to promote youth sections;
- encourage more volunteers to take part in youth work by offering training;
- investigate the setting up of a Purley Youth Council;
- work to improve facilities at the two playgrounds, keep areas tidy and equipment safe to use;
- work with Sovereign Housing (SHA) to identify other outdoor areas in Purley, probably in SHA areas, which could be used as safe play areas, especially for the older age groups, and obtain SHA agreement to maintain them (these should not duplicate existing facilities, but should complement them);
- support West Berkshire youth services initiatives such as the after school club at St Mary’s Church and the summer programme of events arranged during the school holidays which could be continued in future school holidays;
- consider the provision of a youth shelter (and where it might be);
- consider whether there should be two centres for youth activities in Purley – review evidence of what young people want in this regard and consider a limited pilot exercise perhaps using the Area Resources For All (ARFA) bus;
- consider whether there should be a Purley based Duke of Edinburgh award initiative;
- discuss with Youth Services and others the possibility that Adventure Dolphin might provide an outreach facility in Purley.

## 13. YOUTH ISSUES

<b>YOUTH ISSUES</b>			
<b>Aim</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Key contact</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Opportunities for young people to take part in range of activities in safe environment	Promote and encourage youth activities	Youth Services; St Mary's; Local organisations	Ongoing
Opportunities for young people to take part in range of activities in safe environment	Consider setting up a Youth Council for Purley	Schools and young people	By June 2005
Opportunities for young people to take part in range of activities in safe environment	Encourage volunteers to train as youth workers	Youth Services; Residents	Ongoing
Opportunities for young people to take part in range of activities in safe environment	Improve existing playground facilities and extend (especially for older children)	Sovereign Housing Association; WBC	Ongoing
Opportunities for young people to take part in range of activities in safe environment	Review scope and funding for a youth shelter, new youth centre(s) and other facilities	WBC; Adventure Dolphin and Youth Services; CAWB	By March 2005
Opportunities for young people to take part in range of activities in safe environment	Consider Purley based Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme		By June 2005

## 14. COMMUNICATION

Purley on Thames has a growing population, including many newcomers who may not be aware of what is happening in the parish and what amenities exist. Good networks exist through the church, local groups and local schools, but, without a clear village centre or focus and with the geographic diversity of the parish, better communication is needed to ensure that residents are able to take advantage of those opportunities which are available. Findings from the survey, on issues such as adult education, bear out the need for better communication within the parish.

### Findings

The Parish News is the single most frequently mentioned source of information (but it is probably circulated to about half the households in the parish).

Free papers and local newspapers are an important and valued source of local information and the parish notice boards and the shop notice board are mentioned by more than 30%. The Post Office is a source of information for about a quarter of respondents.

Almost two thirds of the respondents say they will use a Purley website if it is available.

### Aims

To improve residents' knowledge of and access to information about events in Purley on Thames.

To increase understanding of local issues and promote a sense of belonging through good, accessible information.

To provide the Parish Council, local councillors and WBC officers with local feedback.

To improve accessibility to information of particular groups such as the elderly or those with disabilities or those who have recently moved to Purley.

### Monitoring

The actions will be evaluated through local feedback from residents.

### Parish Council Information

There is interest in having more information about council activities to enhance accountability and improve feedback to the local authorities.

The following proposals will be progressed:

- better feedback to residents following Parish Council meetings;
- explanation of the role of the Parish Council;
- investigation of the role and usefulness of the annual meeting and annual report and improvements to both;
- drop-in surgeries held by local councillors;
- a Purley on Thames website.

### Information on notice boards

Notice boards are a valued source of information in most areas although there is a view that they could be improved. Actions to be taken are:

- review and improve the information on the parish notice boards;
- invest in new notice boards for the parish (perhaps using sponsorship to provide funding);
- review with the two shops in Purley the availability of community information displayed and how it might be improved.

### Parish News

The Parish News is published by St Mary's church and circulated widely in the parish. It is currently thought to cover about half the households in the parish, although responses indicate that almost 58% of respondents quote this as a source of information on what happens locally.

It is clearly an important source of information already established, but it does not reach the whole community. The Parish Council will review, with the relevant church personnel, ways in which its coverage might be increased.

### **Purley on Thames website**

The survey indicated a high degree of support for a website for Purley and a Parish Council site is being proposed which would act as a portal for all Purley organisations. This will be further explored in conjunction with local groups with the aim of having a site running by June 2005.

### **Sense of Belonging to Purley**

The Village Plan has helped to stimulate interest in what is happening locally and in the future of Purley. There is plenty of evidence from the questionnaire of a need for better communication of information on local activities and amenities. In a situation where more than a third of the households in Purley have a Tilehurst address and where the ecclesiastical parish differs from the civil one, good communication to all households is particularly important.

Specific proposals which will be progressed include:

- a local web site (see above);
- a Parish Directory providing information about local activities;
- a Welcome to Purley on Thames guide;
- a guide to the local area and its history;
- use of local radio and free newspapers to promulgate a coherent message about events in the parish;
- review the need for additional information for households on the Tilehurst border.

## 14. COMMUNICATION

<b>COMMUNICATION</b>			
<b>Aim</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Key contacts</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Improve knowledge and understanding of local issues and sense of belonging to community	The Parish Council will improve feedback to residents in a variety of ways, including the use of drop-in surgeries, notice boards, Parish News	St Mary's; District Councillors; Martin Salter	Ongoing starting in September 2004
Improve knowledge and understanding of local issues and sense of belonging to community	A parish website will be created		June 2005
Improve knowledge and understanding of local issues and sense of belonging to community	A Parish Directory		June 2005
Provide WBC and Parish Council with feedback	Make Parish Council business more transparent and accessible and encourage input from residents		Ongoing
Improve accessibility of information for certain groups	A welcome pack for new residents		By September 2005
Improve accessibility of information for certain groups	Review the information needed by those on the Tilehurst border		By June 2005
Improve accessibility of information for certain groups	Consider the needs of the elderly or those with disabilities for information on local events	Age Concern; Disability groups	By June 2005

The responses to the Village Plan questionnaire provide a clear picture of the priorities of residents. 84.8% of respondents say that there should be no new development in Purley and over 88% say that, if development is inevitable, it should not be allowed at the edge of the present settlement boundaries encroaching into the countryside.

Residents feel that if further development has to happen it should favour small family homes (42.4%) and sheltered housing for the elderly (43.4%). It should include only developments which fit an agreed plan (56%) and be well integrated into surroundings (41.2%). 50.6% favoured the conversion of redundant buildings and 33.5% gave preference to small family homes, with almost as many preferring individual dwellings. Larger developments were not well supported (6.2% only).

Most people (nearly 79%) favour owner occupation for new developments, but 23% support shared ownership.

### Aims

To develop a Village Design Statement (VDS) which will be adopted by West Berkshire Council as a Supplementary Planning Document and be taken into account for all Purley planning decisions.

### Monitoring

Success will be regarded as a VDS completed by the end of March 2005 and submitted for adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document to West Berkshire Council under the new planning arrangements.

### A VDS for Purley on Thames

The Village Design Statement will be based upon the findings of the public consultation for the Village Plan. In line with the views of respondents to the questionnaire, it will indicate that priorities for new developments should be:

- individual dwellings or small groups of fewer than ten houses;
- well integrated into their surroundings;
- consistent with the VDS;
- there should be a large element of small family homes and homes aimed at young people;
- there should be some sheltered housing provided to prevent the elderly having to move away when they become less able;
- most of the housing should be designed for owner occupation.

To meet the government requirement for a proportion of social housing in all but the smallest developments, shared ownership houses for younger people and key workers should be included in development, to enable both groups to live in Purley on Thames.

The development of Purley on Thames over the past few decades has focused exclusively on the building of new houses. During this period services and commercial sites have been lost and the result is a parish which is seriously under-endowed with facilities in relation to its size and which is almost entirely residential development. There are a number of signs within the Village Plan responses that residents feel that the balance should be restored. There are a substantial number of unprompted requests for a pub or more social facilities, a youth club and for additional shops. There are also many quantified calls for new facilities, for example a swimming pool (over 70%), a pharmacy (over 71%), a doctor's surgery (almost 64%), a Farmers' Market (54%), more adult education, youth and sports facilities. The need to re-balance the mix in Purley to allow for additional facilities to service the large number of new houses (and those still to be built) must be taken into account in the Village Design Statement and in all future planning. The present situation falls far short of West Berkshire's stated requirement for sustainable development, meaning that residents do not have to travel (or can use public transport) for local facilities.

## 15. DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

A number of developments or proposed developments border the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The VDS will require that no housing development extend beyond the boundary of the AONB and that all developments near the boundary be treated sensitively. The rural view of Purley from the north of the Thames should be retained by protecting the rows of trees which masks much of the Purley housing development.



*View of Purley from above Hardwick House*

### Further consultation

The Village Design Statement (VDS) will be subject to further public consultation on those areas which have not directly fallen out of the questionnaire responses. A public meeting will be held in the Autumn to address these additional issues and it is intended that a VDS will be agreed with the Parish Council early in 2005 and be finalised before the end of March 2005.

Further information on the proposed content of the VDS can be found in the next section.

<b>DEVELOPMENT</b>			
<b>Aim</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Key contact</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Develop a Village Design Statement to be adopted by WBC	Complete VDS after further consultation by March 2005 and submit to WBC	WBC	March 2005

The Design Statement will set down some overall requirements and then look separately at each of the five areas of Purley on Thames, using the same definitions as were used for geographical breakdown of the Village Plan questionnaire responses.

These five areas are:

- the River Estate;
- Purley Village, Westbury Lane and the AONB north of the railway;
- the area between the railway and the A329;
- the A329 (Oxford Road) and its environs;
- Tilehurst borders and the AONB south of the A329.

The terms of the VDS will be the subject of further public consultation. The following paragraphs give a flavour of the proposals which will be put forward for consultation, based upon Village Plan responses and other sources.

### **The River Estate**

Key points to be made will include the importance of the Flood Alleviation scheme and need to ensure that no development takes place which impinges upon the scheme or exacerbates the risks of flooding. There should be no extension to the present area of development and Purley Meadow, owned by Mapledurham Estate, should remain as waterside pasture. Development should not be permitted west of Mapledurham Drive.

The site of the present Village Stores should be earmarked for retail and should not be redeveloped as housing. Similarly the site of Purley Park Social Club should be identified for continuing leisure/social use unless a new site can be found to provide such facilities in the area.

### **Purley Village including Westbury Lane and the AONB north of the railway**

The scale and appearance of extensions should be appropriate to the area and further infill should not be permitted in this area. The character of the village and the existing views across the AONB should be retained. There should be no development beyond the present boundaries of development and no inappropriate traffic calming in the village (Purley Lane and Purley Village).

The possibility of a village green in the area between Mapledurham Drive, Purley Village and Home Farm should be explored. The VDS is also likely to make proposals concerning the retention of the character of the land bounded by the River, Sul Brook, Mapledurham Drive and the village and railway.

### **The area between the railway and the A329**

This area should remain an area of detached family housing. Extensions should not be allowed to close the gaps between dwellings and infill should not be permitted where it changes the nature and relationship of the houses to the neighbouring houses. The present character of the area should be retained. It will be proposed that where open frontages are part of the design this feature should be retained and enclosure precluded.

### **A329 (Oxford Road) and its environs**

The tree-lined approach to Purley on the Purley side of the Reading boundary is an important feature emphasising the separateness and rural nature of the parish and must be retained. Similarly the gap between the settlement boundaries on the Pangbourne side of Purley must be sacrosanct (as the Local Plan makes it at present).

This should remain an area of mixed family housing, and development within the existing settlement boundary should be countenanced, but blocks of flats should not be permitted in this area, even to achieve the required density or social housing to meet government planning policy guidelines (PPG3).

New developments should be permitted where they do not detract from the present character of the area and where they are at the lower end of the PPG3 permitted density range. Access to the busy A329 will need to be considered for any development.

The strip between Winston Way and Glebe Road should remain the commercial heart of Purley and be identified for commercial redevelopment. Settlement boundaries should be retained and any development beyond the agreed settlement boundary should not be used as a reason for extending housing development. For instance, in this area, if the land presently used for caravan storage ceases to be used for this purpose in the future, its use for housing development (which would extend the present settlement boundaries) should be resisted. It is proposed that the land should revert to agricultural use.

### **Tilehurst borders and the AONB South of the A329**

Development off Long Lane should be in an integrated fashion rather than a series of separate developments. There should be no gated communities.

The Village Plan response has shown that residents do not want expansion of housing development into the countryside. However, in this area the government has already breached the settlement line and if there is to be further development (which seems inevitable) it is important that it is integrated. The VDS will suggest that any development of Kirton's Farm should integrate it with the rest of Purley, linking with the Trenthams estate. Any new development should provide a footpath along the edge of the AONB linking Goosecroft to Long Lane, making available additional land for recreation. The housing development should comply with the preferences identified in the Village Plan – sheltered housing, small family homes, homes for young people and including shared ownership properties. The location bordering on the AONB should require the development to meet high environmental standards.

The VDS will say that the relationship of the development (in the Long Lane area) to the AONB should be carefully designed so that each adds value to the other. Pikeshaw should be retained as an open space.

***Front Cover***

Aerial View of Purley taken in 2003  
Mapledurham Lock  
The Post Office, Purley Rise  
St Mary's Church, Purley

***Back Cover***

Houses in Purley Village  
View (with cows) of the River Estate  
from the Purley allotments  
A house in Colyton Way

