

NEWSLETTER

December 2017, issue 10

Parish Council matters

Just to remind you all, the Parish Office will be open as normal on Monday 18 and Thursday 21 December 2017. The office will then be closed from Monday 25 December to Monday 1 January 2018, inclusive, although Officers will pick up messages and e-mails during this time.

The Parish Councillors and Officers would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy Christmas!

Sue Briscoe
Chair of Purley on Thames Parish Council



Salt bins

Now the colder weather's upon us, the salt bins around the village are being used much more heavily. If you notice a bin is running low on grit, please contact the office to advise Colin Moses, our Amenities Officer, who will arrange for West Berkshire Council to come and top up the bins as necessary.

New litter and dog litter bins

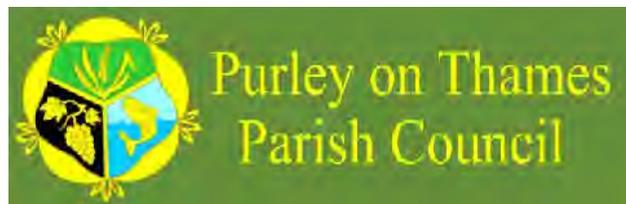
As you might have noticed, some additional and replacement litter and dog litter bins have been installed around the village.

There's now a large, red dog bin on Mapledurham Drive and another at the lock; these replace the old, smaller bins which frequently overflowed during busy times. There's an additional new dog litter bin on Springs Farm land near Pangbourne Waterworks (at the junction of footpaths 1 and 7) and also a new litter bin at the lock which the lock keeper has kindly agreed to empty.

It's hoped the extra capacity for disposing of litter and dog waste will help keep the village clean and tidy.

Pikeshaw Woods

The wooden kissing gate at Pikeshaw broke recently and, following an inspection of its overall condition, it was decided that the gate needed replacing. A contractor has been appointed and the work is due to be completed by Sunday 17 December.



Fly posting

The putting up of posters and advertising is not permitted around the village and the Parish Council has delegated authority from West Berkshire Council to remove fly posters from lamp-posts, etc. The only exceptions are travelling fairs and circuses (historically, they have the right to put up signs) and one-off events which have been given permission to put up notices (although they must be removed as soon as the event has taken place).

If you see any fly posters around the village, please contact the Parish Office to let us know; do not remove them as the authority extends only to representatives of the Parish Council.

Notice board on Mapledurham Drive

The Perspex in one of the notice boards on Mapledurham Drive was damaged over the summer. Unfortunately, the company which supplied the notice board is no longer in business so we have been looking into the best way to replace the glass. As a result, the Amenities Officer has removed the damaged Perspex and taken it to a glazier so that a replacement of the correct size and width can be made. It is hoped that the new sheet will be in place and the notice board back in use by Christmas.

Thames Valley Police

In August 2017, the Police and Crime Commissioner announced a new grant fund from his Community Safety Fund allocation. Supporting key aims within the Police and Crime Plan, the fund was open to applicants from voluntary organisations and £94,000 has been awarded to eight organisations which will deliver cyber-crime prevention activities.

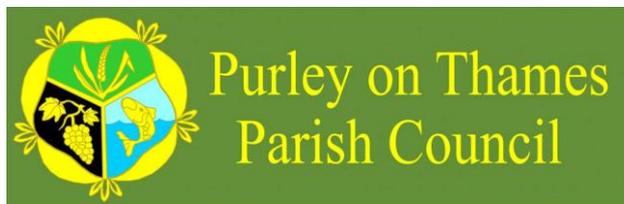
Further information about the Police and Crime Plan for the Thames Valley is on the web site at <https://www.thamesvalley-pcc.gov.uk/police-and-crime-plan/>



As part of the work to support victims of crime, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) is offering a Victims First Specialist Counselling Service. The service, which covers Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire, receives referrals for victims who need counselling, matches them with an appropriate counsellor, and funds their sessions.

The OPCC is currently seeking qualified counsellors to join this service as an “Approved Counsellor” – once approved, a counsellor is included on the database and will be considered for referrals near them whose initial requirements match the support the counsellor offers.

If you are, or know of, a counsellor interested in joining the service, further information is available at <https://www.thamesvalley-pcc.gov.uk/victims-first/counselling/>, or you may e-mail counsellinghub@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk



West Berkshire Council

West Berkshire Council (WBC) has begun a consultation on proposals affecting some frontline services as it prepares to set its budget for 2018/19. The Council began preparing the budget earlier this year and has worked hard to minimise the impact on frontline services. Proposals for cutting costs and raising extra funds include:

- introducing a charge for garden waste collections – many other councils already charge for this and it's felt the service could be improved with a resident contribution;
- reducing funding for Citizens Advice West Berkshire in Newbury – it is felt this service could be delivered more efficiently in conjunction with the Council as most people in this area use the Reading facility;
- no longer sending planning application notices to neighbouring/nearby properties; orange site notices would continue to be displayed – WBC is also ceasing sending hard copies to the Parish Council but all the information is available online.

To view the proposals and respond to the consultation, please visit the WBC web site - <http://info.westberks.gov.uk/budgetproposals>; the public consultation is open until Wednesday 10 January 2018.

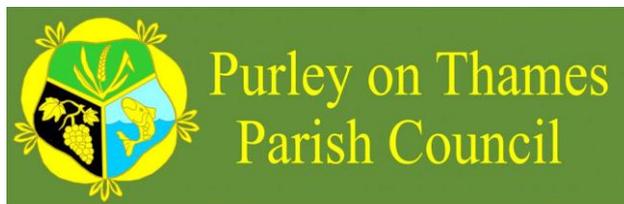


When the new pedestrian crossing was installed on the Oxford Road at the end of Theobald Drive, WBC Highways department made a commitment to check that the crossing is successful in making the road safer for people to cross while also reducing traffic speeds without adversely affecting traffic flow by causing queues. For this reason, a traffic measuring device has been put on the road near the crossing; it will monitor the crossing's effect, and the timings of the lights will be adjusted if necessary.



WBC is joining with all the other authorities in Berkshire to bid to be part of a new Government pilot concerning treatment of Business Rates collected by some District and all County Councils. This is important because, under the current system, WBC retains only 20% of monies collected – the rest goes in to the national pot. Keeping a little more (even another 5%) would protect frontline services for several years ahead and would also stop the need for constant savings and new charges in each budget.





Security at Goosecroft

As a result of the vandalism and antisocial behaviour which have been particularly serious problems this year, additional security lighting has been now installed at Goosecroft. CCTV cameras have also been installed on the Barn, Pavilion and Parish Office to give full coverage of the buildings and recreation facilities at Goosecroft.

It is hoped that these measures will deter the antisocial behaviour in the longer term although, sadly, we have already had to provide some footage to the police following an incident of vandalism.

M4 Junctions 12 to 13 bridge refurbishment

Work on refurbishing bridges between junctions 12 and 13 of the M4 has progressed very well. As a result, the remaining three weekend closures (scheduled for 15 to 18 December, 12 to 15 January 2018, and 19 to 22 January) have been cancelled.

The occasional full overnight closure will still be necessary, and dates for these will be advertised on signs alongside the M4 and in the media.

Springs Farm paths

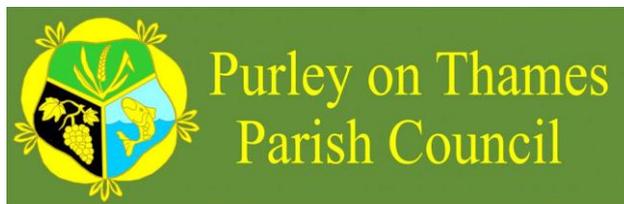
Just a reminder that a section of footpath PURL1/1 is now closed from Westbury Lane to the permissive path; this is to allow Springs Farm to carry out extensive works to hedges and security fencing. The closure may last for up to six months, but Springs Farm is aware of the inconvenience and has now agreed to increase the number of contractors working on site in order to keep closure time to a minimum.

Further information in the form of Q&A is available on the Parish Council website at <http://www.purleyonthames-pc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/SpF-HedgeWrks.pdf>



As regular users of the permissive path from Westbury Lane Bridge will know, some areas of it are particularly susceptible to heavy rain and become close to impassable due to mud and puddles. The agents at Springs Farm have now confirmed they will be laying extra wood chippings in the worst places; this should be completed by mid-December and will, hopefully, improve walking conditions on the path.





Village matters

Flood Awareness update

Each year, as winter approaches, the Strategic Support department at West Berkshire Council (WBC) organises a teleconference at which Council Flood Wardens, the Met office and the Environment Agency review the likelihood of floods over the winter. This year, rainfall has been well below average and groundwater is still at summer levels, so flooding is unlikely.

One effect of low rainfall, however, is that the ground is showing “low water moisture deficit”. This means that, if there is very heavy rain, the ground’s absorption rate is likely to be reduced so there could be some surface water flooding. This is a particular risk where there are small rivers or streams, or if drains are blocked. Carolyn Richardson, Civil Contingencies Manager at WBC, has asked anyone who sees a blocked drain to report it to WBC so that it can be cleared. This is particularly important as the weather is expected to be wetter and warmer in the New Year.

Web sites with useful information about flooding and weather conditions include:

- Environment Agency floodline – <https://www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings>
- Flood warnings for England – <https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk>
- Met Office – <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/public/weather/forecast>

David Briscoe

Flood Warden Co-ordinator



We are currently looking for Deputy Flood Wardens to work with each Flood Warden. If you would like more information or to volunteer for this, please contact the Parish Office.

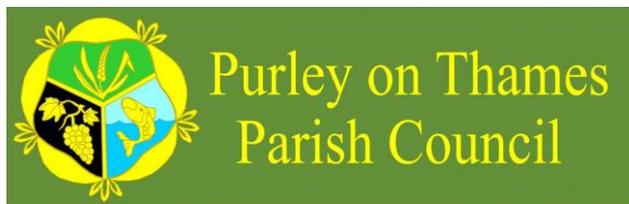
Christmas Market in the Barn at Goosecroft

On Sunday 29 November, the Barn was festively decorated for the third Christmas Market organised by Friends of Purley Barn. There was a wide range of stalls, refreshments, Father (and Mother!) Christmas’s grotto, Purley Sports and Social Club was open for lunches and, during the afternoon, Pangbourne Silver Band entertained shoppers with carols.



In all, over a thousand people attended and over 40 local businesses and organisations were represented. The final monies are still being received, but it’s believed the event raised around £2,000.

Thanks go to all the volunteers who helped make the event a success and to Sulham Estates for, once again, allowing the field next to Goosecroft to be used overflow car parking.



Events in the Barn, Goosecroft

A Birds of Prey Evening has been organised by Friends of Purley Barn and will be held in the Barn at Goosecroft from 7.00pm on Friday 9 February 2018. Tickets cost £5.00 for an adult, £2.00 for a child and the price includes one glass of wine/beer or a soft drink – there will be a bar where further drinks may be purchased.

Tickets must be bought in advance and may be bought at the Farmers' Market on Saturday 13 January 2018 or by calling the Box Office on 0118 941 2322.

For further information, see www.fopb.org.uk or e-mail BirdsOfPrey@FoPB.org.uk.



Don't forget to check the "What's On" page on the Parish Council web site for events being held locally – www.purleyonthames-pc.gov.uk/whats-on/; the problem with the drop-down menus has now been fixed, and they can now be accessed by i-Pad.

Contact

Further information on matters raised here and other local issues is available on the Parish Council web site – www.purleyonthames-pc.gov.uk.

If you would like to contact us, please call 0118 984 4507, or you may e-mail asstclerk@purleyonthames-pc.gov.uk. You are also welcome to come and see us during office public hours:

Monday	2.30pm to 6.30pm
Thursday	9.30am to 2.30pm

If you know of anyone who might also like to receive this Parish Council Newsletter, please ask them to contact asstclerk@purleyonthames-pc.gov.uk giving the e-mail address they'd like us to use.



**Happy Christmas
from the Officers**