

## NEWSLETTER

March 2019, issue 25

### Parish Council matters

We're coming to the end of the Parish Council year and with that comes the Annual Parish Meeting, which will be at 7.30pm on Monday 15 April in the Small Hall of the Barn at Goosecroft. This is an opportunity for parishioners to discuss how money's been spent over the year and to ask questions of councillors so, if there are issues you'd like to raise or suggestions you'd like to make, do come along on 15 April. As well as Council business, we'll also have a speaker – Dr Jane Sellwood from the [University of the Third Age](#) (U3A) will tell us about U3A courses and groups locally, as well as discussing how to start groups for new activities.

A very big "thank you" to the dedicated team of volunteers delivering the Annual Report to all households in Purley. The aim is to have the report delivered to every household before the date of the Annual Parish Meeting so, if you haven't had a copy by mid-April, please contact the Parish Office to let us know. If you'd like to know more about being a volunteer, there's an interesting item later in this Newsletter – new volunteers are always welcome!

Every four years, Parish Councillors must stand for election. Anyone wishing to stand must be nominated and, if there are more nominations than seats on the Council, ie 13, there will be a Parish Council election on 2 May. If there are 13 nominations or fewer, the nominees will become councillors, uncontested. Don't forget, the Parish Council represents you when making decisions about local facilities and amenities. If there is an election, please do vote.

*Sue Briscoe*  
*Chair of Thames Parish Council*

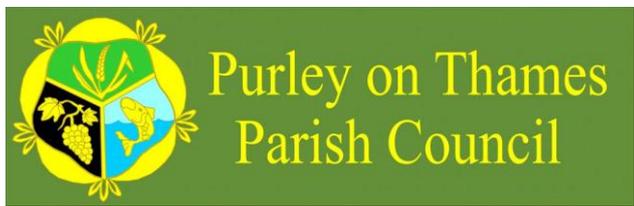
### Council elections

Thursday 2 May 2019 is the date of the elections to decide councillors for district, town and parish councils. The nomination process is now open and anyone wanting to stand has until 4.00pm on Wednesday 3 April to submit their nomination to West Berkshire's Returning Officer. A list of candidates standing for election will be published online by 4.00pm on Thursday 4 April.

Following a review by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, there's been an adjustment in ward boundaries and a reduction in the total number of district councillors. Delivery of polling cards started on Tuesday 19 March; the cards will show residents which ward they are in and which polling station to attend.

The deadline for registering to vote is Friday 12 April. You can also apply to vote by post and the deadline for this is Monday 15 April. Applications to nominate proxies must be submitted by Wednesday 24 April.

Further information about registering to vote is available on [WBC's web site](#).



**News from the Parish Office**

The gate post and wall of the Burial Ground at Goosecroft have now been rebuilt after being seriously damaged by a driver very early one morning in January. Most of the cost was covered by a claim on the insurance.



Users of the sports facilities at Goosecroft will be pleased to see that the Pavilion has recently been painted inside and out and that Purley Sports and Social Club has replaced the cladding on the adjoining club premises. As a result, the whole building is now looking very smart indeed.



Further improvements are planned for Goosecroft, including the installation of three new, energy efficient lights on Goosecroft Lane which will replace the existing, outdated lamps.

Additionally, one of the requests in the latest Village Plan was for a public WC at Goosecroft. In order to fulfil this action, a baby changing unit will be fitted in the outside WC (which has also been repainted) at the end of the Pavilion, and an automated opening system will be installed.



**Spring at Goosecroft**



At Bucknell’s Meadow, a new litter bin has been fixed near one of the picnic benches and another will be installed later in the year near the climbing wall. These two new bins replace two which were vandalized over the past year.

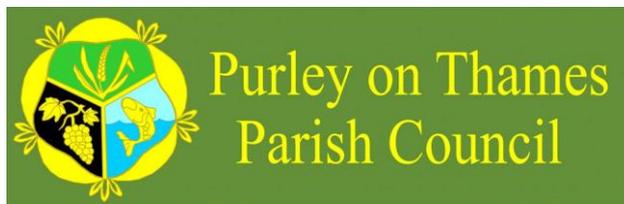
It would be a great help if all the bins in the meadow, including those by the entrance, were used to help keep the area and play equipment tidy.



Looking forward, the cracking at the edges of the games surface on the multi use equipment at Bucknell’s is to be repaired shortly.



All the salt bins have, once again, been restocked so we are ready should there be any final flurry of wintry weather – or, more optimistically, for next winter!



## Delivering the Annual Report

More than twenty volunteers from Purley as well as groups from the local scouts are working to deliver the Annual Report to all houses in Purley (there are nearly 2000 in all!). One or two volunteers were on holiday in mid/late March, so if you've not had your report yet it's because the people concerned are away – we have until 12 April to complete the deliveries.

Overall, delivering the reports is a fun experience (especially when it isn't raining!) – it offers the chance to see areas of Purley you may not often have reason to visit, and you may meet the residents, most of whom are very friendly.

You also see a variety of ways in which people receive their mail - putting a report into an external box is easy once you've worked out that there are many different sorts with different openings. But getting small items like an annual report through the letter boxes with two flaps and brushes between – well you have to put your fingers right in and just hope there's no fierce dog on the other side!

*Delivery Team Volunteer*



## Disability Confident

On Friday 22 March, Alok Sharma, MP for Reading West, hosted an event aimed at encouraging local companies to sign up to become Disability Confident employers.

Disability Confident is a scheme championed by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), and is designed to help employers recruit and retain staff with disabilities and health conditions.

The event was held at the offices of Bayer plc at Green Park; the company is already a Disability Confident employer and kindly provided meeting space for the session. There were presentations from DWP staff, motivational speakers, and case studies from local Disability Confident employers Total Communication, Thames Water, and Microsoft, demonstrating how the scheme had benefitted both employer and employee. Other Disability Confident employers in attendance included PLUSS, Shaw Trust, Kennedy Scott and IKEA.

More than 60 people attended the event, including representatives from local employers Oracle, CGI, BP, Berkeley Homes, Direct Wines, Nokia, Stonewater, Sovereign Homes, Barton Willmore, Reading Football Club, Talentino, Code Wizards, Thames Valley Berkshire LEP, Belinda Knight Solicitors, Harrison Clark Rickerbys, CH and Co, and Clarify.

### Asian hornet (*Vespa velutina*)

*Vespa velutina*, also known as the Asian hornet, is an invasive, non-native species from Asia. It arrived in France in 2004 where it spread rapidly. Although it presents no greater risk to human health than other hornets or bees, it is a highly effective predator of insects, including honey bees and other pollinating insects, and can cause significant losses to bee colonies and, potentially, other native species.

Sightings have been recorded in the UK since 2016 and there is particular concern in southern parts of England and Wales. They can be introduced in many ways including with soil brought in with imported plants, cut flowers, fruit, garden furniture, plant pots, and untreated timber.

Asian hornets:

- have a dark brown or black velvety body
- have a yellow or orange band on fourth segment of abdomen
- have yellow tipped legs
- are smaller than the native European hornet
- are not active at night



Asian hornet (*Vespa velutina*)

Further guidance on how to identify an Asian hornet is available [here](#)

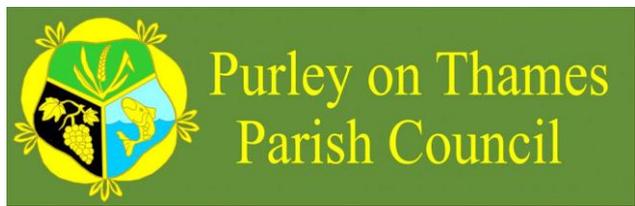
If you think you've seen an Asian hornet, it is important not to interfere with it or any nest. Sightings can be reported using free apps for iPhone and for Androids, online, or by e-mail. Details and links can be found at [www.nonnativespecies.org/alerts/asianhornet](http://www.nonnativespecies.org/alerts/asianhornet)

### Whitchurch Bridge

The General Estates Company Ltd has become the new owner and operator of Whitchurch toll bridge.

The bridge had been owned by the Company of Proprietors of Whitchurch Bridge since the first bridge was built in 1792, and Whitchurch Bridge (Holdings) Ltd was responsible for the reconstruction in 2013-14. However, as the company's directors are nearing retirement age, the decision was taken to sell the bridge. It was first offered to the two local councils: West Berkshire Council had no interest in taking it on, and Oxfordshire County Council also decided, after careful consideration, not to proceed.

The General Estates Company Ltd is based in Hythe, near Southampton, and has been in business for over 100 years. It's been a shareholder in the Whitchurch Bridge Company for many years, and is believed to own and operate the Batheaston Toll Bridge near Bath, as well as having an interest in Dunham Toll Bridge which crosses the River Trent. The new owners have said they have no intention of changing the way the bridge is operated in the foreseeable future, and the Bridge Manager and toll-collecting staff will remain in post.



## Village matters

### Mapledurham Lock café and lock-keeper's cottage

The Lock Café has now closed, apparently due to problems in agreeing new contract terms with the landlord, the Environment Agency. It is hoped that another tenant will take over in due course.

The lock-keeper's cottage has been empty for some time while a relief lock-keeper's been looking after the lock itself. We understand that a new lock-keeper is due to start soon and is likely to live in the cottage. There seem to be no plans for the Environment Agency to let the cottage privately.

### Friends of Purley Barn (FoPB)

Friends of Purley Barn (FOPB) is a group of volunteers who put in a great deal of effort to raise funds to help maintain and improve the facilities in the Barn at Goosecroft.

FOPB's biggest event of the year is the Christmas Market which is held in the Barn in November (this year it'll be on Sunday 24 November). As with many similar groups, most of the organisation, setting up on the day and clearing up afterwards tends to fall to the same small number of people. This year, it would be lovely if new helpers stepped forward to get involved – not only in the market but in other events (and new fundraising ideas are always welcome too!).



Daffodils outside the Barn

If you'd like to know more, please contact the Assistant Clerk in the first instance.

## Local news and events

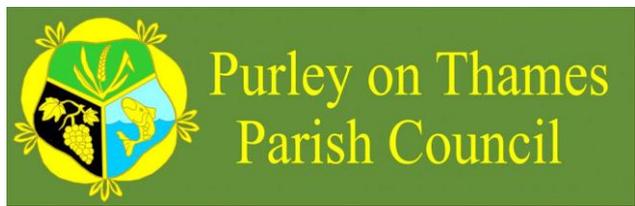
On Saturday 30 March, Hearing Dogs is holding a Great British Dog Walk at Beale Park in order to raise funds and awareness. Registration is at 10.00am with the 5k walk starting at 11.00am. Adult tickets cost £10.00 if booked online in advance or £12.00 on the day (a doggy bandana is given for every ticket purchased), and entry is free for children under 16.

Please see [here](#) for further information and to book tickets.

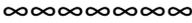
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Don't forget to put your clocks forward by one hour at 1.00am on Sunday 31 March!

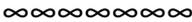
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From 10.00am to 3.00pm on Saturday 6 April, Purley Residents Support Committee (PRSC) is organising a “What’s on” event in the Barn at Goosecroft. Entrance is free and this will be a wonderful opportunity to find out about local clubs and societies, what they do and how to join.



Also on Saturday 6 April, Purley Horticultural Society will be holding its Spring Flower Show from 2.30pm to 4.00pm in Purley Memorial Hall on Glebe Road.



From 10.30am to 12.30pm on Wednesday 10 April and on Wednesday 17 April, there will be a workshop to build a mini bug hotel in the Wild Explorer Centre at Beale Park. There’s a £5.00 charge for each hotel built (they can be taken home!) and the events are run on a first-come, first-served basis.

From 1.30pm to 3.30pm on the same days (10 and 17 April), Beale Park Animal Keepers will also be running “meet the bugs” sessions.

Parental supervision is required for both the workshops and the sessions, and more information may be found on the Beale Park [web site](#).



On the morning of Saturday 13 April, the farmers’ and craft markets will take place in the Barn at Goosecroft. These markets are held on the second Saturday of every month and, thanks to the WI, refreshments are also available.

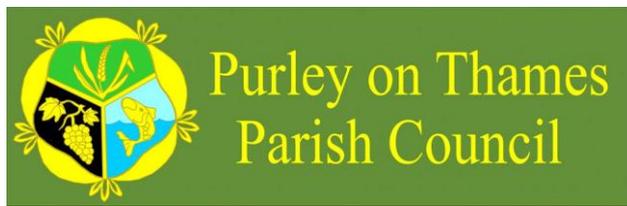
See [here](#) for further information.



Trentham Bowls Club is holding an open day from 10.00am to 3.00pm on Saturday 13 and Sunday 14 April. All ages and abilities are welcome, but please wear flat shoes. The club offers excellent facilities for new and advanced bowlers, and free tuition will be available on the day – bowls can also be supplied if necessary.

The club can be found at Bowling Green Lane off Sherwood Rise and, if you’ve ever considered taking up lawn bowls, this is a wonderful opportunity to try it and to meet existing members.

If you have any queries or would like to know more about the open day please e-mail either [treasurer@trentham-bowls.co.uk](mailto:treasurer@trentham-bowls.co.uk) or [ladies-captain@trentham-bowls.co.uk](mailto:ladies-captain@trentham-bowls.co.uk), or leave a message on the club telephone, 0118 984 5832.



This year, Good Friday is on April 19 so that and Monday 22 April are both bank holidays. Here some ideas for different things to do over the long weekend.



This year, Basildon Park will have two trails over the school holidays, from 6 to 23 April. They each cost £3.00 and are available from Visitor Reception – and there's a tasty Cadbury prize at the end of it! See [here](#) for further information.

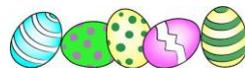


On Wednesday 17 April, Reading Museum is holding drop in [Make and Take: Balloon Bunnies and Chicks](#) between 10.00am and 12 noon, and from 1.00pm to 3.00pm. Each session lasts half an hour and costs £1.00 (payable on the day). This is a chance for children to turn a balloon into a fat, friendly Easter creature simply by adding bendy legs, a beak, ears and eyes – and they'll be all ready to enjoy over the Easter weekend!



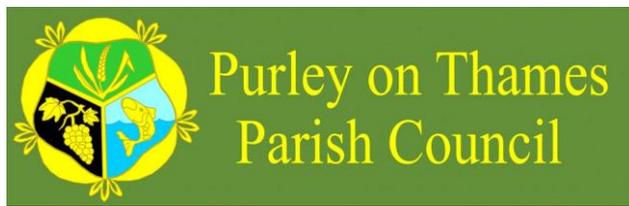
The third Craft Theory Festival is being held at South Street Arts Centre in Reading on Friday 19 and Saturday 20 April. There will be a family-friendly session from noon to 5.00pm on Good Friday, otherwise, this is an adults-only event which offers a selection of beers from local, national and international breweries, as well as a chance to meet the brewers. There's also street food and DJs.

See [here](#) for more information and to book.



Friends of Caversham Court Gardens are holding an Easter Egg Trail from 2.00pm to 4.00pm on Saturday 20th April 2019 at Caversham Court. There will be an Easter Egg Quiz on a nature theme and all young competitors will win an Easter Egg or a non-dairy treat. Children must be accompanied by adults and entry is free, although donations to the Friends of Caversham Court Gardens would be welcomed. Refreshments will be available in the tea kiosk throughout the afternoon and further details may be found [here](#).





Purley Players is putting on its Spring performance at 7.30pm on Friday 26 and Saturday 27 April in the Barn at Goosecroft. This year, the play is a comedy “Holiday at Home” and, as always, a bar and refreshments will be available.

Tickets cost £9.00 (£7.00 for concessions) and the box office is now open. To book your seats call Marjorie on 0118 941 8856.



The first session of Goring Gap Boat Club’s Spring Learn2Row course will be on Saturday 27 April; there are six sessions in all and the full course costs £130.00. There are a few places left so, if you’re over 18 years of age and would like an introduction to the sport of rowing, please contact Alastair – [captainofrowing@goringgapbc.org.uk](mailto:captainofrowing@goringgapbc.org.uk).

Further information about the club is available at [www.goringgapbc.org.uk](http://www.goringgapbc.org.uk).



For information about these and other events, please see the “What’s On” page on the Parish Council’s web site – [www.purleyonthames-pc.gov.uk/whats-on/](http://www.purleyonthames-pc.gov.uk/whats-on/)

## Feedback

This Parish Council Newsletter is now entering its third year having been circulated every month since February 2017, and we hope that all who’ve signed up for it continue to find it of interest. Thank you to everyone who has already given feedback and input to its content during that time, it’s been very helpful indeed.

We would welcome ideas as to how the Newsletter can be improved so, if there are areas related to the Parish Council about which you’d like to know more, please do let us know by contacting the Assistant Clerk – [asstclerk@purleyonthames-pc.gov.uk](mailto:asstclerk@purleyonthames-pc.gov.uk)

## Contact

Please see the Parish Council web site – [www.purleyonthames-pc.gov.uk](http://www.purleyonthames-pc.gov.uk) – for more information on local issues,

To contact us, please call 0118 984 4507, or e-mail [asstclerk@purleyonthames-pc.gov.uk](mailto:asstclerk@purleyonthames-pc.gov.uk). You are also welcome to come and see us during the following office public hours:

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

If you know of anyone who might like to receive this Parish Council Newsletter, please ask them to notify [asstclerk@purleyonthames-pc.gov.uk](mailto:asstclerk@purleyonthames-pc.gov.uk) giving the e-mail address they’d like us to use.