



Account of Purley on Thames

Chronicles 1950-1959

1950 14/15 Geo VI

The Parish precept for 1950/51 was set at £40 on 21st March (S4)

On 24th May the salary of the Clerk to the Parish Council was increased from £10 to £18 pa (S4)

The open space proposed by the Parish Council for a recreation ground was deemed unsuitable by the Town and Country Planning Officer. An alternative site was proposed south of the Oxford Road but the Parish Council believed it to be unsafe for children to have to cross the main road. Further debate took place on 27th June and Mr Bucknell said he would safeguard his possession of field OS35 which had been recommended by the Land Commissioner instead of the one owned by Mr Theobald. He offered an alternative meadow in Purley Village. The Parish Council then suggested a 6 acre plot off Beech Road owned by the Rev Wilder of Sulham (S4- 24/5/50,27/6/50)

On 13th June the Parish Council were advised that the Director of Education had stated that the conveyance of children over 8 years of age who had to travel to Pangbourne to school, would cease to be paid by the County Council. Parents had until 30th June to make alternative arrangements. A letter of protest was sent to the Director by the Parish council with a copy to the MP Mr Hurd. Three further resolutions were sent on 27th June (S4)

1951 15/16 Geo VI

The South Berkshire United Sanitary District was renamed the South Berkshire Joint Public Health Committee (S309-51)

In January the Parish Council were given details of the pipe through which effluent from Aldermaston would flow to the Thames. There would be 11 miles of pipe of between 5 and 3 inches bore which would discharge about 25,000 gallons daily into the Sul Brook (S4-1/51)

The Parish precept was set at £20 on 17th January, however the Council reset it at £100 on 20th February after being informed that the product of a penny rate was £25. (S4-1/51,2/51)

Complaints about the washing and lavatory conditions at the school were forwarded to the rector by the Parish Council in April (S4-4/51)

A revised schedule of footpaths was presented to the Parish Council in April for consideration (S4-4/51)

In February the Parish council were told that a meeting had been held with the Rev Wilder and he had agreed to lease them a plot of land for seven years for a recreation ground. The Council had to fence it (S4-1/51)

A fete was held on the new recreation ground on 16th June to raise money for the Memorial Hall Fund (S4-3/51)

Difficulties arose in June because the Purley Sports Club wanted to have a separate lease with the

Rev Wilder for use of the playing field. It was pointed out that the Club and the Council could not both lease the same piece of land at the same time so some compromise would have to be reached. The Parish Council decided to set up a subcommittee to manage lettings of the ground They agreed to let the Club erect a temporary pavilion on the ground on the condition that they either remove it or it becomes the property of the Council. (S4-6/51,7/51)

Herbert Arthur Tidbury died on 22nd August. He was born 26/10/1885 and had been a churchwarden for 23 years and a Parish Councillor since the Parish Council was founded in 1927 (S12)(S25/3/52)

The Bishop of Oxford attended the Harvest Thanksgiving Service at St Mary's on 23rd September (S76-4/51)

Once again the church organ was in need of repair and renewal so the PCC commissioned a report (ref 76)

In October the Parish Council called for nominations to replace Mr H.A.Tidbury who had died, In November they co-opted Mr C.A.Dunton (S4-10/51,11/51)

Bradfield RDC wrote to the Parish Council asking for suggestions on a site for further council houses. The Parish Council replied in October that a site on Long Lane seemed the only suitable one.(S4-10/51)

Trenthams bought Belleisle Farm off the South Berks Hunt and began to establish their headquarters there (S40-32)

The Gas main in Glebe Road was further extended (S185-2)

1952 16 Geo VI/1 Eliz II

On 26th February the parish precept was set at £65

Following elections to the Parish Council in March the new Council consisted of A.W.Bucknell, Miss D. Scott-Stokes, W.A.Crossley, W.J.Halsey, C.A.Dunton, P.W.Fitchew and B.Theobald. (S4)

Comparative figures on the sizes of electorates in the Bradfield villages were presented to the Parish Council on 20th March. Purley's electorate was given as 784 (S4)

After a review of insurance by the PCC the old policy was found to provide £1000 cover at 10/6 per £100. Recommendations were Building £4900, Seating £1000, Windows £300, Organ £400, Bells £750 and plate £200. The cover on the last item was raised and the other recommendations accepted. (ref 76)

The Berkshire Development Plan was published in April as a result of the Town and Country Planning Act of 1948. It formed the basis for subsequent planning permissions. (S17)

The report on the church organ was presented to the PCC in May. After considerable debate it was agreed to accept the estimate of Messrs Hill Norman and Beard for £99-7-6 to effect repairs. The woodwork and especially the pedal board was affected by woodworm and it was recommended that the instrument be dismantled, cleaned, regulated and revoiced. This would mean the organ being out of action for two Sundays and a piano was borrowed to provide the music. (ref 76)

A special meeting of the Parish Council was called for 5th June to discuss the recreation ground. It was agreed to build lavatories at the ground and lay out tennis courts. There was considerable debate

as to how to go about levelling the site (S4)

The walls of the churchyard were badly in need of repair. An estimate of £144 had been made but it was decided that the organ repairs were more urgent (ref 76)

It was reported to the Parish Council on 8th July that the school managers had agreed to apply for the school to have 'aided' status (S4)

At the same meeting the proposal to build four houses adjacent to the Memorial Hall at a density of 12 to the acre was greeted with alarm (S4)

Following an enquiry as to why the church clock was not working it was stated that the lead weights kept getting stolen (S4-7/52)

The South Berks Hunt refused to sell land in Long Lane to the Bradfield RDC for council houses. (S4-9/52)

In September Pangbourne Parish Council invited Purley to join with them in Coronation celebrations next year. However the Parish Council on 23rd September decided not to accept the suggestion and call a Parish Meeting to decide what Purley should do. The meeting was duly held on 2nd October and numerous ideas were discussed. It was decided to base the programme on a TV show in the Memorial Hall with children's sports, children's tea, aquatic sports, television relay and a bonfire at the recreation ground. Permission was sought for a 4d rate to pay for it. (S4-10/52)

1953 1/2 Eliz II

Several residents of Bourne Road asked that they be transferred to Pangbourne Parish. Purley Parish Council were strongly opposed to this at their meeting on 5th March. By July a formal proposal from Pangbourne Parish Council was received under section 141 of the Local Government Act 1944 This was further discussed at the Parish Meeting on 18th August. (S25)(S4)

The Parish Council meeting of the 5th March had to be suspended because of a dispute about pecuniary interest. The meeting was discussing a development proposal by Mr. Fitchew re a kiosk on St Mary's Avenue. He claimed that if he had a pecuniary interest then so did every other members who owned plots on the River Estate. The chairman refused to give a ruling on the matter and suspended the meeting. At the May meeting the Council was informed that the proposal had been turned down by Bradfield RDC (S4-3/52,5/52)

On 16th February a special Parish Meeting was held to discuss the Coronation celebrations. A committee of 16 was appointed and the proposal to levy a 4d rate was confirmed. The proposals of the Coronation Committee were discussed at the Parish Council meeting of 19th May and various items of expenditure were authorised. At a special Parish Meeting of 18th August it was reported that the celebrations had been a huge success. Spoons had been distributed to the children. (S25-8/53)(S4-5/53)

In June a cedar tree was transplanted from Norfolk to celebrate the Queen's Coronation. It was planted by the great niece of Lord Lister, who used to live at thee the Old Rectory. The top of this tree was blown out in a storm in 1975 (S1-1/78)

The rector asked the Parish Council to find an alternative place for meetings. They had been held at the school since the Council was founded in 1927. At the meeting on 29th September the Council replied to the rector that they had no intention of moving and quoted section 128 para 1 of the Act of

1935 as their authority. (S4)

A vigorous discussion took place at the 28th July meeting of the Parish Council on the problems of the residents of Mapledurham Drive getting their night soil collected. They had to carry it in buckets across neighbours land to Colyton Way as Mr Bucknell would not allow wheeled vehicles to pass through the gate to Mapledurham Drive. It was an offence to bury excreta so they decided to consult the Medical Officer of Health. Later in the year Bradfield RDC agreed to meet the costs involved in the regular emptying of the closets by a private contractor as well as providing piped water to the Estate (S4)(S309-53-39)

Berkshire County Council were asked to make improvements to New Hill following complaints at the Parish Meeting of 25th August that the approach to the Oxford Road was too steep (S25)

Mr Bucknell sent his apologies to the Parish Council meeting of 29th September and the Council sent him wishes for a speedy recovery. However by the next meeting he had died and Bernard Theobald was elected chairman in his stead. Mrs Chamberlain was co-opted to replace him on the Council on 10th November (S4)

The Memorial Hall was opened by the member of Parliament, Mr Anthony Hurd on 14th October. It had been planned that it would be opened by the Minister of Education, Miss Florence Horsborough, but a family bereavement prevented her coming. The hall eventually cost £2700 of which £1100 was raised locally and £800 came from a grant from the Ministry of Education. To get it completed in time for the Coronation a small mortgage was taken out for the balance of £800 (S184-32)(S1-4/70)

After a series of long drawn out negotiations it was finally agreed on 10th November to ask Reading Borough Water Company to lay on a water supply to the pavilion at a cost of £13/6/0. This figure had later to be revised sharply upwards as many items had been overlooked. (S4)

1954 2/3 Eliz II

After a public enquiry the proposals made by Pangbourne Parish Council to annexe part of Purley were rejected (S4-3/54)(S25)

Messrs H&E Simmonds Ltd gave a small piece of land to the parish to improve the approach to the Memorial Hall (S25)

The proposed mains drainage scheme for Purley was shelved because of cost. The Parish Meeting on 16th March resolved to press for it to go ahead with particular priority for Glebe Road which was also in need of repairing. The road was so bad that a special meeting was called for September 28th to discuss the matter and a road committee was formed to get some action (S25)

The Reading Water Company extended their system by 3262 yards into the Purley River estate (S309-54)

A further letter was received by the Parish Council on 28th May from the rector about it ceasing to use the school for meetings (S4-5/54)

Following the death of Mr Halsey, Bob Skerritt was co-opted to the Parish Council on 28th May to replace him (S4-5/54)

Mrs Pryor, the Parish Council nominee on the school's board of managers reported to the Parish Council on 31st August that improved sanitation was being considered at the school and that the County Council had agreed to pay for new wash basins (S4-8/54)

The Parish Council informed Bradfield RDC in October that they preferred 12 flats instead of 6 houses to be built on the Marsh Farm Estate (S4-10/54)

1955 3/4 Eliz II

The Parish Council Meeting on 20th January was the last to be held at the school (S4)

At this meeting the Parish Council considered the proposal from the Church for a memorial tablet to commemorate the dead of the Second World War. The Parish Council were generally in favour but recommended that after this lapse of time it would be better if no names were inscribed on it Their suggestion was not adopted.(S4)

The meeting of the Parish Council on 15th February was the first to be held at the Memorial Hall.(S4)

At this meeting a list of Street names was compiled and forwarded to Bradfield RDC for official naming. The list was Bourne Road, Westbury Lane, Glebe Road, Beech Road, Oxford Road, New Hill, School Hill, Long Lane, The Village, St Mary's Avenue, Colyton Way, Wintringham Way, Oak Tree Walk, Park Walk, Woodland Way, The Short, Brading Way, Chestnut Grove and River Gardens(S4)

On the 4th April Mr Peter Fitchew told the Parish Council that he would not be seeking re-election as either a Parish or District Councillor (S4)

At the Parish Council elections in May Messrs Skerritt, Bucknell, Marshall, Crossley, Theobald and Dunton and Mrs Chamberlain were elected to the Parish Council with Messrs Bucknell and Dunton as District Councillors as Purley was now entitled to two District Councillors on Bradfield RDC. (S4)

The Parish Council on 31st May decided that the cost of the proposed lighting scheme for Bourne Road was excessive. A penny rate was noted as yielding £27-12-0 (S4)

At the same meeting concern was expressed about the amount of heavy traffic using Long Lane and the County Council were to be approached to see if the width could be doubled (S4)

At a special Parish Meeting on 24th June it was decided to adopt the Lighting and Watching Act 1833 to provide three street lights for Bourne Road. At a second meeting on 26th August it was decided to spend £160 and enter an agreement with the Southern Electricity Board for 25 years and apply no more than a penny rate to pay for this (S25)

At the Parish Council meeting on 19th July a precept of £60 was agreed for the coming year (S4)

The rateable value of the Parish was reported to the Council on 27th September as being £6824 (S4)

At the same meeting it was agreed to purchase three light standards for Bourne Road at £46-4-4 each and apply for a loan of £160 to pay for them to be installed (S4)

1956 4/5 Eliz II

Mrs M Chamberlain resigned as a Parish Councillor because of ill health and Miss Dorothy Scott-Stokes was invited to take her place on 24th Jan (Ref 4)

There were complaints to the Parish Council on 24th Jan that the electricity voltage was so low that

it was often impossible to cook at weekends (ref 4)

At the Parish Council meeting of 24th April it was reported that the new name plate for streets in Purley were being made and would be erected soon. (ref 4)

The Parish Council objected to Sulbrooke Road being renamed Bourne Road. (ref 4)

A precept of £90 was agreed at the Parish Council meeting of 25th April (ref 4)

At the Parish Council meeting on 15th May it was agreed to start work on the pavilion at the recreation ground with costs not to exceed £3-10-0 (ref 4)

At the Parish Council meeting on 24th August the Council were informed by Berkshire CC that Purley should now have nine councillors. Messrs J T Buckmaster and R A Fisher were co-opted as new members, joining on 24th September (ref 4)

At the Parish Council meeting on 24th September there was a considerable debate as to whether or not there really was a right of way via the Memorial Hall grounds to Purvey's bridge. They concurred that there was such a right a way but the Memorial Hall Committee had fenced off the access (ref 4)

William Henry Morton was inducted as rector on the 7th November (ref 22)

1957 5/6 Eliz II

On 10th January the Parish Council was told that £40 had been raised in the parish for the Hungarian Relief Fund (S4)

On 11th March Mr Crossley resigned from the Parish Council because of ill health. Mr David Martin of 17 St Mary's Ave was co-opted to replace him on 28th May) (S4)

The Memorial Hall was having financial difficulties so a 'Friends of the Hall' was founded in May. Friends agreed to give 6d a week to

keep the Hall going (S1-5/70)

Mr Williams won the Bradfield RDC Best Kept Garden Competition. He was presented with his award at the Parish Council meeting on 12th November (S4)

At the same meeting the precept for the coming year was fixed at £100 (S4)

The Thames Conservancy dredged the Thames by Purley during 1957 to 1959. The work was done by Aubrey Watson who laid hoggins on Mapledurham Drive to bring sludge from the Lock to dump on the pond field. Mr A Lewendon, the Thames Conservancy archaeologist, found numerous objects in the sludge, including Saxon spearheads, Roman coins and stone age artifacts. (S116)

1958 6/7 Eliz II

The South Berks Hunt moved its kennels from Belleisle Farm to Mortimer. (ref 21)

At the Parish Council meeting on 4th Feb a precept of £225 was approved. This included a new item for street lighting.

At the Parish Council Meeting of 26th March it was agreed to ensure that lighting was included in the construction of the new Blakes estate (Highfield Road) so that only maintenance charges would

have to be borne thereafter. (ref 4)

Horace Michael Rabone died on 15th April. His wife Winifred gave a reading desk to the church as a memorial. They lived in Oak Tree Road in Tilehurst.

Miss N H McLoughlin of Caversham came to Purley in May as a prospective infant teacher at the school. She arrived in the middle of bad floods in the area. She noted that the school was in a somewhat delapidated state and that the new water supply consisted merely of a single tap in the entrance lobby (ref 1-5/73)

On the 15th July the Parish Council resolved to complain to Bradfield RDC about offal being left in trenches at the poultry packing station on Long Lane. This was causing considerable nuisance with flies and stench.

When Miss McLoighlin started work at the school in September she found there had been a lot of work done by Berkshire CC. The old ventilator had been removed, there was clear glass in the windows, the roof had been re-tiled, electricity had been installed and there was a new cloakroom, kitchen and toilet block (ref 1-5/73)

At the Parish Council meeting on 22nd September, approval was given to erect a new bus shelter at the top of New Hill (ref 4)

At the same meeting the precept for the year from 1st October was approved at £200 (ref 4)

The Reading Water Department extended the network down Long Lane by 890 yards to serve 11 houses and in Glebe Road by 37 yards to serve 4 houses (ref 309-58)

The old hand operated wheels which were used to raise and lower the paddles on the lock gates were removed and a powered system installed instead.

1959 7/8 Eliz II

Miss I Nowell became headmistress of the school

At the Parish Council meeting on 23rd April it was reported that a proposal had been made to build houses on the 30 acres opposite Marsh Farm Estate in Pangbourne. Both Purley and Pangbourne Parish Councils objected (S4)

At the Parish Council meeting on 24th May it was agreed to ask the Thames Conservancy to provide a safe swimming site for Purley. There had been a wrangle with Pangbourne Parish Council about the use of the River Pang for this purpose (ref 4)

At the Parish Council Meeting of 29th June it was reported that a Commission was sitting to review Local Boundaries (S4)

Mr Fisher resigned from the Parish Council on 5th November and at the next meeting it was resolved not to co-opt to fill the vacancy (S4)

The Estate sewer in Orchard Close was taken over by Bradfield RDC (S309-59-31)

A 150 yard extension to the water main was laid to serve 3 houses in Orchard Close (S309-59-33)

It was decided to do a housing survey of the Purley Park River Estate. There were 285 properties on 33 acres, most of the houses being asbestos on metal or timber framing (S309-59-32)

K1950 9/10/11

