

Account of Purley on Thames

Goosecroft Recreation Ground

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The Beech Road Recreation Ground

Shortly after the Second World War the Parish Council obtained a six-year licence from Frederick Wilder for the use of a field in the Goosecroft area, although this name had long since fallen into disuse. It was a pretty rough and sloping area but it was well used. When the six years expired the Council managed to persuade Mr Wilder to sell them six acres a little to the west of this original field.

This new plot was levelled and fenced and was later known as the Beech Road Recreation Ground.. Its purchase was funded by a loan of £xxx from the Local Government Loans Board. It was a source of problems for many years for two chief reasons. First that the land is very flinty and sharp stones continued to rise through the soil for over ten years after it was laid out. It was so bad that Purley FC were not allowed to play in local leagues as their ground was declared to dangerous.

The second problem was drainage. The excavations and backfilling that had taken place while levelling the area had created a hard pan a foot or so beneath the surface at the north east corner. The result was that water would not drain away, making the field unusable in rainy weather. Many attempts at drainage were made, of which the most successful was the provision of a French Drain alongside the hard-standing to the north of the playing area. These and other actions by the Parish Council over many years has greatly reduced the severity of these problems but they remain as irritations and inconveniences.

Tennis Courts

The north-east corner of the recreation ground was levelled especially to provide two lawn tennis courts.

These were replaced by three hard courts around 1973 and a much stronger and higher fence was provided. To the west a row of conifers have provided a windbreak.

For a short period floodlights were installed to enable the courts to be used for netball but there was strong opposition from residents of Beech Road and when the local netball league decided to play all their matches at Theale the lights became redundant anyhow and were removed.

Children's play area

On the east side of the ground children's play equipment was installed. Over the years this has been replaced many times and Heath and Safety requirements have meant that a secure fence had to be erected and a whole variety of measures taken to minimise risks.

Pavilion

A pavilion was provided with showers and changing rooms for sports teams. There was a central room which was used for many years as the place where the Parish Council met. Again over the years facilities have been improved.

Sports and Social Club

A wooden building in the same style as the pavilion was erected to the east of the pavilion and used as a bar for sports teams. This evolved into a Sports and Social Club which holds a lease from the Parish Council and provides refreshment facilities. Around 1980 this was extended to double the size.

Caretaker's Accommodation

When the new ground was provided it was deemed advisory to have a caretaker on site. Initially the accommodation was a caravan but in the 1990s this was replaced by a small bungalow. In 2016 the workload had increased so much that it was decided to appoint an Amenities Manager to oversee all the required work which was then put out to contract. At the time of writing the bungalow is empty and a committee of the Council is considering letting terms.

Parish Office

For about ten years the Parish Council met in the pavilion and the Clerk worked from home. But as the workload increased steadily over the years it became necessary to build a substantial building to provide an office for the clerk as well as meeting facilities for the Council. This was opened in 19xx. It has since been redesigned to incorporate the former kitchenette into the clerk's offices and now provides working space for three council employees.

Barn

The Barn formerly at Trenthams was dismantled and rebuilt on a plot between the recreation ground and Beech Road. It is now a popular village amenity hosting a very wide variety of activities.

Cemetery

When the burial ground at the Church became full several options were considered by the Parish Council. It was finally decided to purchase more land from Sulham Estate to create a cemetery to the west of the Barn. This was duly laid out as a lawn cemetery and consecrated by the Bishop of Reading. It was divided into four quadrants with the south east quadrant reserved for cremation burials. Additional land was purchased to provide for around 150 years of burials but the west half has been made available for junior and informal activities until the east half is full.

Car Parking

The Sports and Social Club paid to have a parking area to the north of the playing field paved and a number of spaces were provided adjacent to the Barn. Some additional spaces adjacent to the Burial ground were funded by a sports grant but while the parking facilities are adequate for most of the time there are occasions when it is not sufficient. When large scale events are planned it is usual to provide overflow parking in the paddock to the east of the ground.

