



Purfleet-on-Thames Community Forum

For ease of reference topics appear as separate subjects rather than in the order discussed. Items do not appear in any order of priority, and may appear under an unlinked agenda item (e.g. AOB)

Meeting Minutes 28th September 2021

1. Welcome

John welcomed everyone and explained how the meeting would run.

Minutes for 27th July are on the website and were signed off.

Apologies – Hilary Mason, Kim Vasa

2. Guest Speakers:

Laura Bayley, Essex Fire Museum

The museum is in Hogg Lane behind Grays Fire Station.

It is not open on a regular basis but has open days during school holidays and will be open October 26th and 28th – visit museum@essex-fire.gov.uk for details and how to book and should you wish to arrange a group tour.

Roy Aanstad Essex County Fire & Rescue Service – Smoke Alarms

Due to connection issues Laura Bayley from the Essex Fire Museum spoke on Roy's behalf. 2/3rds of fires start in the kitchen – when cooking it is good to keep an eye on the food; consider setting a timer as a prompt.

In the event of a fire get out and if able close doors behind you, stay out, call the fire service. If practical close internal doors at night as closed doors can restrict the spread of the fire by 10-15 minutes.

A smoke alarm is recommended on each level of your property plus one in the hallway and one on the landing, test monthly, replace every 10 years including wired in alarms.

Stand-alone alarms are available free from the Fire Service, come with a 10-year battery, and currently the Fire Service can come and fit them.

If you have any questions or wish to get in touch with the Fire Service:

Home safety visit: www.essex-fire.gov.uk/hfs

0300 303 0088

Ryan Farmer, Manager, Future Housing Strategy Development, Thurrock Council

Speaking to as many people as possible to find out what is important to residents to help identify what the strategy needs to prioritise and focus on in addition to looking at legislation, regulation, changes in the housing market, impact of welfare reforms, impact of COVID-19 on housing and the way residents lead their lives.

The strategy is far broader than just housing stock/properties and covers council tenants, social housing, private rental, and owner occupiers.

As the authority is a social housing provider and developer it has broad responsibilities towards housing such as homelessness prevention and relief, enforcement of standards in the private rental sector, licencing, the strategic assessment of housing needs for now and future needs.

The new strategy will run for 5 years, 2022-2027 and is being led by the Development Team who are working on other documents to support the strategy including:

Assett Management which looks at how the authority invests in stock, obtains maximum value, and provides good quality, sustainable warm homes which includes an element of private rental and owner occupiers particularly around energy efficiency and fuel poverty.



Purfleet-on-Thames Community Forum

Resident Engagement Structure which is about the area and neighbourhood around the homes of all residents be they council tenants or other tenants, owner occupiers, leaseholders.

Nationally playing into housing:

Social Housing White Paper which sets out the government's policy intentions with 7 elements covering expectations which the council must adhere to and are applicable to social housing, private rental, and home ownership sectors. The timeline is unknown, as is what it will look like, so the Housing Strategy has to be responsive and able to flex.

Fire and Building Safety with the government actively progressing legislation but again details are unknown at present.

Covid-19 saw communities coming together and building resilience under their own initiative and the desire is to help communities remain resilient and united. Ways of engaging changed but the more traditional ways of engagement and interaction must not be overlooked.

The full impact on housing and homelessness is yet to be seen now that temporary protections have stopped. The increase in uncertainty of people's finances and housing situations needs to be addressed throughout the lifetime of the strategy.

Locally playing into housing:

Affordability there is a lack of affordable housing in Thurrock.

14% of all properties in the borough belong to the council (just under 10,000); approx. 3% of dwellings are owned by housing associations or registered providers of social housing and there are not many other options for social or affordable housing as the stock is not there. Local housing allowance rates do not keep up with the market and in the current market both buying and renting will become less and less affordable.

About ½ first time buyers struggle to buy a flat and around 1/3rd of households struggle to afford the median rent for a 1 bed property.

This strategy needs to find a way to increase the number of affordable homes in the borough.

The Housing Strategy follows 6 principles:

Community Resilience and Engagement

Resident representation makes the strategy fit for purpose in the way housing services are designed, delivered, reviewed, assessed, commissioned.

Safety and Security

Includes looking at people's perception as to how safe and secure they feel and how to assist or link to the right levels of support owner occupiers in the wrong size property and those struggling to live safely and independently.

Health and Wellbeing

A central factor is housing and space around the home.

Understanding and Addressing Housing Need

Need to understand ways to support people into the right size accommodation and accommodation which supports both mental and physical health.

Investment, Development and Standard of Homes

Homes have been used differently during the pandemic and this may continue so new builds should take this into consideration and produce right size homes in the right location, affordable, and home people want to live in.



Purfleet-on-Thames Community Forum

Housing Services

Need to deliver high quality resident-centric and resident focussed services which meet the needs of people and provide good value for money, and which are easily accessible.

Various documents including strategies for housing, infrastructure and health and wellbeing feed into the Local Plan to provide a joined-up approach to help make it relevant and successful.

From the Floor:

We are losing reasonably sized family dwellings to HMOs and house conversions into flats and large 4 bed properties are not being built. How will HMOs feature in the strategy?

Something will be included to address this. Currently some areas have licencing so that may be expanded and new techniques and new ways to engage with landlords wanting HMOs will be looked at.

Where can residents send feedback and is there a deadline?

Working on extending the deadline to obtain as many views as possible and information will be shared back via the Chair.

It was suggested people be approached at supermarkets and libraries and that the strategy includes details as to what enforcement can be undertaken/crackdown on rogue landlords, protection of green and brown field sites to ensure they are not built on or sold off because of the climate change emergency.

Want to see the word affordable in the strategy.

The Lower Thames Crossing is having a huge effect on housing, how is that being addressed?

It impacts a significant amount of land and hampers potential growth and development plans in suitable areas. These responsibilities come under the planning department and the Local Plan which has yet to be completed.

3. General Update

Cllr Qaisar Abbas reported that:

A site visit has taken place at Marine Court and the rat infestation is being investigated.

Overgrown hedges along London Road footpath have been cut back.

Missed bins are an ongoing issue and regularly reported.

A large protest took place due to the proposed closure of the Thameside Museum and Theatre. The council meeting has been adjourned to October due to flooding issues.

Please email councillors with any concerns you may have.

From the Floor:

The road sweeper shovels the inside edge along the footpaths and cuts back brambles but overgrowing hedgerows remains an ongoing problem.

The 20mph speed restriction was introduced to make walking and cycling safer but it was noted that Harris Riverside students are walking in the road due to the narrow pavements.

Cllr Qaisar was asked to approach the council to get all greenery cut back from footpaths.

Head of Greening has stated the reason why the 2 benches on the green have not yet been put in is due to the ongoing greenery works taking place.

An application is with Planning for the beacon green to be designated a green area, and a tree preservation order has also been submitted.



Purfleet-on-Thames Community Forum

4. Matters Arising and AOB

Bus Consultation

The recent meeting was very constructive despite the very low attendance.

Silhouettes

Aiming to be installed by 7th Nov in time for Purfleet-on-Thames' Remembrance Day.

Forum's New Email Addresses

As from 1st October the old addresses will no longer be accessible.

Dickens Theatre Company

Due to funding issues the proposed production has been cancelled.

Boat, Stonehouse Roundabout

Highways do not see any issues with us illuminating the boat with solar lights. Hopefully this will be done by the end of the year.

Name Change

After a year of correspondence Royal Mail has now officially changed the name to Purfleet-on-Thames.

Donations

Outstanding donations towards last year's Christmas lights has now gratefully been received from Garrison Residents' Association, Lynn Mansfield's tombola. A donation has also been received from Purfleet Patient Participation Group (PPG).

Come end of October 12 months will have passed since Wates' promised donation. Trevor is chasing.

Community Picnic

Our Community Builder Kim Vasa organised this event and has requested return of the survey forms so that she can compile a report on the picnic. 60 free children's packed lunches were distributed, and a good time was had by the roughly 150 who attended.

L15

This green area next to Woodlands Nursery is suffering from small quantities of rubbish being dumped. Should anyone see this happening or have any information please contact chair.potcf@thurrockforums.org

Queen's Platinum Jubilee

The Forum has registered to take part in the celebrations on 2nd June 2022. Please contact Trevor vicechair.potcf@thurrockforums.org from today if you can help in any way.

London's ULEZ

New Ultra Low Emission Zone daily charge of £12.50 for road use inside the A406 starts 25th October and is operational 24/7 excluding Christmas Day.

Clock Tower

This Grade 2 listed building is suffering from greenery overgrowth which has been reported to the council. A request has also been asked for repairs to the door and for a coat of paint to the top and the clock face.

Christmas Lights

Looking to maximise use of the lights by switching them on on 27th November with a possible winter fayre. The lights application has been submitted, donations are being sought. Garrett confirmed on behalf of PCRL that they will be able to supply mince pies and mulled wine. A request has been made to Thames Community Choir to attend but they are unable to confirm at this time.

Purfleet Chronicles

If you would like to continue seeing articles posted on the website please contact Trevor otherwise the posts will only be put on twitter and Facebook.



Purfleet-on-Thames Community Forum

July Meeting

The committee opted to not hold a July meeting in 2022 due to it falling within a major holiday period. Instead to look at holding a very informal Q+A session on Zoom.

Turner – Purfleet Essex Shore

This picture had been out of circulation for 120 years and recently sold to a private buyer for £4 million at Sotheby's.

Fibre Broadband

A lot of fibre is being put in but is not currently being advertised so if interested check suppliers.

Heritage Centre

Now open again with good feedback received and is benefitting from 3 new enthusiastic volunteers. A few events have already taken place including a visit by 90 children from East Ham and plans for another large group visit from the children of Purfleet Primary School.

7th November - Purfleet-on-Thames Remembrance Day event.

4th December - Ensign will be running historic buses from Lakeside to the Heritage Centre and through to the recently opened RAF museum at Hendon.

Cups and Saucers

If you have any unchipped cups and saucers that you no longer want, please contact John at chair.potcf@thurrockforums.org

Redevelopment

An online survey gives a couple of new pictures of what the proposed development will look like at www.givemyview.com

First Phase of Greening Works Webinar 6 October 6pm www.tinyurl.com/WebinarOct2021
PCRL are working through various applications which they have to discharge in order to be able to start on site. One application under consideration by the council is for clearance works to make way for new works to start on site.

The webinar will provide more info about clearance works, timetable, what's involved.

Rev Erica Bowler, Community Chaplain and Missional Listener

Commission service on Saturday 2nd Oct 2pm, everyone welcome.

Erica wants to find out what is going on in the area, what needs may not currently be met and which she and the wider church may be able to help with, and whilst doing that hopes to meet as many people as possible. Erica is a Baptist minister offering a listening ear, support/advocacy.

Petitions

Spider Park is on Thurrock Council consultation portal - skate park not fit for purpose.

Grangewaters is also on the consultation portal. The Council has recognised that it is an asset of community value. Please consider signing up to the Save Grangewaters petition.

Litter Picking

Contact the Forum if a specific area needs litter picking and a litter pick can be arranged.

Tank Hill Road Bridges

These have become very overgrown and will be discussed at the next Committee meeting.

5. Next meeting 30th Nov 7.30pm hoping to be a joint Zoom and in person at Backstage Centre
Contact John by the end of October for any requests for speakers in November.