

Purfleet On Thames News





Foreword

This magazine has been put together by a range of partners including the Purfleet Forum, Purfleet Heritage Centre, the RSPB, the Royal Opera House, local residents and volunteers, the High House Community Group and others, with support from Thurrock Council and Thurrock Thames Gateway Development Corporation.

The magazine is a continuation of the excellent magazines previously published, and follows a similar pattern, with local lives at the heart of the stories and articles included.

We felt it was important to carry on with the magazine because there is so much happening in Purfleet. With the exciting plans for High House and the Royal Opera House Production Park, updates from the Thurrock Thames Gateway Development Corporation, discussions about the possibility of regeneration of the Garrison Estate, the activities at the Purfleet Children's Centre, news from the RSPB, the Royal Opera House and the Heritage Centre; there is certainly a lot going on! We also feel it is important to include stories of Purfleet's past, so we have included some articles from times gone by.

If you wish to comment on this magazine, or would like to contribute to the next one, then please give me a call on 01375 413960 or email me at cerydings@thurrock.gov.uk.

Thanks, and I hope you enjoy reading it as much as we did putting it together!



This magazine has been produced using recycled paper.

Purfleet on Thames Community Forum

Yes it's the same place and we hope that the name change will be adopted by everyone giving the place a much needed identity boost. Since the AGM (24th June 08), which was well supported we have not been idle. I know we said we were going on holiday but that was not quite true!

For those of you that don't know or are new to the area, Purfleet on Thames Community Forum is a voluntary group that acts as a springboard of information between the council and local service providers. We are also a vehicle for allowing all of Purfleet's ever growing population to have their say in things that concern them and the services they receive. We aim to be here for everyone, wherever you live, be it council, rented, leased or home owner.

We receive a small budget from Thurrock Council every year. Any group who may have a project or ideas to improve Purfleet that needs funding can apply. There are also many other ways where funding can be found so bigger projects can be supported. In the past we have funded several projects, some for the forum and some for other local groups. These include:

- two VAS speed signs,
- notice boards supporting the Heritage Centre and Woodlands pre-school

- a new pavement outside the pre-school
- helped finance the play equipment at the River Lane Centre.

I nearly forgot to mention another very successful play day that was held on the Ordnance Green, organised by Thurrock Play Network and fully funded by YOUR COMMUNITY FORUM. So thank you to every one that supported the event by going along.

We have been granted some additional funding to do a bit of face lifting. We are starting with Stone House roundabout and you may have noticed that all the shrubs etc. have been removed. This is just the start as we are hoping to run a design competition. We are looking for ideas on landscaping, thinking on the lines of where we live and the river.

We are installing additional dog bins and litter bins, by popular request. (In addition to this and for those of you that know how I like Christmas lights and tree.) Last year we organised a Christmas carol sing-along at St Stephens church. This included a large Christmas tree and lights, home made soup, mince pies and mulled wine. This year it's going to be bigger and better (the lights not the tree!). A sustainable Christmas tree is being planted and we will be having a carol sing along. Aveley Brass Band and MP Andrew MacKinlay will be switching

on the Christmas lights. I hope that all who supported last year's event will support us again this year and bring your neighbours along. The date is **Thursday 11th December 08**.

Finally Purfleet on Thames Community Forum is here to support you and to ensure that you can have your say about things that concern you. We meet in St Stephens Church Hall opposite the Royal Hotel on the last Tuesday of the month gathering at 7pm for a 7:30pm start with tea & coffee supplied.

Anyone can come along and join the group. If you have an email address we can add you to the list so that you can receive information about what's going on in Purfleet and Thurrock.

We also have a website www.purfleetcf.org.uk or you can contact me on info@purfleetcf.org.uk. or telephone 01708 866600 after 7.00 pm.

If you would like a chat then drop me an email and I will give you a ring.

I hope you have found this interesting, and it has whetted your appetite to find out more.

**John Rowles -Chair
Purfleet on Thames Community Forum**



COMPETITION!!!!

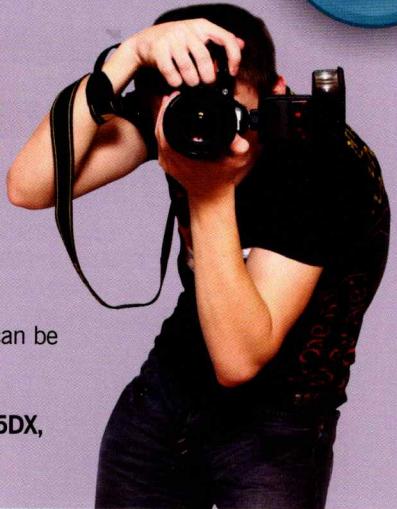
for the Best Picture

WIN
A DIGITAL
CAMERA

The first 12 people to phone in will be sent a disposable camera. Call 01375 413960.

We are looking for the best photo taken in Purfleet. The winner will win a digital camera. The themes can be of anything interesting in Purfleet or on the River (we have heard there are a family of seals in the river).

Send your photos to Tenant Participation, Thameside Complex, 6th floor, Orsett Road, Grays, Essex, RM17 5DX, alternatively take your photo to the Purfleet Housing Office, River Court, Garrison, Purfleet.



Consultations carried out in Purfleet – Watts Wood and Uplands Estate.

A couple of years ago Watts Wood and the Uplands were included within the boundaries of the Purfleet on Thames Forum. When the Council changed the ward boundaries Watts Wood and the Uplands became part of the Aveley Forum.

The two estates had a flyer and questionnaire put through their doors asking their opinion –

- Would they like to remain within the Aveley Forum?
- Would they prefer to be included within the Purfleet Forum?

Approximately 500 questionnaires were delivered to households. Twenty- eight forms were returned.

A drop in session was held at the Fondu Sports and Social club on 24th September 2008. Seven residents came to the drop in session.

Results

From the twenty-eight forms returned – twenty seven have said they prefer to be included within the Purfleet Forum.

From the drop in session all residents said that they prefer to be included within the Purfleet Forum.

John Rowles - Chair of the Purfleet Forum attended the meeting and said the Purfleet Forum would welcome residents from the Uplands and Watts Wood.

I would like to thank all the residents for returning their completed questionnaires and for attending the meeting.

Residents from the Uplands Estate and Watts Wood can attend the Purfleet Forum meetings that are held on the last Tuesday of the month.

Update on Plans to Regenerate the Garrison Estate: Council takes a prudent approach

Firstly can I say a big "Thank you" to those residents who took the time several months ago to engage in a discussion with the Council on the regeneration of the Garrison Estate. Earlier this year several meetings were held with the Council's housing Department and local residents and stakeholders on the Garrison and the information gleaned has helped us to now shape a few ideas for the Estate.

In the light of the current economic circumstances however, the Council has decided that it makes sense to examine these ideas through a risk management 'magnifying glass'.

We will be looking at these issues and having a fuller debate with Councillors over the coming weeks. We hope to get back to residents in the new year once we have had these discussions. So watch this space for more news on our regeneration plans!

For further information please contact: Valerie Johnson, Estate Regeneration Manager, Thurrock Council: 01375 652218

High House Wordsearch

C	L	O	N	A	E	R
B	I	E	R	B	N	F
H	S	T	A	B	L	D
W	T	I	B	F	A	S
N	E	R	L	M	S	U
I	D	O	V	E	Y	O
P	S	G	E	J	D	H

Barn
Dove
House
Listed
Stable



Affordable Photography

In partnership with
St Stephen's Church Purfleet
And Purfleet Children's Centre



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Contact Andy on
01708689757 or 07989988496

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Every Friday & Saturday
8pm till late

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FUNCTION ROOM
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SUNDAY CARVERY
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All enquiries Tel: 01708 890 999

St Stephen's Church (Opposite Royal Hotel)



Bishop Blesses "Loos" and The High Sheriff visits Purfleet

Bishop Laurie Green officially marked the completion of the refurbishment of St Stephens during a service led by Rev Andy Hudson. The work has taken 6 months to complete and includes new toilets, kitchen, store room fire exit, ramp, lighting and internal decoration, with facilities for the disabled. The work was funded by The Thurrock Thames Gateway Corporation, Cleanaway Mardyke, Wren, and the Healthy Living Centre.

St Stephen's Youth

Drop in Centre

for anyone 11 years and over
is now open Wednesday
and Thursday evenings
7:00pm-9:30pm



We are raising funds to
hopefully take a group of young
people to Australia as part of a
cultural exchange project.

The big G club is a new venture for Autumn 2008 Friday evenings 7:00pm-8:30pm for anyone of any age but under 8's will need to be accompanied by a responsible adult. There will be stories and drama from the Bible, singing led by the Big G band, Games, Craft activities and refreshments. Term time only.

Your Space.

Saturdays 10:30am-12:30 term time only.
Learn new skills including Basic Computing, Digital Photography, Guitar, Keyboard, or just pop in for a cup of tea or coffee and chill out. Internet access available. Have you got a skill or talent you could pass on to someone? Please let us know.

Worship every Sunday 11:00am Informal Communion for all ages all welcome.

Contact Rev Andy Hudson for more information 01708689757
Mobile 07989988496 e-mail hudson_a6@aol.com.

See church notice board for more events.



High House Community Group

The High House Community Group sets a good example of community practice. We would welcome more people to attend our regular meetings, especially young people. We currently have representatives from Heritage organisations, Community Forums, agencies involved in Play matters, Thurrock Council Housing, Thurrock Community Development, Purfleet Primary School, Thurrock Museum and private businesses. Residents from all over Thurrock are currently helping us to try being as inclusive as possible. We hope that people from all over the county will visit the High House site in the future and use the facilities there. The remit of our particular group is to ensure the heritage of the site is preserved and to ensure that residents, especially those living locally, are totally involved in the activities on the site.

A recent site visit took place when Thurrock Thames Gateway Development Corporation invited members of High House Group to view the Coachman's Cottage, newly enhanced with a fresh roof and the stable block. The intention is that once this area is made safe

and fully accessible, volunteers could staff a regular information desk at weekends to keep visitors informed of progress on the site.

The next meeting of the High House Community Group, where we discuss updates, and look at possible fundraising events is at the Proof House, Centurion Way, Garrison Estate, on **Thursday 29th January, at 6:30pm with a 7pm start**. Tea, coffee and biscuits are available at the meeting, and it would be great to see you there!

Please visit our website at
www.highhousepurfleet.co.uk

Contact us through the Thurrock Play Network at the Beehive on 01375 389876

Email us
highhousepurfleet@hotmail.co.uk

Maggie Pollock
 Chair

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Royal Opera House and the community working together

Sun and Heir, the ROH site specific community production took place at the London Cruise Terminal in July. It was the culmination of many months of hard work and involvement throughout the community from primary school children to students, families and adults led by the team from the Royal Opera House.

The production of Sun and Heir was the first of many engagement opportunities between ROH and the Thurrock community. This show was a year in the making and developed entirely through guiding the creative energies of local people. Around 4,000 Thurrock residents also visited Covent Garden this year enjoying pre-show workshops, talks, tours and performances at the Royal Opera House.

The BP Big Screening of **The Marriage of Figaro** at Lakeside shopping centre on 16th July provided further opportunities for

students from Belhus Chase Community College, Aveley, as they learnt how to undertake front of house responsibilities. The BP Big Screens programme is a fundamental part of the ROH's mission to introduce opera and ballet to the widest possible audience. As each Season passes the ROH will connect with more Big Screens around the UK. The goal is to have 65+ screens by 2012, when live performances will be screened to coincide with the London Olympics.



The next project to grab the imagination of the Thurrock community will be **Voices of the Future**. The project started in the 2007/08 season and is leading up to the performance on the Main stage at Covent Garden in March 2009. Schools and colleges in the area will have the opportunity to work alongside professional ROH designers to create designs for the set and costumes for this new piece of work commissioned by Orlando Gough.



From a 1920's Postcard.

The Royal Opera House's Production Park and The High House Project in 2008

By Gary Houghton

It has been over 450 years since the foundations were laid to the High House legacy and it is fitting that after making so much of Thurrock's history, this magnificent set of buildings is going to be brought back to life by one of the largest cultural developments in recent times. The New Year has brought new energy and enthusiasm to the High House Project with the intervention of the Royal Opera House and their vision for a world leading production park, with the High House site being its front and outreach project for the community. The actual unit for making the sets will be built between the Purfleet bypass and the houses along Josling Road to the north-west of High House on a 14-acre site, leaving the historical buildings to be restored and resurrected back into use.

The story of High House itself started in 1551 when it was built to give two daughters equal share in the Manor of West Thurrock, which stretched from the Grays border in the east to the Purfleet marshes in the west, and from the Mardyke canal in the north to the Thames river edge in the south. At the height of its power, the manor of West Thurrock, with High House at its core, owned and

watched over two ferries across the river to Kent, various quarries and lime kilns, manor houses, smaller residents', orchards and gardens. This shows the sheer size and scope of the land which High House oversaw during its long reign in Purfleet and the wider Thurrock area.

From this status of power, it is not surprising that there are 3 listed buildings on the site that clearly shows the significance and status that the farmstead was held in during its long life. The dovecote is noted as a Scheduled Ancient Monument and one of the best surviving examples in the south-east of England, and indeed the barn and the house itself are both grade two listed.

In the mid part of the last century farming suffered as an industry, eventually leading to the power and size of the farmstead

decreasing. Over time, the manor was cut up and its land built on with what you see of the modern area, radically changing the view of Purfleet. Gradually, the land which High House owned was reduced simply to the land which the buildings stood on. The house continued to be used as a school

and then as flats, until eventually it fell silent for many years.

Local people came together over their concern for the farmstead and they formed a committee to try to bring the farm back to life for the community. Clearance and open days were organised to heighten the awareness of the farmstead and its plight, and the local residents reacted in the true spirit of community by backing all events held at High House with vigour and zeal.

The undergrowth was thick and the volunteers worked hard to clear the site from years of neglect, but all those brave souls who helped on the day did not bat





an eye-lid at the task ahead. It did not take long before the site was beginning to look as though it had a new lease of life. You can see from the photographs of a High House open day, just how well they were attended and how well they were received by all.

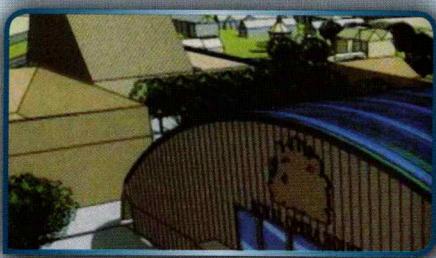
Yet this was not the last surprise, twist or turn in the running story of High House.

The Royal Opera House were looking for a new home to locate their production facilities, where the hard work of making the scenery and backdrops for the ballets and operas at Covent Garden are created.

Several sites were shown to them in Thurrock but nothing jumped out at them, until they were shown High House. They loved the site and its historical backdrop, and they realised that it would make a sensational front for their production park and their outreach project into the community. You see, they want very much to be part of the community and not just a business that has simply been dropped into the area, and they envisage having workshops and apprenticeships so that they can actually employ from the local workforce.

What the Royal Opera House is envisaging is a Production Park with several different elements. There shall be the main scene production building, with various small workshops to the north of the site where smaller support companies can be close to the ROH's site. The last part of the Production Park will be occupied by the National Skills Academy, which will provide courses in backstage technical, promotion and management skills. This

leaves the community with the exciting prospect of having a facility which teaches specific skills that local people can benefit from.



Designers have been busy making the most of the site, creating a space that is organised and clear with the intent of making a positive lasting legacy for Purfleet, Thurrock, and the local cultural identity as well as for the local workforce. What they have produced is an exciting, modern and fresh development that will hopefully be a structure that will stand for many years and provide much needed jobs and training for Purfleet and for Thurrock.

The building has been designed so

that local residents and visiting schools can see into the building and watch the activity without disturbing the ROH workers inside. This is a unique feature, and will open up the inner workings of the Production Park, helping to make the ROH's main building not just another mysterious building in the borough but an open and equal partner in Purfleet.

The development of the ROH Production Park and the restoration of High House is a partnership between the Royal Opera

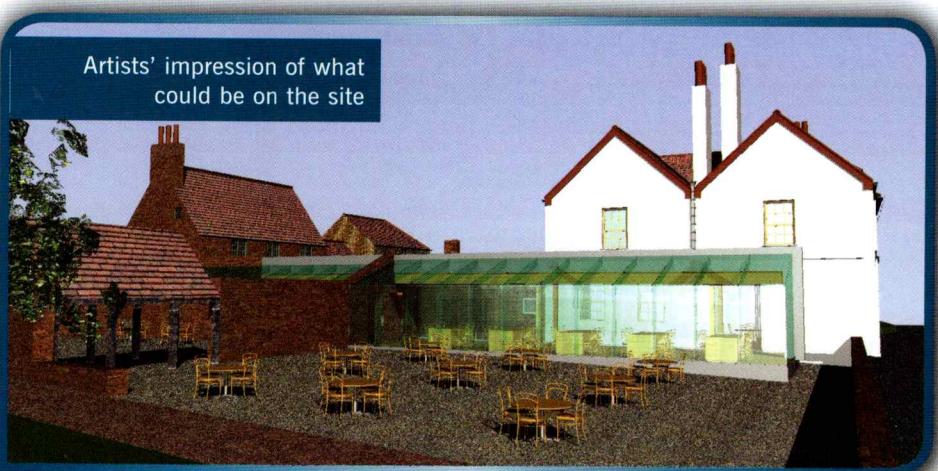
House, the Arts Council England, the East of England Development Agency, Thurrock Council, the Thurrock Thames Gateway Development Corporation and the Creative and Cultural Skills Sector Skills Council. All of these partners are working together to try and bring the ROH and Thurrock closer together.

Further designs have been floated about what the set of historical buildings that make up High House will look like. These buildings will be restored to their former glory and brought back into everyday use. The artist's impression of the site is of the café to the west of the house itself, and shows open air seating which will hopefully be used in the summer, by the community and the ROH workforce. The idea is for ingredients in the café's meals to be grown in part of the walled garden, with the rest of the walled garden given over to recreation, picnic as well as for ROH performances to the local community.

Interesting times are ahead for High House and for Purfleet alike, so be sure to look out for any further updates about the project in the coming weeks and months.

If you would like to become involved in helping High House be all that it can be then please email the committee on highhousepurfleet@hotmail.co.uk or telephone Thurrock Play Network on 01375 389876.

Thanks to all of you who continue to spend so much time, sweat and energy turning the dream of High House into a reality.





Thames Board Mills - 1930 to 1936

By Doris Pearl (nee Richardson)

On leaving school at 14 I had done some domestic work. I started work at TBM in 1930, not long before I turned 16. At first I was stacking up big pieces of cardboard. You were not allowed to operate any of the machines until you were 16. At first I worked 8am till 5pm.

Once I turned 16 I started working on the machines, and also started shift work. You were only able to do this when you were 16 as well. I was on 'D' shift. You either worked 6 am to 1pm, or 1pm till 10pm. We worked Mondays to Fridays.

I remember being part of a team of 4 women, and being put on the Robbs Machines and as the sheets came out of the machine you had to flip them over out of the

way of the next sheets coming through. The machines could probably deal with sheets about 10 foot wide, that's why we needed to work as a team.

Sometimes I was placed on a stitching machine - this was a bit easier as you could sit down, and it was less noisy. I wasn't really tall enough for the Slotters - which made the biggest sheets, as I couldn't move them far enough away from the machines itself.

I was paid 16 shillings a week. Best part of this, 14 shillings, was given straightaway to my mother. When my sister, Betty, who also worked at TBM, and I got home from the 1pm finish, we had to lend a hand with housework and looking after our younger brothers and sisters.

The factory was always noisy, particularly next to the Throttles, but quite clean. There

always seemed to be people sweeping up the shavings.

We were issued with 2 blue overalls and hats each year. We had to wash them ourselves.

There was a canteen which did cooked breakfasts, but these had to be ordered.

There were some gardens where we could take our tea in the good weather.

There was a nurse on duty most of the time.

I remember that one of the overseers was Jimmy Holmes. I worked with Doll Smith for a lot of the time I was there. Kitty Sutton, who lived in Hathaway Road was there and Flo Rate. Other people were sisters Daisy and Pansy Humphries and Glad Trencher.

I left when I married in 1936.

The Heritage Centre
Tel: 01708 890874



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The Royal Hotel

High Street, London Road, Purfleet, RM19 1QA.

The Royal Hotel boasts a superb riverside location, with terraces and gardens overlooking the Thames and parts of the hotel are Grade II listed building dating back to the 16th Century.

The Royal Hotel has 30 rooms, of which 21 have river views, a function room available for parties, weddings, christenings and business meetings.

The Restaurant has a fantastic '2 for £10' offer which is available all day every day. Bookings are taken for large dining parties.

Hotel Prices (Room Only)

Monday to Thursday - £55.00

Friday to Sunday - £45.00





walking the way to health

Walking the Way to Health' is a national initiative from the British Heart Foundation and the Countryside Agency and here in Thurrock we have launched our very own Walking Scheme.

So if you hardly leave your front door? Know walking is good for you but don't get round to it? Want to walk but get bored doing it on your own? Have health problems & difficulty moving around? Then why not come join us on one of our FREE walks.

The walk last about 60 minutes so you can fit them in around your lifestyle and can have the added bonus of improving your health in all sorts of ways!

**Walking just one mile can burn up
at least 100 kcal**

Thursdays at 12.15pm

RSPB New Tank Hill Road, Purfleet

Meet at the main centre

You don't need to book – just come along on the day. The walks take place in the rain or shine so whatever the weather wrap up well.

If it's your first time attending a walk, please arrive 20 minutes early to complete paperwork

For more information please call 01708 805089

How well do YOU know Thurrock?



"A terrific mix of interesting history plus exciting future"

Where we live, work, enjoy our leisure pursuits and bring up our families is important to all of us.

If you want to find out more about what is happening in Thurrock local guides, Geoff Vaughan and Malcolm Knight, will share their experiences of growing up and living in the area and show you where the Development Corporation intends to make a difference as a part of one of the Development Corporation's free tours.

Here is just some of the feedback from local residents who have been on a tour:

"I really enjoyed the day and have told my friends and family how good it was"

"We learnt quite a lot about the new Thames Gateway and I think that Thurrock will benefit quite a lot if all the projects go ahead"

"I found the tour very interesting with the guides knowledge of local history and passion for the regeneration of Thurrock - I can see the vision."

**If you'd like to take a free tour
please call Jackie on 01708 895 440.
Single or group bookings are welcome.**

Enjoy what nature has to offer on your doorstep at RSPB Rainham Marshes. There's something for everyone!



If you're looking for a day out with a difference, then why not explore the nature reserve at Rainham Marshes on the outskirts of Purfleet. There is so much to see and do for all ages. Visit the striking multi-award winning visitor centre located just off New Tank Hill Road. Here you can enjoy panoramic views while sampling the delicious freshly prepared food as well as popping into the shop for both bird care and gift ideas.

The reserve is an area of ancient grazing marshland of which there is very little left in the country, let alone so close to the London.

Due to its use by the MoD for 100 years, the area has remained undeveloped as with much of the surrounding area. Around the reserve you will find interesting and sometimes rare bird species along with various insects, reptiles and mammals.

Venture onto the reserve to access the network of nature trails that allow you to get really close to nature no matter your age, ability or knowledge. A visit to the new adventure play area is a must for families with exciting equipment made from sustainable materials. As the reserve has been open for just two years, new developments are regularly springing up such a new education area and viewing platforms or hides, so look out for what's new in the future.

A full range of regular and special events are scheduled to help you enjoy the outdoors and find out more about the reserve. There will surely be something for everyone to enjoy!

Cyclists or visitors on foot can visit us by using the riverside path that links Purfleet to Rainham, which is signposted from Purfleet station. If travelling by car, the reserve is located off New Tank Hill Road (A1090) in Purfleet, which is just off the A1306 between Rainham and Lakeside. This is accessible from the Aveley, Wennington and Purfleet junction off the A13 and J30/31 of the M25.

The reserve is open daily between 9.30 am and 5 pm during the summer months and 4.30 pm during the winter months. RSPB members and residents of Thurrock and Havering visit for free, otherwise fees are £2.50 for adults, £1 for children and £7 for a family of two adults and up to four children. Call 01708 899840 or visit www.rspb.org.uk/rainham for more information.



Regeneration and the Purfleet Garrison Estate: Mardyke Bridge

Good news for the residents of the Garrison Estate. Funding has been secured for a cycle/pedestrian bridge, which crosses the Mardyke on the river side of the Sluice.

The Project heralds excellent partnership working between the Council, Sustrans, the RSPB and Veolia all of whom have contributed financially to make this scheme work.

The Bridge will allow residents of Purfleet greater access to the RSPB reserve and open up the estate as a key plank in the regeneration of the area.

Residents will be further engaged in the naming of the bridge together with a community-based artwork initiative to decorate the Bridge once it is built.

If you would like to get involved or would like further information please contact ash@commissionseast.org.uk or telephone 01223 356882

Garrison Estate Inspections

Come along and have your say...

Your estate officer and caretakers walk around the estate to see how clean and tidy it is and take note of any other environmental issues, such as abandoned cars, any repairs needed or improvements that could be made in the future. You're welcome to attend an inspection, just turn up on the day and take part.

Marine & River Court
every 1st Thursday of the month

Chieftan Drive & Comet Close
every 4th Thursday of the month

For all inspections meet outside the Local Office at 1.30pm

For further information, please contact the Local Office on:
01708 864898



Anti Social Behaviour

Thurrock Council take any form of Anti-Social Behaviour seriously. In the last two years the Local Housing Office in Purfleet, has worked together with the Neighbourhood Police, the Anti-Social Behaviour Team, the Be Smart Team and have achieved some positive results.

Due to the Data Protection Act and privacy laws we are not always allowed to publish names and action taken. But here are a few examples of positive results.

In the last year the Council and the Police have identified and taken action against three taggers that live in the Purfleet area. Two of these taggers were charged with Criminal damage to Council Property and were prosecuted. The other one is still being investigated, with a view to prosecution.

Lead had also been stolen from the Garrison Estate and again, the thieves were identified by a witness. These thieves were taken to court and were prosecuted with the council receiving compensation to repair the damage caused.

Another example was a broken pane of glass smashed on one of the security doors, the person responsible was arrested by Police at the scene, and later charged for causing criminal damage to Council property. The council were awarded compensation for damage caused.

There have been many more positive results that have been achieved recently along with numerous success stories of neighbour nuisance where we have worked with tenants to solve problems, some we have been able to clear up quickly, others have taken more time to resolve.

Although we take Anti-Social Behaviour very seriously, we aim to try and resolve the issues in a painless way as possible. Eviction from Council Properties is always a last resort, but we will carry out this if all other courses of action have failed.

If a Council Tenant loses their property due to Anti-Social Behaviour they are not permitted to join Thurrock's Housing Register for 5 years. Even if that person contacts another authority to join their housing register they can be denied because of their history of Anti-Social Behaviour.

Further information on Anti-Social Behaviour can be found on our website at www.thurrock.gov.uk/housing



Blooming Success

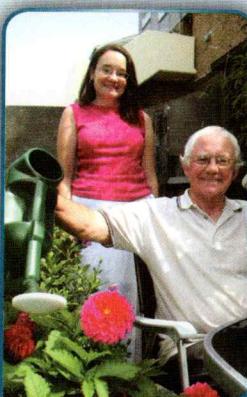
This year saw the Garrison Estate's first annual Garden and Balcony competition. The Housing Department and Tenant Participation Team organised the event to brighten up the Estate. Around 20 residents entered the competition. Independent Judges from Thurrock Council and the Thurrock Thames Gateway Development Corporation judged the gardens and balconies.

Winners of the best garden were Mr and Mrs Clough from Chieftan Drive, who won a garden furniture set. Runner up was Mr and Mrs Gosling of Rapier Close. Winner of the best balcony was Allison Kavanagh of River Court and the runner-up was Ms L Pamintuan, who both won B&Q gift vouchers.

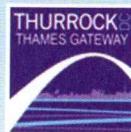
There was another prize for best use of a small space, which went to Ms Hare of River Court.

A prize giving ceremony was held at Mulberry Drive Sheltered Complex on Thursday (14 August) where a cream tea was served.

Cllr Tunde Ojetola, Thurrock Council's Cabinet member for Housing said: "The competition, the first of its kind here, was a great success and I'm confident it is likely to become an annual event."



Community Fund - Here to Help You



Since its launch in February 2007, the Thurrock Thames Gateway Development Corporation Community Fund, has helped over 70 local community groups to complete projects as diverse as refurbishing community halls to staging major events.

The Purfleet Heritage and Military Centre recently celebrated the 90th anniversary of the Royal Airforce after it received a grant of £10,000 to stage the two-day event. This celebrated the RAF's achievements in both wartime and peacetime, and featured fly-overs by vintage RAF planes and live 1940s music by the Breton Entertainers dressed in period costume.

In addition to this, Purfleet residents have benefited from a £20,000 grant to St Stephen's Church Hall, to enable the upgrade of its existing facilities to be completed. The wide range of activities held in the Hall, including toddlers groups, brownies, public consultation, Community Forum and other community meetings, now enjoy the new facilities which include a brand new kitchen, a disabled toilet, children's toilet and baby change facilities.

As the fund moves ever closer to the half million pounds mark the Development Corporation is encouraging more groups to apply for funding. If you have a project and would like to be considered for a grant from the Community Fund, please contact Jean Angus, Community Development and Funding Officer, on 01708 895 400 or email communityfund@thurrocktgdc.org.uk.



Free Home Fire Safety Checks

Did you know that you can invite Thurrock firefighters into your home to ensure that you are as "fire safe" as possible? Crews from the local stations are able to offer professional advice on home fire safety and if necessary fit free smoke alarms with 10 year batteries. The fire service is doing all that it can to ensure as many homes as possible have correctly fitted and maintained smoke alarms, and that all the families know what to do in the event of a fire. In the last three years over 2000 Thurrock households have benefited from this service. For further details on this service please telephone the Community Fire Safety team at 01375 376628 or call in at your local fire station.

Smoke alarms



Smoke alarms do not prevent fires happening but they do provide vital time to escape. It is important that smoke alarms are fitted on each floor of your home, ideally on the hallway or landing ceilings. Don't put smoke alarms in the kitchen where it can be set off accidentally. Once a week test the battery by pressing the test button until the alarm sounds. Once a year change the battery (unless it's a 10 year alarm). Twice a year, open the case and gently vacuum the inside to remove dust from the sensors if it doesn't open vacuum through the holes.

The Children's Centre



West Thurrock, South Stifford and Purfleet on Thames



The 'all new' Purfleet Children's Centre – There's something for everyone!

Purfleet Children's Centre has recently undergone refurbishment to improve the facilities for the community. The whole centre has been decorated inside and out, but has also undergone other changes too!

For those that aren't familiar with what a Children's Centre is, here are some simple facts for you,

- Children's Centres are for children under five years old and their families, where services and information are available (but if you're beyond this age we'd like to hear from you, as you might be able to read stories to children, show how to be resourceful with what's in the fridge/larder, or to help others learn how to knit a hat for their child????).
- A place to access early education and childcare - at Purfleet we have strong links with Woodlands Pre-School and Nursery.
- Support for parents – this includes advice on parenting, information on local childcare options and access to specialist services for children and families (e.g. Speech and Language).
- Child and family health services – this ranges from health screening, health visitor and midwifery services to breast-feeding support.
- Outreach services – you might be new to the area, so coming into the centre would be a good start to know more about your community; come meet others!
- Support for childminders – this is via a quality-assured, co-ordinated network of childminders.
- Activities for parents/carers and children – these range from creative activities (gluing, sticking and colouring) to some physical fun with West Ham United (and you don't have to be a football fan either!). We've also recently joined the RSPB at Rainham Marshes to offer some outside and indoor fun, discovery and learning.
- Advice on training and employment opportunities – you can find out more about being a life-long learner or how to return to employment with Jobcentre Plus or the 'Wishes' programme.

There's much more to find out about the centre, so why not pop in sometime soon.

Purfleet Children's Centre, Centurion Way (off Chieftan Drive), Purfleet-On-Thames

CONTACT 01708 863739