



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 26th May 2026

Venue: St Stephen's Church Hall, London Road, Purfleet-on-Thames RM19 1QD

Time: 19:30

1. Welcome and Apologies

Everyone was informed that an audio recording of the meeting was being made. Apologies had been received from Lee Watson and Adrian Hilsum.

2. Agree Previous Minutes 31st March 2026

Minutes of 31st March were agreed.

3. Guest Speaker:

Rebecca Coleman – SEC Newgate – Google Data Centre

The proposed data centre is still going through the planning process, and the Forum will be kept updated with any progress.

Google, in consultation with Natural England and the council, is looking at developing the western part of the site to enable translocation of a rare and protected plant in addition to possibly removing it from the site.

Energy for the data centre will be via a National Grid connection into the motorway and Google has an agreement to receive a specific amount of energy.

Michael Blake - Community Investment Manager (for residents and community benefit)

Grants can only be made to organisations registered with the Charity Commission; other organisations should contact the Essex Community Foundation regarding possible funding. Google wants to be visible so activity is under way before planning consent has been granted, and activity will continue way after the granting of consent.

A partnership has been established with the Essex Community Foundation, and the aim is to have a local partnership with Lewis Hamilton's charity; there has been engagement with CVS and Back Story, and they are looking at how they can work with The Pantry.

Funding for Christmas lights can either be directly through community investment if the Forum is Charity Commission registered, or alternatively Google employees could choose to undertake match funding.

Google Data Centre Parent Zone

Google is rolling out Parent Zone, a UK wide programme consisting of three free online safety internet training sessions for schools; 25 sessions have taken place in Thurrock. Requests were received for adults to receive training, which Vicki will be giving this evening.

Vicki Shotbolt (Founder and CEO of Parent Zone):

The aim is for children not to simply be safe online but also to flourish and perhaps progress to a career in technology. Three basic rules for digital parenting were presented:

1. Set good rules – clear, consistent and open, and giving consideration to functionality.



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2. Using tools – research them; user empowerment tools enable boundaries to be set from routers to devices to apps.
3. Communication – remain calm, reassure, be honest.

Resources are available at parentzone.org.uk/parents and upskilling of local people is available via Citizens Advice, with the Google AI certificate course taking 10-12 hours to complete.

4. Matters Arising and Updates

Crime Figures

The vice-chair shared March crime figures for the area, obtained from Essex Police's website.

Footpath on The Green

£106 money was used to fund the installation of the footpath.

The standard of the footpath's finish has been raised with the council along with the fact that asphalt was laid instead of the agreed hogging.

A request has been made for the footpath to be overlaid with hogging.

Multi-Generational Play/Gym Equipment

The council has put this out to tender again but not included the three companies the Forum originally obtained quotes from, despite them being a preferred supplier to the council.

CCTV to cover the equipment and link to the council's system was originally estimated to cost £18,000 but this figure has now been downgraded to circa £5,000.

Any left-over monies will be spent on additional benches and picnic tables and residents were assured that the Forum are keeping a close eye on the situation.

Councillor Updates

Our recently elected councillors for the new Ward of Purfleet-on-Thames were introduced, being Cllr Aaron Green (Labour) and Cllr Michelle Heal (Reform UK).

Cllr Green can be contacted at a.green@thurrock.gov.uk and he provided the following updates:

Regeneration

A project board, which meets weekly, has been set up to manage the next steps and is co-chaired by Claire Demmel and Dawn Calvert.

It also includes Ash Baldwin, Helen Nicol and Mark Bradbury.

Terms of reference have been drafted and commented on with the aim of agreeing them at the next meeting.

The board has approved the appointment of KPMG Legal to review the legality of appointing MUSE (supported by ECF) via direct award using the Pagabo Framework and are awaiting a programme for completing that work.

The ECF board has noted the Cabinet decision and advised they will progress negotiations once the council has satisfied itself on the previous point.

Draft briefs have been shared for the appointment of legal advisors to progress the negotiations on the Development Agreement and development advisors to address the points around viability and financial risk and Homes England funding with comments on these being discussed at the next meeting.

The board has also asked for a project forward plan and risk register to be prepared.

Purfleet-on-Thames.org
email chair.potcf@thurrockforums.org



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Once the briefs are finalised the board aim to agree a timetable for bringing a decision back to Cabinet.

Cllr Green will enquire whether the Forum can become a member of the project board.

C2C

Cllr Green has emailed the company regarding the length of time the barriers remain down and is awaiting an update.

Church House Site

Planning Enforcement officers have been asked to attend the site and an update is awaited.

Cllr Green is monitoring the situation and will speak further with Enforcement.

Cllr Heal said she is here to help and asked residents to reach out and email her with their concerns: michelle.heal@thurrock.gov.uk

When asked if Reform support the regeneration Cllr Heal replied that the area needs regenerating and she will push for this, at the same time acknowledging that currently she does not know a lot about the project.

Cllr Heal said she will follow up on concerns over the rumour of travellers taking over the Church House site, particularly as hard core has been laid across the site.

A resident reported they had spoken to the landowner who told them 6 houses were being built, and of the intention to move his entire family onto the site.

5. AOB

How Technology Can Enhance Photos

A presentation of historic local black and white photos coloured by AI was given, bringing the pictures to life and making additional details visible.

Heritage Centre

A discussion around funding for small museums had taken place with MP Jen Craft, and at the end of March the subject was raised in Parliament which included a debate on funding small museums.

Upcoming events:

Remembering Thames Board Mills - Sunday 9th August 10.30am-3pm

Military Walk - Sunday 30th August 11am-1pm

Purfleet Pantry

Community fun day - 14th August 12pm-3pm

The chair asked Forum committee members to help Cllr Green run a BBQ at the event.

The chair then proceeded to ask the committee members in attendance if they agreed to the Forum paying for the meat for the BBQ, with any and all profit made from the sale of the BBQ food going to the Forum.

No objection to the proposal to pay for the meat was raised, however the chair was asked what the proposed spend figure was.

Claire Asplin felt that the suggested maximum spend of £500 was too much and as this was a public meeting there was no opportunity for the committee to hold a discussion. Therefore a maximum spend figure has yet to be agreed by the committee.



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T100 Festival Events

Thurrock Through a Bee's Eyes - Thursday 28 May, 1–3pm

Purfleet Poems in the Garden with Rachel Morgan - Saturday 30 May, 11am–4pm

The Amazing Estuary Walking Show with Nigel Munson - Purfleet-on-Thames to Rainham Marshes - Sunday 31 May, 3–5pm

Meandering Monday Walk with Move to Thrive - Monday 1 June, 10am–12pm

New Footpath

It was asked if a temporary path can be made from Vineyard Way to the station with London Road being so narrow. Cllr Green will raise this with Mark Bradbury.

Christmas Lights

The Forum have received a quote for 32 motifs, all the same design at £4949 including VAT. In addition to the above cost there is now a non-refundable fee of £150 to obtain council permission to erect the lights.

Michael Blake will see what he can do about Google contributing towards the cost.

Bollards

Bollards have been requested at The Royal's end of the green to discourage quad bikes.

Any ideas as to how to improve the locale were requested and can be sent to chair.potcf@thurrockforums.org

6. Next Meeting

19:30 on Tuesday 28th July 2026

Speaker - Peter Wright, Head of Highways