

See what we have done: Purfleet Heritage Centre, 2nd March 2025

Good morning, everyone and thank you for coming today.

I would like to begin by taking a moment to remember Alan Gosling who sadly passed away a few days ago. I would like to offer my condolences to Sue and all those with fond memories of Alan. He was here to welcome me on every visit, and it is hard to think of Purfleet Heritage Centre without thinking of him. He would be delighted to see so many of you here today.

We are here to celebrate the soft opening of the Centre following recent refurbishments that have taken place. These are part of a two year make-over programme working towards a Grand Re-opening on 1st March 2026. The museum has a dedicated group of volunteers without whom Purfleet Heritage Centre wouldn't be able to exist. These same volunteers have been involved in the refurbishments.

Purfleet Heritage and Military Centre is a gem in Thurrock's long and varied history. The former Royal Gunpowder Magazine now has Grade 1 listing. This is a registered Charity, it has over 50 members and an ever growing group of volunteers. Many have been involved since the museum's inception in 1994 and they have been a vital part of the Heritage Centre's creation, development and growth.

My very first engagement as Mayor was here receiving a donation of part of a Zeppelin brought down in the Thames during WW1 . As with every other visit I was welcomed and given the opportunity to explore the fantastic Large range of artefacts from military and social history for which the Centre acts as custodian. Volunteers were always here to answer my questions and provide further insight into the past. I have also had the honour of being asked to write a forward for the Visitors' Guidebook. Also, I'd just like to say the coffee is always good.

I would like to finish by thanking all the volunteers, including Dave and Trevor and by thanking you for coming today.