

Welcome to the March 2026 edition of Rostrum
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VILLAGE DIARY

March

- 1** **Footpaths Walk** – 2pm - outside Hall
- 1** **Time to Remember** – 2.30pm – Wateringbury Church
- 3** **Parish Council Meeting** - 7.30pm – Hall Upper Room
- 6** **Footpaths Walk** – 10am - outside Hall
- 6** **Peter Pan** pantomime – 7 for 7.30pm –Hall
- 7** **Peter Pan** - matinee – 1.30 for 2 pm – Hall
- 7** **Peter Pan** – evening - 7 for 7.30 pm – Hall
- 11** **WI - meeting** – 7.30-9.30pm – Hal
- 13** **CAMEO Coffee Morning** – 10.30-11.30am – Hall Back room
- 15** **Wateringbury Village Market** – 10am-1pm – Hall
- 18** **Flower Club** – M. Matharu – ‘Floral Fiesta’ - 7pm - Nettlestead Hall
- 18** **Cuppa with a Copper** PC Dan – 10-11am – Wateringbury Hotel
- 18** **History Society** – ‘The Roaring 20s’ talk – 7.40 for 8pm – Hall

April

- 5** **Footpaths Walk** – 2.30pm - outside Hall
- 7** **Parish Council Meeting** - 7.30pm – Hall Upper Room
- 8** **WI - meeting** - 7.30-9.30pm – Hall
- 13** **CAMEO Coffee Morning** – 10.30am – Hall Back Room
- 15** **History Society** – ‘What the Victorians did for us’– 7.40 for 8pm – Hall
- 15** **Flower Club** – ‘Design in a shoe’ workshop - 7pm - Nettlestead Hall
- 19** **Wateringbury Village Market** – 10am -1pm – Hall

VILLAGE FETE SUNDAY 7TH JUNE AT THE PLAYING FIELDS

CAMEO COFFEE MORNING - BACK ROOM OF VILLAGE HALL 13th March – 10.30am-11.30am

Come And Meet Each Other and enjoy Free Coffee and Cake
The event is sponsored by the Parish Council to provide an
opportunity to get to know others from the village. **Second
Friday of each month.**
Make a note in your diary.

Kent Acting Studio continues to meet each Saturday morning
in the Village Hall. Their website is www.kentactingstudio.co.uk

VILLAGE PEOPLE *Please let us have your news and tributes
by 17th March for our April edition of Rostrum. Entries are
free.*
Email: rostrum2@hotmail.com

Belated Birthday Greetings to **Sarah Hudson** who recently
celebrated a milestone birthday.

New Grandson Arrival Congratulations to Alison and

Brian Tibbals on the arrival of Luca Maximillion in Pembury Hospital and to proud parents David and Natacha Tibbals who live in East Peckham.

Golden Wedding Congratulation to Barry and Hilary Fisher who were married on 20th March 1976 at St Martin's Church Acrise, near Hawkinge. They moved to Watringbury not long after. Hilary has been church organist for over 40 years.

New Throw Lines Bring Lifesaving Support to the Medway

The Environment Agency, in partnership with Kent Fire and Rescue, have installed 10 brightly coloured throw lines at key locations along the river. These rescue aids are designed for quick and easy use in emergencies where someone is in difficulty in the water.

This move is part of a broader campaign to reduce drowning risks and promote safer enjoyment of the river. The throw lines replace older life rings, which were often vandalised or removed - posing serious safety hazards. Unlike the old equipment, the new throw lines are tamper-resistant and securely fixed, ensuring they're available when needed to save lives.

How to Use a Throw Line

A throw line is a buoyant rope stored in a bag, designed to help someone in trouble without putting the rescuer at risk.

Call 999 immediately and give your location, as shown on the board.

1. Stand in a stable position on the riverbank or dock. Hold the rope's end firmly and throw the bag underarm or sidearm, aiming past the person so the rope reaches them.
2. Once they grab the rope, instruct them to hold tight and lie on their back to stay afloat.
3. Carefully pull them to safety, avoiding being pulled in yourself.

Never jump in after someone in distress.

Always call emergency services and ask for the fire service in any water rescue situation. These throw lines could make the difference between life and death - knowing how to use them is vital.

Faith Goddings, Environment Agency

LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

'The Roaring 20s' is the topic of Delia Taylor's talk to the Society on **Wednesday 18th March**. A trip into an era of so many happy times at a time of hardship but much camaraderie.

On **15th April** Ian Bevan's topic will be 'What the Victorians did for us'. Both talks are in the Village Hall and start at 8pm with free tea or coffee on offer from 7.40pm. Visitors are very welcome to come along at a cost of £7 an evening.

The Members' Annual Wine and Cheese evening will be on **Wednesday 20th May** at a member's home. This is a ticket only event and tickets, which cost £7, will be on sale at our March and April meetings. *Christine Byron*

WATERINGBURY FLOWER CLUB

After concluding our AGM business at our February meeting, we had a very interesting evening making designs depicting the Valentine's theme with the colour Red. The committee led the workshop and inspired us with modern and traditional designs and a few contemporary. What a talented bunch they are.

See our photos on Facebook, and think about having a try yourself. Come along and see if the club is for you, you will be made very welcome. Friendship through Flowers.

On the **18th March** we have one of Kent's 2025 newly qualified demonstrators, Marion Matharu from Ashford, with her exciting 'Floral Fiesta', followed by our popular club competition with a similar title.

On the **15th April** we have our popular in-house workshop entitled 'A design in a shoe'. Meetings start at 7 for 7.45pm at Nettlestead Village Hall. Refreshments provided.
Jean Schofield President WFC

1ST WATERINGBURY BROWNIES

We have spaces available for an immediate start in the Brownie Unit - we meet on Thursday evenings in Wateringbury, and would welcome any girls from the age of 7 to 10.

The Brownies (and Leaders) enjoy a wide variety of activities throughout the year, from canoeing, climbing, walks, picnics, outdoor games to cooking, crafts, themed evenings and working towards badges. We take part in community activities such as the village fete, attend the Wateringbury Players panto and join the Remembrance parade. The Brownies have a chance to try new things whilst making new friends and most importantly having fun!

We are happy to offer taster sessions.

To contact the leaders, please

email 1stwateringburybrownies@gmail.com Carolyn (Tawny Owl) and Jane (Snowy Owl)

MATT BOUGHTON – TMBC BOROUGH COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

February at both Kent County Council and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council (TMBC) is always dominated by setting the Budget for the coming financial year. We both have numerous meetings determining where to prioritise funding, balancing what a Council has to do, against what a Council would like to do.

This year has been no different. But the financial backdrop for both Councils has got harder. For TMBC especially, that has been trickier than usual.

There are essentially three ways in which Councils are funded:

- 1) Council Tax.
- 2) Fees and charges – including parking income, garden waste subscriptions or licensing fees.
- 3) The Local Government Finance Settlement.

The Local Government Finance Settlement is the amount of money the Government gives to councils to help balance its Budget. The Government assumes councils raise council tax by the maximum permitted and then determines a 'Core Spending Power'. Government support is then the gap between council tax income and the Core Spending Power.

The particular problem for TMBC is that the Government has reduced its Core Spending Power from £27.3m to £22.3m for the coming year. It works out at a 15% reduction. This scale of reduction is the second largest in the whole country. Only Harborough in Leicestershire comes off worse.

Why has this happened? Put simply, the Government has conducted a 'Fair Funding Review' which gives greater Government support to Councils in financial difficulty. TMBC is one of only a handful of local Councils in the country without any debt at all. It means every penny you pay TMBC in council tax is spent on services we all benefit from. Yet the Fair Funding Review means we are being penalised for years of strong financial management.

This isn't even the tip of the iceberg. There are also reductions to grants Government gives councils such as Business Rates indexation and Homelessness Support Grant. The services funded from these grants can only continue with money reallocated from elsewhere.

It has a number of immediate consequences. TMBC's share of council tax is proposed to increase by the maximum permitted, to plug as much of this gap as possible. The other way councils receive income, fees and charges, will need to be considered. Whilst parking charges will remain frozen, other fees will increase – such as street naming and numbering charges.

The world of Council finances is extremely complicated and not easy to understand. Unfortunately, much of it is dependent on the Government and, as we are finding, if a Government changes national policy, it can have a significant impact on the amount of money available for local services.

*Matt Boughton Leader, Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council
Councillor for East Peckham, West Peckham, Mereworth and Wateringbury*

WATERINGBURY FOOTPATHS GROUP

In February we had damp, grey and muddy walks, but we luckily dodged the worst of the rain. Our Sunday walk was brightened by four new walkers spanning three generations from one family, two of whom have recently moved to Wateringbury. Our route showed them that it's possible to walk to Kings Hill on public footpaths without going along busy roads. Rostrum is a great way for people recently moved to the village to meet local people and explore new places.

It had been a very wet couple of months, but there were signs of spring, such as daffodils and narcissi in verges. We just need to be dressed for the conditions: footwear with a good grip; a waterproof coat; and some of us like to use a walking stick or pole if we are concerned about slipping. Just getting out in the fresh air and having some exercise always lifts my spirits. You are very welcome to join our sociable group walks. We will be leaving the village hall at:

2.00pm on **Sunday 1st March**

10.00am on **Friday 6th March**

2.30pm on **Sunday 5th April** (note later start time as by then we'll have lighter evenings)

Please contact me if you want more information and to be kept updated. We have a WhatsApp group for me to send reminders and updates.

Lisa Dean 07759 539032

WATERINGBURY SOCIAL CLUB

As we are well into 2026 the Wateringbury Social Club (WSC) offers very competitive bar prices and a range of activities and events:

- Sky Sport Entertainment (on our large TV)
- Snooker
- Pool
- Darts.

Throughout the months we hold regular quizzes (including speed quiz) and bingo, all within a welcoming atmosphere. We always welcome new members with reductions for OAPs and students. The WSC is open:

Wednesday to Thursday 7pm-11pm

Friday 5pm-11pm,

Saturday 4:30pm-11pm

Sunday 12pm-7pm.

If you haven't been to the club yet, do come along and see what you are missing. Apologies, but our comedy night that was advertised in last month's Rostrum, has now SOLD OUT.

STILL DESPERATELY NEEDED FOR WAR TORN UKRAINE

Animal food and medication, even partly used, animal coats, beds, toys, etc. Warm clothes - knitted gloves, hats, baby clothes. Clothes and boots for soldiers. Utensils, human medication, toiletries and walking aids. Clean, complete toys and puzzles. Please put your name and telephone number in bags. Sue 07875 262659

GARDENING FOR WILDLIFE

Frogs and toads are now on the move, coming out of hibernation and returning to the pond where they spawned. Some ponds have already got spawn in them and the tadpoles will hatch in around 14 days depending on the temperature. All amphibians eat insects, slugs and snails so are a gardener's friend. Once the weather warms up, they will leave the water and live on land in damp dark places, so even if you haven't got a pond, you can encourage them by providing piles of stones, logs or rocks in corners of your garden.

Birds are also preparing to reproduce, so it's best to avoid pruning hedges, trees and shrubs now as this might disturb nest building. Robins are usually the first songbirds to begin and create a small, neat, mossy cup often surrounded by dry leaves. Blackbirds will start a little later and their nests incorporate mud and are often sited in evergreen shrubs such as ivy. You can help them by putting out bundles of small twigs and moss for them to collect and in the past, it has been suggested that you could also offer cat and dog hair. However, this is no longer recommended as it may have been treated with insect repellent and this can harm the birds.

This is a good time of year to plant bare rooted trees (much cheaper than in pots!) and although native species are best for our wildlife, any tree is a welcome addition to a garden.

Pauline Knutton

WI Wateringbury WI meets on Second Wednesday of every month at the Village Hall 7.30pm to 9.30pm.

We had a lovely meeting in February. Our speaker for the evening was Carol M Creasey. She entertained us with some of the trials and the joy of bringing up a severely autistic son in the 1970s. By sheer determination and love he was able to live a relatively normal life. Carol was inspired to write about her family's life journey which also led her to write some novels set around the Kent coast. We were lucky enough to be able to purchase some of Carol's books which she also signed for us.

During the Winter months we have been holding a series of craft workshops. In January we did painting on ceramics with Lois Constable who you can regularly find at the Village Market. Lois returned our bowls to us all glazed and fired. You can see our finished bowls on Wateringbury and Nettlestead residents Facebook page.

March will bring us Jo Golding, a holistic therapist. Jo is coming to explain to us the benefits of Reflexology and also Auricular Acupuncture on the body. Mindfulness and holistic treatments are proven to benefit us all. We don't always know where to go for help but Jo is on hand to guide us through and will lead us to a future of wellbeing. Come along and see where it will take you.

Visitors welcome £3, refreshments £1, raffle £1.

Sharon Goshawk President [Email](mailto:Wateringbury@wkwfi.org.uk)
Wateringbury@wkwfi.org.uk

WATERINGBURY SCOUT GROUP

As the weather starts to improve over the next few months you will see our young people out and about in the village, including our Scouts trying to “match the picture”, Cubs practicing road safety on a hike and our Beavers playing Easter games at the recreation ground.

Our Scouts are working towards their fundraising badge and had a stall at the Christmas fayres at Lower Grange Farm and the village market. They raised almost £300 towards replacing group equipment through hard work and some cheeky smiles. Look out for possible cake sales, quiz nights and more this year. They are also trying out karaoke and fencing this term and learning about disabilities and solving difficulties that may make everyday activities more complex. We are joining in The Great Tommy Sleepout in March to raise funds for our veterans.

Beavers have also got lots of fun to have with unusual UK traditions, completing their safety badge, a sleepover (although sleep always seems optional!), growing their own snacks and finishing with lots of fun and Easter games.

The Cubs will be joining other local Cubs on a sleepover at a soft play centre, cue a lot of excited children having a blast!

If any of these sound exciting to you as an adult, why don't you come down and see what we do. Please contact me at:

Glv@wateringbury-scouts.org.uk

WATERINGBURY GUIDES

One of the new guide interest badges is *Thrift* so we spent an evening repurposing existing clothing to make something new that we could wear. Our finished efforts were paraded on the catwalk and we had great fun. We celebrated Burns Night with a Scottish quiz and offered haggis, neaps and tatties. To be fair, most girls and leaders tried the haggis and generally agreed that it wasn't as bad as expected.

On the subject of expected, we had a first aid evening with girls being presented with a series of first aid scenarios that they had to deal with. It would be true to say, it was not our finest hour and we were very grateful that all leaders are first aid trained and we wouldn't have to rely on the girls! It was agreed that we need to repeat this evening again and soon!

We've recently reorganised our patrols and we spent an evening with activities getting the new groups to gel, and to incorporate the new members who have recently joined us. On Friday 13th we had a backwards evening wearing our pyjamas and starting the evening as we would normally end it. We spent time making pancakes with various recipes for our breakfast. We'll be joining the rest of the District at an Activity Day at Lower Grange Farm shortly where the girls will get a selection of activities including quad biking, power risers and fencing.

There are still spaces in Brownies (aged 7-10), and a few in Guides (aged 10-15) in Wateringbury so please register your daughter on <https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/information-for-parents/register-a-child/>

Sheena Stewart and team.

TIME TO REMEMBER
Sunday 1st March at 2.30pm
in church of St John the Baptist,
Wateringbury

We all experience the loss of beloved family and friends. No matter how recent or long ago the event, anniversaries and special dates cause us to pause and reflect.

On 1st March there will be an opportunity to come to church and have time to reflect and celebrate the special times we shared with those we loved who have passed from this world.

We all grieve in our own way.

We all heal in our own time.

For those who wish to stay after the service
tea and cake will be served

JUMBLE SALE - TESTON VILLAGE HALL
SATURDAY 7th MARCH - 2-4pm
Clothes, Books, Toys and Games, Household
Goods
Miscellaneous Treasures
Refreshments available - Entrance 50p
(in aid of Teston Church)

CHURCHYARD PLANT SALE
SATURDAY 23rd MAY 10am-1pm
When dividing plants while working in your garden in the coming weeks please pot some up and bring them along to the plant sale. All proceeds for the maintenance of our ancient village church

Wateringbury Summer Village
Fete
7 June 2026

Get ready for one of the highlights of our community calendar. The Summer Village Fete returns on

Sunday 7 June 2026, running from 12.30 noon until 5pm, and everyone is warmly invited to join the fun.

This year's fete promises a wonderful afternoon for all ages. Expect a cheerful mix of traditional stalls, homemade cakes, local crafts, games for children, a raffle, plant sales, and

plenty of opportunities to catch up with neighbours over something delicious to eat and drink. There will also be live entertainment throughout the day, adding to the relaxed summer atmosphere.

Whether you come for the bargains, the music, the food, or simply the company, the fete is a lovely way to celebrate the season and support our parish community. Bring family, friends, and a bit of sunshine spirit.

Enquiries for stalls are open.

Please contact Julie Jones on 07753811585
We look forward to seeing you there!

WATERINGBURY CHURCH SERVICES IN MARCH

[Benefice website](#) www.mwpcchurches.org

*A friendly welcome awaits you at all **Sunday Services which start at 10am and last for about an hour.** Each service has an easy to follow service sheet. Refreshments are served after these services please stay for a chat if you can.*

Sunday 1st 10am – Matins led by Barry Fisher

A quiet service using the traditional words from the Prayer Book

Sunday 1st – 2.30pm – Time to Remember

A gentle service to celebrate the lives of those we have lost.

Sunday 8th - Holy Communion with Rev Gary Townsend

Saturday 14th - 3-5pm - Messy Church (for children and their carers) Bible Story, Action Songs, Prayer time, lots of crafts and ending with afternoon tea.

Mothering Sunday 15th - 10am - All Age Worship

A less formal service. As is our custom ladies in the congregation will be given posies of flowers

Sunday 22nd - 10am – Benefice Communion with Rev Gary

Palm Sunday 29th – 10am Benefice Communion Service in West Peckham church with Rev Gary Townsend

Palm Crosses are given to all as Jesus entry into Jerusalem is remembered.

Maundy Thursday 2nd April 7.30pm in Mereworth church

Service of Holy Communion with vigil and foot washing

Good Friday 3rd April – 2-3pm – An Hour at the Cross led by Barry Fisher

A contemplative time to reflect on the Crucifixion of Jesus

Sunday 5th April - 10am – Easter Service

We celebrate Jesus' resurrection on the first Easter day

Sunday 22nd March - 5pm-6pm at Mereworth Church:

REFRESH - Praise, Prayer and Discussion.

This is an informal service in which we explore some fundamental questions about the Christian Faith.

This month's topic:

Christian Behaviour Part 1. A presentation of *The Three Parts of Morality* from C.S. Lewis' book, *Mere Christianity*

BENEFICE LENT COURSE IN WATERINGBURY CHURCH

Wednesday evenings at 7.30pm

25th February, March 4th, 11th, 18th and 25th

For our Lent Course this year we will be showing a selection of **films from a series called 'The Chosen'**. As part of each session there will be an opportunity to discuss some questions based on the film and a time of prayer. It's free and everyone is welcome to join for all or as many evenings as you can manage.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER – A SERVICE FOR EVERYONE

FRIDAY 6th MARCH

ST JAMES THE GREAT, EAST MALLING

Service at 10.30am - Refreshments afterwards

COFFEE BREAK Wednesdays 11th & 25th March 8th & 22nd April

If you enjoy coffee and homemade cake and a friendly chat do come along to this informal group which meets in the church social area on a fortnightly basis. Suggested donation £1 Using the money from the donations the group have recently bought three 40 litre waterproof back-packs which have been donated to support the work of Maidstone Homeless Care.

Gillian Sessions 01622 813076

CHURCH AND CHURCHYARD SPRING CLEAN SATURDAY 28th MARCH – 9.30AM-NOON

If you can spare an hour or so please do come along and help make the churchyard and church sparkle for Easter. Bring along the 'tools' for any task you would like to assist with.

EASTER FUN WITH FAITH

Calling all primary school aged children in Wateringbury ... please join us for a morning filled with fun, songs and craft activities to help celebrate and hear the Easter story

Saturday 4th April 2026

9.30am until 12.30pm

St John the Baptist church, Wateringbury

Booking is essential and the form can be found on www.mwwwpchurches.org.

Deadline Wednesday 1st April 2026

FEBRUARY PARISH COUNCIL NOTES

Vacancy on Parish Council - Rob Andrews applied to fill the vacancy on the Council. He told the meeting he wished to make a difference to life in the village. He had organised the successful Halloween Trail held in 2025 and was happy to arrange other such events. He was unanimously co-opted and joined Councillors for the meeting.

Borough Councillor Report - Matt Boughton reported that most of Councillors' time at the moment was focused on setting the budget for the coming financial year. Some tough decisions will have to be made particularly in the light of the reduction in the funding from central government. T&M's grant is the second worst in England being a 15% reduction in an already inadequate funding package. T&M was one of very few borough councils which was not debt ridden, which he felt was due to wise decisions made over the years.

KCC Councillor Report - Sarah Hudson said that the meeting on 12th February would focus on setting the KCC budget for the coming year and it was likely to be a long meeting. Central Government's plans to reorganise County Councils is the subject of a 7-week Public Consultation to allow the general public to comment on the proposals. KCC's preferred option was to amalgamate with Maidstone, Tunbridge Wells and Sevenoaks.

Allotments – more informal inspections would be carried out in addition to the annual inspection to ensure plots were being maintained to an appropriate standard. There were three vacant plots; anyone interested in growing their own vegetables should contact the Clerk for details.

Cemetery - it was unanimously agreed to fund the new Clerk's attendance on a training course on the administration of burial grounds. New regulations were agreed about the maintenance of individual plots. Two new graves had sunk about 2 feet and needed to be refilled. The relevant families will be contacted to arrange for the work to be completed.

Crime Report – There were 20 calls to the police most of which did not affect the wider community. One criminal damage caused by a catapult. One report of a female being offered a lift by an unknown male motorist. Reports of youths

doing balloons (nitrous oxide) in the cemetery car park. Police are patrolling the area.

Fly Tipping - there had been another serious incident of fly tipping which had totally blocked Park Road.

Planning - there were no new planning applications to consider. Councillors spent some time discussing planning considerations which it will use to vigorously oppose the Fields Lane Planning Application when they give a permitted 3-minute presentation to the TMBC Planning Committee on 18th February. They have also sent in written objections.

Topics raised at Public Open Sessions

Vehicles parking at the junction of Fields Lane and Tonbridge Road were a continuing problem; when were the double yellow lines going to be painted? There is a waiting list for the work to be done. It was hoped the work would be carried out this year. It was stressed the lines would only be painted near the junction where badly parked vehicles were an ongoing safety issue. Police have attended at times.

Would there be a Village Fete in 2026? Sarah Hudson said plans were well under way and there was a new co-ordinator. The fete would be at the Playing Fields on **Sunday 7th June**.

Next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on **3rd March** at 7.30pm in the Village Hall upper room. Members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting and will be given two opportunities to raise matters of local concern.

Approved minutes of council meetings are published on the Parish Council website www.wateringbury.org.uk

VILLAGE MARKET

Despite your Village Market attracting new and diverse sellers every month we had a disappointing footfall at our February market. Please support this monthly market regularly offering over 25 unique and bespoke stalls. In addition, we now have a regular Tarot reader! Entry is free and refreshments available to enjoy in our separate Chat Room. Local events and groups are always publicised. Please come along and support your Village Market. Future dates – **15th March ,19th April, 17th May , 21st June**

TONBRIDGE & MALLING RAMBLERS WALKS IN MARCH

For full details of the walks starting from Trosley, Trosley Country Park, Offham, Knockholt, Leigh and Birling, please see, www.tonbridgeandmallingeramblers.org.uk