

**Welcome to the summer issue of Rostrum
covering the months of July and August.**

VILLAGE DIARY

JULY

- 2** **Footpaths Walk** – Hall car park – 2.30pm
4 **Parish Council Meeting** – Hall -7.30pm
followed by Planning Committee
11 **Footpaths Walk** – Hall car park – 10am
13 **Jewels of the Duchess of Windsor** WI talk –
hall – 2pm
18 **Sports & Rec Association AGM** – Hall –
7.30pm
19 **Flower demo by Jenny Nye** – East Malling
Institute – 7pm

AUGUST

- 6** **Footpaths Walk** – Hall car park – 2.30pm
16 **Flower demo by Robin White** – East Malling
Institute – 7pm
17 **Footpaths Walk** – Hall car park – 10am
The Parish Council does not meet in August

SEPTEMBER

- 3** **Footpaths Walk** – Hall car park – 2.30pm
5 **Parish Council Meeting** – Hall -7.30pm
followed by Planning Committee

Wateringbury Parish Council

Invites YOU to come to the

Annual General Meeting

which it is holding for

Wateringbury Sports and

Recreation Association

On Tuesday 18th July at 7.30pm in

The Upper Room of the Village Hall

The Association is a registered charity which manages the Playing Fields on behalf of the Parish and it is hoped that all village organisations and those interested in this village asset, which we can all enjoy, will come along to the meeting. An agenda will be issued in due course, details from Parish Clerk. clerk@wateringburypc.org.uk

VILLAGE PEOPLE *Please let us have your news and tributes by 17th August for our September magazine. Entries are free.*

Email www.rostrum2@hotmail.com

RIP Janet Coltham 14/08/1936 – 11/06/2023

Rostrum is sad to report Janet's passing in Maidstone Hospital after a short illness. Janet and Alan moved to Vine House, Wateringbury in 1995 and they both quickly began to contribute to village life. Janet used her undoubted keyboarding and admin skills in many settings - serving on the residents' management committee of Vine Court, the WI committee and as a committee member of the History Society she helped produce several of its publications. Janet was joint editor of

Rostrum for many years and helped to develop the magazine. In 2015 a downsizing move took Alan and Janet to a chalet bungalow in Allington although they still returned to the village for special events. Rostrum sends its condolences to Alan, Sharon and Debra, their families and friends.

A Big Thank You to the Village Fete Committee - Nicola, Greg, Sarah and Sarah for all their hard work over the preceding months to ensure the village could enjoy a happy afternoon. The summer fete also gave many local organisations and small businesses the opportunity to raise their profiles and funds. Thanks also to all who helped in so many ways.

The Rostrum Team

WATERINGBURY SCOUT GROUP

After what seemed like a long time waiting, summer has finally arrived with some very pleasant weather, which means the scout sections have been outside for a large majority of the meetings so far this term.

Beavers have and will be having fun on and with water as they joined other Beaver Scouts from the district for a water activity day at Mote Park where they had a go at dragon boat racing. They will be having more fun with water when they learn and experiment with transporting water and no doubt getting wet all over again!

Cubs really enjoyed litter picking in early June, maybe you saw them around the village in small groups wearing hi-viz Scout scarves with litter grabbers and bags. Also planned for later this term is celebrating and learning about American Independence Day, dragon boat racing and pedaloes at Mote Park, plus shelter building in the orchard. At the end of the term the Cubs are going on their summer camp in Tunbridge Wells where they will be building teepees, tomahawk throwing, building a totem pole, archery, tracking and making dream catchers.

Scouts are microlighting with Kent Scouts microlighting team, visiting Tonbridge Police station, playing water games and having a family baseball night. Their summer camp is at Broadstone Warren where they will be doing a wide variety of activities such as, drone flying, one night sleeping in bivouacs, cooking on fires, leap of faith, zip lining, water slides and loads more.

If you'd like to put your child on the waiting list, volunteer or make an enquiry please do so via the Wateringbury Scout Group website www.Wateringbury-scouts.org.uk

Nicola - Cub Scout Leader

INSTALLATION OF NEW PLAY EQUIPMENT ON THE QUEEN ELIZABETH II PLAYING FIELDS.

Work is taking place to instal the new play equipment.. Playdale will erect Heras fencing only where they are working so that the existing play area will remain open for children to use. Two junior swings, two sheep springers and a play panel will be installed within the existing play area thanks to the grant from the National Lottery Community Fund, and the western end extension, will have a multi-play tower unit, a roundabout, two swings, two springers, a see-saw, and a play panel put in thanks to the grant from the FCC Communities Foundation.

Please note that some of the car park space will be required by the contractors for their vehicles and machinery. The Lower play area will remain open until after work on the upper play area has been completed. *Frances Fielding*

NEWS FROM SARAH HUDSON BOROUGH AND KCC COUNCILLOR CHAIR OF PARISH COUNCIL

Now that the local elections are over, the new administration has hit the ground running, and we have had several very productive meetings. Just last week, we heard how TMBC is making good progress in cutting its carbon emissions, as the third

year of it's action plan comes to an end. The council has it's first electric vehicle, installed 28 EV charging points across the Borough, fitted 196 solar panels to the roof of Larkfield Leisure Centre, and changed to auto switch-off LED lighting in the council buildings. There is still more work to do, to reach our ambitious target to be carbon neutral by 2030.

A pilot scheme to crack down on littering and fly-tipping has seen more than 1,400 fixed penalty notices issued in its first six months. All fly-tipping is investigated to see if there is any way of finding where the rubbish came from, but the vast majority is commercial waste, and untraceable. The Council is now considering a recommendation to tender for a permanent contract, with a focus on targeting fly-tippers.

A planning application has been submitted by Fergus Wilson to convert and extend the three consecutive properties he owns by the crossroads, and to build a four storey property of 7 flats. The planning application number is TM/23/01186/FL. Please do take the opportunity to have your say on this application.

The various village groups we are lucky to have, are all in need of new members, whether it is the WI, the Village Hall, or the Wateringbury Sports & Recreation Association. If you have some spare time, and would like to get more involved, please do get in touch. The Village Hall will be needing a new Chair and Treasurer in the next year or two, so now's the time to get more involved – you won't regret it!

And if you live near any of the flower troughs and barrels, please could you give them a water from time to time, especially in the hot weather – it would be really appreciated by the whole village!

WATERINGBURY VILLAGE SUMMER FETE

It was hot, hot, hot this year for the annual village fete, but there was still a really good turnout of people coming along and enjoying the many activities, stalls and treats on offer.

Unfortunately the dog show, the ice cream van and temporarily the pizza dough were casualties of the high temperatures experienced over the weekend. There were a lot of the old, favourite stalls plus some new ones too. New this year were the fairground rides (a big hit with the children), circus workshops, cake stalls, pizza van, vintage cars and morris dancers.

Congratulations to all the raffle and programme draw prize winners, there were some lovely monetary, voucher and other prizes on offer. Thank you to all the volunteers, supporters, stallholders, whose who donated items, raffle ticket holders and of course the public who turned up, without which the fete could not take place.

We have been asked what happens to the monies raised during the fete. Of course the individual stallholders keep what they raise, whether that's for their own commercial enterprise or charitable purposes. The profit from stall fees, raffle sales etc. go back into running the next fete, so paying for the entertainment, St. John's Ambulance, printing costs, insurance etc. It would be wonderful if we could start to contribute excess funds towards initiatives within the village to benefit local people.

If you'd like to join our happy throng of fete volunteers and wear the t-shirt with pride, then please email us at Wateringburyfetecommittee@gmail.com

Nicola - Chair, Wateringbury Village Fete Committee

'WHERE MEMORIES MEET' – NEW PETITION FOR ACTION

Many residents in Wateringbury Village will be familiar with the ongoing problems Lucy has been experiencing due to the recurring flooding problems which blight her business at 'Where Memories Meet'. Blessed with a beautiful natural spring well in the basement, which also doubles up as an antiques and vintage clothing showroom, this great asset to our village life seems to have hit a brick wall with regards her situation.

The well is a 'pit stop' for a culverted water course that runs down Red Hill, through WMM and, theoretically, out through the drainage system under the cross roads. In practice this does not

happen due to the drainage pipework's poor state of repair under the road. Kent County Council and private surveyors have used specialist equipment to establish the problem and the consistent conclusion is that the drain is not fit for purpose. Lucy has reached out to Councillors, our local MP Tom Tugendhat, Kent County Council and Southern Water. The vacuum of inaction has been disappointing to some residents, which is why they have helped Lucy prepare a petition to present to Kent County Council this summer. An e-petition is also in process with KCC.

The request is simple: Kent County Council needs to take its reparation responsibilities seriously and have this problem resolved by Autumn 2023, when the rains come again.

If you wish to sign the petition, please pop in to see Lucy and she will provide the paperwork. The e-petition will be circulated on the Facebook Community page when it is live

FOOTPATH GROUP

In perfect walking weather (dry, sunny but not too hot) we had a couple of lovely walks in June. As well as our official starting point at the village hall, I let regular walkers know that they could choose to meet us at the station to save walking down and up Bow Road. From the station we went over Bow Bridge and across the fields to Bow Meadow Cottages and up to Hunt Street. Walking past Marshalls Farm, we came to Tutsham, where we continued on footpaths to West Farleigh and The Tickled Trout. Just before the pub we took a footpath downhill through long grass to a lane, where we turned left past some very impressive old trees and crossed a couple of cattle grids to arrive at Tutsham Hall. The popular footpath from there took us down to Waregrave's Wood (still muddy by the gate) and back to Bow Bridge. It was 4½ miles for the full walk, but some walkers opted for shorter routes.

Our next walks will be leaving the village hall at:

2.30pm on Sunday 2nd July, 10.00am on Tuesday
11th July

2.30pm on Sunday 6th August 10.00am on Thursday
17th August

2.30pm on Sunday 3rd September

Everyone is always welcome! Please contact me for more information.

Lisa Dean 077 5953 9032

WATERINGBURY AND NETTLESTEAD PRE-SCHOOL AND OUT OF SCHOOL CLUB

We are very excited to share that the Preschool has signed up to the Curiosity Approach and we are steadily working towards gaining our Accreditation. We are only at the start of the journey but the impact has already been so positive on everyone. It's a modern day approach to Early Years taking parts from Reggio, Steiner, Te Whariki, Pikler and a sprinkle of Montessori. The approach fits perfectly into the current changing technological times. Bringing curiosity, awe and wonder into early Childhood and creating the 'thinkers and doers' of the future!

With so much excitement going on we can't believe we are already in the last term! With the introduction of loose parts into the children's play we have been able to watch their imagination naturally unfold☺. We will be sad to see our older children leave but they are all so very excited about their next adventure. The children have had transition days with school teachers coming to visit them. At the setting we are continuing to support the children's transitions with independence through daily routines and working with our families.

At end of the term we have an animal encounter session at the setting, leavers Disco for all our children going off to Primary school in September and then finally ending with our

annual sports day, which is always a fun day with all the community getting involved to support our young children!
Nisha Reed 01622 813120 manager@nwps.org.uk

WATERINGBURY GUIDES

Thanks to the various emergency gas roadworks over recent weeks, we decided to move our wide game to the woods behind the Kings Hill Sports Park as many of the girls come from Kings Hill. We had a good evening playing Capture the Flag but as always, I suspect the rules were somewhat 'amended'. However, the girls and visiting brownies enjoyed themselves and that's what matters.

After half term we returned to Mote Park for paddle boards and pedaloos and great fun was had by all. I'm not convinced that the water was any warmer than last time but that didn't seem to discourage girls 'falling in'!

We ran a stall at the Wateringbury village fete for nail painting and mocktails as well as it being a PR exercise to show people what we do in guides. It was very hot indeed and not surprisingly we didn't do that many nails, but lots and lots of mocktails especially once it was known we had ice to add to them.

We've just decided, despite the low numbers that we will go ahead with the camp at Paxwood, a Girlguiding owned site, near Swanley at the beginning of the school holidays as we haven't been since August 2019. We hope to attract one or two more girls before we go as camping is one of the highlights of the guiding year. We'll offer the opportunity of day visits for the newer girls so they can see what camp is like before having to commit. You can contact me on 01622 815416 or email to

wateringburyguides@hotmail.com

Sheena Stewart and team

GARDENING FOR WILDLIFE

Summer is now definitely upon us and our gardens and the wildlife that they support need our help. Our main focus needs to be water and whether it's a pond or shallow trays of regularly topped up water; birds, insects and mammals will all appreciate our efforts and we may well be rewarded by being able to watch them from a safe distance.

The tadpoles from my own pond have all grown legs and hopped off into dark, damp and shady areas and there are currently two large toads living under the log pile. If you can create something similar in your own garden, this may attract not only frogs and toads but also beetles and other insects that are all beneficial.

The wildlife currently attracted to my pond is mainly Common Blue and Red Damselflies. These beautiful and fascinating insects flit across the surface of the water, find a mate and lay their eggs usually on something just under the surface. They are the same family as Dragonflies that are also using the pond and their names such as; Chaser, Darter and Hawker are a good reflection of their personalities. These insects have been around for millions of years and are one of the most successful group of hunters in the animal kingdom, with over a 95% success rate. They feed on small insects and mosquitos, so are another beneficial creature! This success rate is achieved partly by being able to fly in any direction, hover and see in 360 degrees. However, their most impressive achievement is that they can calculate the trajectory of their prey so can intersect it in mid-air rather than chasing it down. I hope that you all have a wonderful Summer enjoying your gardens and the wildlife that it supports. *PK*

NEWS FROM WATERINGBURY SURGERY

An update regarding new Klinik triage; the system has now been built and is in the testing phase. It will be looked at by the clinical staff making any necessary adjustments. The Practice

Staff will be having extensive training before a 'going live' date is set, please check social media and our website for updates.

In the meantime you can continue to book an urgent or routine appointment by calling the surgery from 8.30am. Additional staff will be available to assist with the increased calls whilst we wait for Klinik to go live. If your request is for medication, medical certificates or other administrative enquiries please email: gp.G82200@nhs.net. This email will only be open on a temporary basis until Klinik is live. Again, if you have any questions regarding the new service please feel free to ask a member of the team.

Thank you

Nikki Howe – Assistant Practice Manager (01622 814466)

WATERINGBURY FLOWER CLUB

In June Members had a garden visit to Parsonage Oasts, Benover Lane, Yalding - this is on the NGS list and we spent a gorgeous sunny evening looking around this fabulous riverside garden. The Raikes family have lived and worked this garden for over 50 years and when our guided tour was over we all sat down to tea/coffee, scones jam and cream, well worth a visit - we had a private guided tour which is possible for small groups by arrangement.

In July we have a workshop with local teacher Jenny Nye from Sevenoaks club - Double Trouble is the title and our design is with 2 placements - we are creating a horizontal design with a supermarket or garden flower bunch, members are looking forward to this evening :- August we have the wonderful Robin White from Sheldwich - Nafas Designer of the year 2021 with his title Life is the green leaf - Robin is always popular for his witty demonstrations and his amazing designs. In September we have our own mini club show - members are encouraged to take part and it will be judged by our own Margaret Cowell.

We are a friendly club who meet at the Institute Hall in East Malling every third Wednesday at 7pm, guests are always welcome. Watch out for our taster evenings where we supply all items and you just come along and join in! Watch this space.

Jean Schofield for WFC

W I – Inspiring Women

On 13th July we will welcome the return of Janie Ramsay this time to give her **talk The Jewels of the Duchess of Windsor**. Guest visitors will be very welcome at this meeting. In August we will visit Great Comp Garden. arrangements will be announced.

The June meeting heard an excellent talk on the History of Dolls from member Miranda Cookson. This was supported by a display of some of her large collection of historical dolls. The competition winners were Brenda, Christine and Gillian.

Margaret Malsher

TESTON AND WATERINGBURY PRESCHOOL

Well, here we are our last term before the long summer break and the weather is warming up nicely. We have a busy, fun time ahead as always. Teachers have been visiting the children who will be joining them in September. This helps children transition into 'big' school, giving them a friendly face so reassuring on that important 'first' day.

Our focus book this term is 'Handa's Surprise' by Eileen Browne. A delightful culturally diverse book where Handa puts 7 fruits in her basket to take to her friend Akeyo. Only to have cheeky animals sneakily remove them one at a time. We will be focussing on numbers, listening to Kenyan music and playing traditional instruments. Making animal masks, fruit skewers, and practising for our sports day.

We love our Sports Day a fabulous morning of races and fun for all. Mummies, Daddies and grandparents bring along picnics to enjoy in the sunshine; we also have a jolly nice cake stall too. Each child is given a special medal to keep. Well, we had better get cracking, lots of learning and fun to be had.

We would like to say thank you to Teston Village Hall committee for all the help and support they give us. To Farmers Farm

Shop in Teston for the lovely fruit boxes that they give us each week. To Teston Stores that always seem to have what we need.

If you would like your child to be part of our preschool 'family' we have limited places left for September. Book your visit as soon as possible. testonpreschooladmissions@gmail.com
tandwngroup@gmail.com

Tina Driver 07805796353

WATERINGBURY FOOTBALL CLUB

The players, coaches and committee are taking a well earned rest for a couple of months through the Summer and looking to be back for pre season training in August. The club runs training and/or teams for all age groups, for both girls and boys from age 6 through to age 18. The club are also starting up a mens' team for the upcoming season. If you are interested in joining our fine club, please contact Tony - 07890 053921 or tony@wateringburyfc.co.uk for more detail.

We are looking to hire someone to paint the pitch lines each week - (approximately 2 hours) on a Thursday or Friday and also looking to hire a junior to help in the cafe on Saturday (and some Sunday) mornings - approximately 3 hours per week. For rates of pay and more information, please contact Tony on the above contact detail.

SATURDAY NIGHT AT THE MOVIES – SATURDAY 8TH JULY

East Malling Singers will be performing a programme of songs from films including West Side Story, Breakfast at Tiffany's (Moon River), The Lion King (performed with West Malling CE Primary School Choir) and Working Girl (Let the River Run). **It will take place at St James the Great Church, East Malling, starting at 7.30pm.** Tickets are £12 or free for schoolchildren and are available by emailing boxoffice@eastmallingsingers.co.uk or phone 01622 750943.

Residents are asked to keep their hedges and shrubs trimmed to reduce the problems of walking on our narrow pavements. Please also be thoughtful neighbours and keep boundary hedges and trees trimmed as overgrown vegetation can cause nuisance to neighbours.

MAY PARISH COUNCIL NOTES

Election of Chair This is a new council since all councillors stood down at beginning of May at the end of their 4 year term. There was no need for a public election since Wateringbury is allowed 9 councillors and there were 8 candidates. Sarah Hudson was voted to chair the council for the coming term. Francis Fielding was unanimously elected to serve as vice-chair.

The first **Open Forum Session** was then scheduled to allow members to raise matters of concern. Discussions then took place on the following topics:

Acts of vandalism Concerns were expressed about the vandalism which had been occurring within the village particularly at the playing fields. It was hoped the four CCTV cameras at the playing fields would help to identify those causing harm. Residents were asked to report to the police any acts of vandalism, it was better to have more than one person report an incident than it go unreported. This will allow the police to build up an accurate picture of problems and hopefully prompt them to take action.

Wateringbury Sports and Recreation Association Members of sports associations who use the facilities were present and raised concerns about the administration of the Association. Councillor Hudson said that according to the constitution of this charity an annual general meeting had to take place before the end of May. At the AGM the committee for the coming year are elected. The village had excellent facilities and it was hoped that all associations would have one member on the future committee with a public meeting to be arranged in the Village Hall.

Crime Report The police e-watch website showed the following 4 incidents in the village: Person unknown threw food at a car and then assaulted the driver on stopping; A red Mercedes CLV Coupe stolen from Bow Road: A window was broken in a Mitsubishi L200 parked in a field; An unsecured mountain bike was stolen from the park.

Borough & KCC Councillor's report Sarah Hudson reported that at the recent local T&M elections she and Matt Broughton had been elected to jointly serve the newly formed area of Malling Rural East which covers the villages of Watlington, Mereworth, East Peckham, West Peckham, Golden Green, Kings Hill and Hadlow. KCC were carrying out a public consultation on the proposals to improve the Kent Street junction on the road to Kings Hill. She urged residents to go on-line and express their views.

Finances – the new on-line bank account was now operational.

New play equipment – installation work will start on Monday 12th June.

Next meeting will be on Tuesday 6th June in the upper room of the village hall.

JUNE PARISH COUNCIL NOTES

Co-option of Councillor- at the start of the meeting it was unanimously agreed that Emma Doyle be co-opted to serve on the council.

Sub committees representatives it was agreed the following representation:

Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) Cllr Stuart Mathieson

Parish Partnership Panel (PPP) Cllr Sarah Hudson

Allotments – Cllr Mandy Thwaites

Highways – All councillors

Planning – All councillors

Crime Report (*Source e-watch*) – On 23rd May at Playing Fields, Bow Road Somebody set fire to some woods which spread to a summerhouse and two sheds. Councillor Hudson informed the meeting that the police had interviewed two people under caution.

At the first **Open Forum Session** the matters raised were:

The problems being experienced by the owner of Where Memories Meet over the blocked drains at the cross roads and down Bow Road which were causing flooding in her basement. A resident asked what could be done to help the business owner as it would appear that Southern Water and KCC are in dispute as to who is responsible for the drains and therefore their repair and meanwhile the business owner is suffering.

The overgrown pathways which run parallel to Bow Road. Councillor Hudson said the pathway was owned by Clarion Housing who were responsible for its upkeep.

The narrow pathway along the Tonbridge Road from the cemetery to Pizienwell which is overgrown and therefore difficult to walk along. Councillor Hudson said she had reported the matter and she hoped the pathway would be cleared soon.

Speed Watch – Village organiser David Merry attended the meeting and reported on the May speedwatch statistics. He also brought along a radar gun which was on loan and allowed the teams to monitor the speed of vehicles travelling in both directions. Councillors voted unanimously to purchase a radar gun for use by the village teams.

KCC Councillor Report - Councillor Hudson reported that KCC was facing many challenges to balance its budget. Adult Social Car costs had increased by a large amount. KCC was having to pay £200 per week more per person for those in care homes who were funded by KCC. Homeless funding support had also ceased.

The **next meetings of the Parish Council** in the upper room of the village hall will be at **7.30pm on Tuesdays 4th July and 5th September**. *Approved minutes of council meetings will appear on the Parish Council website in due course*
www.wateringburypc.org.uk

COFFEE BREAK

We are a friendly group who meet fortnightly on Wednesday mornings in the church for a chat and cuppa with delicious cake. Suggested donation £1. Don't be shy – there is usually at least one new face each time we meet. In July we are meeting in members gardens on 12th July in Sheena's garden and on 26th July in Jill's garden. For more details or to arrange a lift please phone Gillian on 01622 813076

Then it's back to our usual mornings 10.30-12.30 in the church social area for Wednesdays 9th and 23rd August and 6th September.

MESSY CHURCH

Saturdays 1st July, 5th August and 2nd September

Children and their carers are invited to come along on the first Saturday of each month to enjoy Messy Church – crafts, prayer and story time and Rev Gary on his guitar leading the choruses. We start promptly at 3pm and all afternoons end with tea at 4.30pm.

Do just come along to the church or for more details email ruth.dunn33@btinternet.com

CHURCH PLANT SALE THANKS

£517.40p was raised from the sale which will help with the day-to-day running costs of our ancient village church. Thank you to all who contributed plants, especially to Bijou Nursery for their generous contribution. And of course to those who came along and bought plants. *Jan Pursey*

CHRISTMAS CRAFT BAZAAR

Saturday 18th November

In the heat of Summer it seems strange to be thinking about the Church Christmas Craft Bazaar, but **do Save the Date**. Stalls are already booked and will be selling an interesting and eclectic selection of gifts. For more details please contact Jan Pursey
mikejan.purse yuk11@btinternet.com

AUDIO VISUAL INSTALLATION

Our exciting new audio visual system for the church will be installed on the week beginning 24th July. This will mean that the church will not be open for the usual weekly activities from 24th-28th July.

With the installation of this new up-to-date technology we will be able to relay live services of Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals. This will mean that friends and family not able to attend in person will be able to do so virtually from anywhere in the world.

It will also enhance community use of the church for meetings, music and drama productions. The new digital sound system will make it so much easier for those with hearing problems to fully participate in all church activities.

Thank you to everyone who donated towards the costs involved. There is still a shortfall of £13,000. Any donations, would be much appreciated. *David Merry*

CREAM TEAS

IN MEREWORTH CHURCHYARD

EVERY SUNDAY AFTERNOON IN JULY

Do go along and enjoy a delicious cream tea in a delightful setting

PARISH BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE

If you would like to commemorate a loved one in our parish Book of Remembrance please contact Joy on 01622 81444 for more details.

REV GARY WRITES

The Rectory, 72 The Street, Mereworth ME18 5NA
gary.rev@outlook.com ☎ 01622 813178

Counting our Blessings

As a vicar I often get requests for weather! What I mean is that people ask me to pray for good weather. Disappointed with the result people jokingly say, "God's not listening vicar!" and I always reply, "Yes He is, and He said 'No! 'But seriously, when the weather is what people want, they say things like: "We've been lucky with the weather, haven't we" or "The weather's been good to us." It is very rare, in my experience, to hear people giving God the credit.

Now, I do not believe that God is really after credit in the way we so often are. I think what He is after is for us to find the deep and lasting joy of getting to know Him who is the source of all that is good. The real gift is not the good gift itself, but the good giver who gives it. Perhaps God allows things to go against us and even go horribly wrong as a way of shaking us up to the fact we are ignoring Him.

Jesus taught that our Father in heaven is an indiscriminately good giver causing the rain and sun to bless both the righteous and the unrighteous (Matthew 5:45). And one of Jesus' Apostles, St Paul, preached to the Greeks in Lystra that: '*God did not leave Himself without witness, for He did good and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness*' (Acts 14:17).

I do think that even amidst the many difficulties, pains, and disappointments of life we can still count our blessings. Perhaps there are a good many of us at the moment who are thankful for one blessing or another despite, or perhaps even because of, all those difficulties, pains and disappointments.

I do hope that as you enjoy the summer with the many blessings that come with the holiday season you will have cause to reflect on the goodness of God. Why not come along to one of the many churches in our area, to a Sunday service, as a way of showing gratitude to God? That may even result in you coming to appreciate even more His interest in you, His care for you and His love for you.

*Rev Gary Townsend
Rector of Mereworth, Watlingbury and West Peckham*

WATERINGBURY CHURCH SERVICES IN JULY AND AUGUST

[Benefice website](http://www.mwpcchurches.org) www.mwpcchurches.org
[Church Face Book Page:](https://www.facebook.com/wateringburychurch) [fb.me/wateringburychurch](https://www.facebook.com/wateringburychurch)

All Sunday morning Services start at 10am and have easy to follow service sheets. Refreshments are served after these services, do stay if you can.

**Saturdays 1st July and 5th August 3-5pm
Messy Church** (for children and their carers) – Bible Story, Action Songs, Prayer time, lots of crafts and ending with afternoon tea. All welcome

**Sunday 2nd July Matins
Sunday 6th August Morning Praise
led by Barry Fisher**

Sunday 2nd July and Sunday 6th August

Holy Communion with Rev Gary Townsend

Messy Church on Sunday meets in the vestry during these services

Sunday 16th July and Sunday 20th August - All Age Worship

Sunday 23rd July and Sunday 24th August

Holy Communion with Rev Gary Townsend

Sunday 30th July Joint Benefice Service in St Lawrence, Mereworth Church As this is the 5th Sunday in the month all three churches in the benefice take the opportunity to worship together and share in fellowship.

Every Sunday at 5pm

in Mereworth Church

Benefice Refresh Services for those who enjoy less formal worship