

**Welcome to the February edition of Rostrum,
the first in 2026**

VILLAGE DIARY

February

- 1 **Footpaths Walk** – 2pm - outside Hall
- 3 **Parish Council Meeting** - 7.30pm – Hall Upper Room
- 7 **Brownies Bingo night** – 6.30 for 7 pm – Hall
- 10 **Footpaths Walk** – 10am - outside Hall
- 11 **WI - meeting Carol Creasey**, writer - 7.30 -9.30pm – Hall
- 13 **CAMEO Coffee Morning** – 10.30-11.30am – Hall small room

- 15 **Village Market** – 10am – 1pm - Hall
- 18 **Protest lobby** - from 6.30pm – Gibson Building, Gibson Drive, Kings Hill
- 18 **Flower Club** - AGM; practical 'Red is the colour'-7 pm - Nettlestead VH
- 18 **Cuppa with a Copper PC Dan** – 10-11am – Wateringbury Hotel
- 18 **Kent's links to Cricket - History Society talk** – 7.40pm - Hall

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 **Peter Pan** pantomime – 7 for 7.30pm – Village 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 – Hall
- 13 **CAMEO Coffee Morning** – 10.30-11.30am – Hall small room
- 14 **Wateringbury Social club** -. 'Out of bounds' – 7pm for 8pm – WSC
- 18 **Flower Club** – M. Matharu - Floral Fiesta' - 7pm - Nettlestead VH
- 18 **Cuppa with a Copper PC Dan** – 10-11am – Wateringbury Hotel

Rostrum thanks all its advertisers for their support, which enables us to provide Rostrum without any charge, and welcomes its new advertisers for 2026: *The Swan on the Green*, a community owned pub; *Zoomies*, a dog walking service; and *Viners & Sons*, funeral directors. Rostrum recommends you do appropriate due diligence on any advertiser you use and hopes you mention that you saw their advert here.

WATERINGBURY VILLAGE MARKET

Please note an earlier start of 10am still closing at 1pm
Our Christmas market in December was a great success.
Increased footfall and good takings - maybe it was the mulled wine!
Profit from which was donated to KHSC (Kings Hill String Club) and Dementia UK. We continue to have an eclectic mix of sellers - never the same every month, with regular new requests for slots.
Please support your Village Market - coffee and cakes and a Chat Room - free entry and no pressure to buy (though temptation will be great!!) The market will continue to be held on the 3rd Sunday of every month in 2026: **15th February, 15th March, 19th April.**
Sue Collins

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

Congratulations

New arrival - **Zebedee Peter Best Shaw** arrived on 16th November in Bath Royal United Hospital weighing 8lbs 3oz. Congratulations to grandparents Emily and Thomas and great grandparents Nell

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and Vivian Rubin and, of course, to parents Joshua and Ellie and big sister Ophelia

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

COFFEE BREAK – 11th and 25th February 10.30am-12.30pm

After meeting every week in January to help overcome post-Christmas blues the group returns to meeting on alternate Wednesdays in the church social area. We are a friendly, informal group who enjoy coffee, tea, home-made cake and spending time in the company of others. Do come along, suggested donation £1. Over the past few months, the group has donated 5 sleeping bags, warm clothing and tinned food to Maidstone Homeless Care to help with its work for those in great need.

If you are shy about coming along on your own do give me a call and we can arrange for someone to meet you.

Gillian Sessions 01622 813076

WATERINGBURY PLAYERS

Happy New Year from The Wateringbury Players. Panto season is a bit late this year but we cannot wait to perform our production of Peter Pan. It will be performed at Wateringbury Village Hall on the evenings of Friday 6th March, Saturday 7th March 7.30pm (doors open at 7.00pm) and Saturday matinee 2pm (doors open at 1.30pm). Tickets will be on sale from Thursday 29th January at The Handy Store and Wateringbury Post Office . Cash only. All tickets are £14. Child concession tickets are available for the Saturday matinee performance only (16 and under) £7.00.

I look forward to seeing you all there. *Esther Clark*

THE OAST THEATRE, TONBRIDGE **“HUMBLE BOY” by Charlotte Jones** **7th March – 14th March 2026**

“Humble Boy” by Charlotte Jones is a multi-award winning comedy with the intensity of family emotions, the search for the meaning of life and echoes of “Hamlet”.

Come along and see for yourself. It is definitely a play not to be missed!

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Performances: 8 pm. (Sunday 3 pm)
Tickets: £14 Book online at www.oasttheatre.com
Credit card bookings 0333 666 33 66 (booking fee applies)

UKRAINE APPEAL

Items still urgently needed: human meds, animal meds (part used or unused), bandages, walking aids, incontinence pads, sanitary products, etc.
Animal food, part used human foods non-perishable, animal items.
Thick winter clothes, new socks, shoes, toiletries, good boots for soldiers.
Please put name/number in with your donation
Any queries? Contact Sue 07875 262759.

TONBRIDGE & MALLING RAMBLERS FEBRUARY WALKS

For full details of the walks see
www.tonbridgeandmallingeramblers.org.uk

WATERINGBURY SCOUT GROUP TRUSTEE BOARD

Do you have the availability to invest some of your time?
Do you want to enhance your skills of team work, organisation, leadership and more?

We are looking for people from the age of 18+ to help us with the management of the scout group. This is not working with the youth members (unless you choose to), this is helping us create a trustee board to oversee the governance and make sure we do things correctly and safely.

If you have ever wanted or been part of a school PTA, run a sports club, managed a business, like accounting or run a home you have the skills we need.

We meet 4-5 times a year either in person or online.
If you are interested or would like more information please contact: Jacqueline at GLV@wateringbury-scouts.org.uk

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WATERINGBURY CUB SCOUTS

As we start the year our Cub pack is thriving with just over 30 boys and girls aged eight to ten and a half years old, all keen to have fun and adventures!

Here's what we'll be getting up to this term: playing games in the dark; making and, of course, eating French toast; learning first aid skills and using origami to make paper aeroplanes, all before half term!

After the break we start back with some baking; joining other local Cub packs on a sleepover; creating robots using woodworking skills; hiking and learning road safety; celebrating St Patrick's Day; tobogganing and, just before Easter, an Easter egg hunt. All culminating with games, activities and adventures galore in our annual, two-night Spring pack holiday!
A jam-packed term of adventure and learning all whilst having loads of fun!

If you'd like to put your child on the waiting list, volunteer or make an enquiry please do so by contacting [Wateringbury](mailto:Wateringbury@wateringbury-scouts.org.uk)
Cub Scout Team

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WI

We meet on 2nd Wednesday of the month at 7.30 to 9.30pm at the village hall.

We have lots of events already organised in our 2026 programme, at the village hall and also a few out and about.

To kick start the year, we had Tony Harris come along in full costume as King Henry VIII. He gave us an amazing evening full of laughter and stories of his six wives and why some of them just didn't make him very happy!!! We finished our meeting with a cup of tea and a piece of cake.

On Wednesday 11th February Carol Creasey will come along. she is a published author from Maidstone who had to change her career path when one of her children was born with Autism. And, while

caring for him she wrote and had published her first book. Proving anything is possible if you are determined enough.

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

For more information email Wateringbury@wkwfwi.org.uk or find us on Facebook. Sharon Goshawk, President

SARAH HUDSON - BOROUGH COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

February brings the Area 2 Planning meeting on Wednesday 18th February which includes the planning application for the 66 houses in the fields north of Drayhorse, just off the A26. Matt and I will be allowed to discuss this, along with a representative of the Parish Council and up to 5 registered speakers. If you wish to talk on the subject you need to have commented on the application through the planning portal. Then you will be invited one week before the meeting to register to speak, should you wish to. You will have 3 minutes to speak. The first five members of the public who register will get to speak, so it is important to act promptly, should you wish to do so. Other committee members and planning officers will also join in with the debate.

Also on 18th February is the Cuppa with a Copper. Come along to the Wateringbury Hotel between 10am and 11am that day and meet and chat with our Village PC Dan. He is also back on Wednesday 18th March. Same time, same place.

The Parish Council are holding a monthly coffee morning at the village hall. February's date is Friday 13th - so pop along and meet some of your parish councillors and raise any issues you may have with them, over a cup of tea or coffee, and a cupcake.

Sarah Hudson TMBC Borough Councillor for East and West Peckham, Mereworth and Wateringbury

TOM TUGENDHAT'S REQUEST

Our MP, Tom Tugendhat, has requested Rostrum readers to assist him in building the case with mobile phone companies for them to upgrade their coverage in our area. He believes that more pressure on them is needed to speed up their existing plans. His actions in this area would be helped if he had more individual reports of experiences.

He believes this is not just a rural problem as many people cannot get a sufficient signal in the middle of Tonbridge to pay for parking or access shopping apps. He notes that calls on train journeys are often disrupted by a lost signal.

He thanks those that have already shared their experiences with him, but would like to hear more individual experiences. He requests you fill out the form on his website at www.tomtugendhat.org/mobile-phone-survey

WATERINGBURY FOOTBALL CLUB

Wateringbury Football Club are looking for an overall academy leader for our Girls' section. If you have, or know someone who has, the interest and the skills for this very important and extremely rewarding (voluntary) position, please contact Tony on 07890 053921. Wateringbury FC is a great and proud asset for the children of our village and the Girls' section is so very important to the club. WFC juniors start from 6 years old and carry through to under 18s.

This particular position is coaching the young girls (6-8 year olds) and preparing them for their junior football journey. Tony Garrett t. 020 7869 3310 (Direct) m. 07890 053921

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

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parade. The Brownies have a chance to try new things whilst making new friends and most importantly having fun!

To contact the leaders, please email 1stwateringburybrownies@gmail.com. We are happy to offer taster sessions. *Carolyn (Tawny Owl) and Jane (Snowy Owl)*

WATERINGBURY FOOTPATHS GROUP

In December and January changing conditions meant I had to adjust my walk plans.

In December we enjoyed a couple of walks to Pizien Well Road. For the Sunday walk we had to make a slight detour to avoid a tree that had fallen onto the footpath between the pond and Old Road. On the weekday repeat walk eight days later it was great to see that the tree had been cleared. Thanks to whoever organised that. We had time and energy to extend the weekday walk over the top of Gibbs Hill.

In January, after a spell without heavy rain, the path by the river to Teston Country Park was dry, unusually for midwinter. We took the opportunity to walk that route on the Sunday afternoon walk. Following heavy rain, I checked three days before the planned weekday repeat walk and the path was completely under water! So instead, we went up the footpath opposite Love Lane, skirted Kings Hill and returned down Canon Lane before cutting back across in front of the woods to enjoy the views.

You are very welcome to join our sociable group walks; new people often join us. We will be leaving the village hall at:

2.00pm on Sunday **1st February**
10.00am on Tuesday **10th February**
2.00pm on Sunday **1st March**

Please contact me if you want more information and to be kept updated.

Lisa Dean 07759 539032

WATERINGBURY SOCIAL CLUB

Wateringbury Social Club are open for 2026 membership. With regular entertainment nights, snooker table, pool table, darts, all major live sports events shown and very competitive bar prices, at annual membership rates of only £25 per adult, £20 per student or £45 for a (same household living) couple, this offers great value to the village's favourite social venue.

Tickets are selling fast for the 'Out of bounds' comedy night being held at 'the club' on Saturday **14th March**. This is an adult only event and tickets can be purchased behind the bar at only £15 per person. *Tony Garret*

GARDENING FOR WILDLIFE

As days begin to lengthen, the first flowers emerge in our gardens. Initially hellebores, snowdrops and aconites, followed by crocuses. All these provide food for early pollinators as well as cheering us all up and can be grown in pots and placed near the house.

The annual RSPB 'Big Bird Count' took place in January, so some of you may have contributed to the important data that will inform us how our garden birds are faring. The advice, as always, is to continue to feed them but to regularly clean bird feeders and tables to prevent the spread of infection. It's also worth considering ways that the trees and shrubs in our gardens can support all wildlife but particularly birds. Some will make their first nesting attempts in evergreen shrubs which provide cover at a time when most broadleaves are still in bud. Yew, Holly, Cotoneaster, Pyracantha and Ivy are all good choices for our gardens whilst also producing berries which provide food throughout the Winter.

I recently watched David Attenborough's 'Wild London', which tells an unusually positive story and emphasizes the positive impact gardens are having. It was particularly encouraging to hear that hedgehog numbers have increased largely due to gardeners

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ensuring that they can move between gardens by creating 'hedgehog highways'. Hedgehogs eat slugs and snails so are friends to all gardeners! *Pauline Knutton*

WATERINGBURY GUIDES

We are very grateful for all the support we got at our cake and sweet stall at Wateringbury Church Christmas Bazaar, raising valuable funds for our activities and the church.

The term ended with an enjoyable visit to Planet Ice Gillingham, The more confident skaters sped around the rink whereas those less confident put their faith in their polar bear skate aid.

We have restarted after Christmas and together we've planned the programme until Easter. We're going to try and be thrifty with unwanted items of clothing to see if they can be 'adapted' into something new, we will celebrate Burns Night daring to try haggis, and we'll have a backwards evening for Friday 13th February starting the evening with goodbye, and working backwards to breakfast where we'll have, of course, pancakes!

We have a District Activity Day at Lower Grange Farm during the half term. We're going to the village panto, oh yes, we are, and also a number of us will sleepover afterwards.

We'll treat all the mums to our Mother's Day meal at the HQ and we round the term off with a trip to Larkfield Leisure Centre for swimming and trampolining.

There are now spaces in rainbows (aged 4-7), brownies (aged 7-10), and 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.

NETTLESTEAD AND WATERINGBURY PRE-SCHOOL

It has been lovely welcoming all our children and families back after the break.

It's the year of the horse in the Chinese New Year Calendar! The children explored this through role-play, craft and books. For snack, they tried prawn crackers with sweet and sour noodles sharing them with their friends whilst practicing using chop sticks! We even attempted making our own fortune cookies.

We have used the cold snap to explore the winter season around us. The children were talking about the icy snow and frosty outdoors. Wrapped up warm, we explored the outdoors using our binoculars to bird watch. We talked about the limited food the birds can have at this time of year. So, the birds didn't go hungry the children helped make some birdfeeders and helped to hang them outside the setting.

Whilst walking along on the frosty field, the children collected some big bits of ice. We talked about how it is formed, shared how the ice felt when touched and finally why it started melting after a while in their hands. The children loved running across the frosty field crunching as they went along!

February 2026 holiday club (children 2-11 year)

Tuesday 17th, Wednesday 18th and Thursday 19th - 9am – 4pm, half days (9am-12.30pm or 12.30-4pm).

Booking form - email enquiries@nwps.org.uk

TESTON & WATERINGBURY PRE-SCHOOL

As we continue to read our termly book, 'A Superhero Like You,' which celebrates everyday superheroes, we were delighted to welcome a local nurse and fireman into our pre-school who spoke to the children about the important work they do. *A big thank you to them both for visiting and spending quality time with our children.*

In our craft corner, the children created helicopters inspired by the air ambulance. We discussed healthy eating habits and why brushing your teeth is important. We've talked about

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recycling truck drivers and the significance of recycling. The children enjoyed sorting rubbish into our large recycling containers.

We will finish this term discussing veterinarians, why caring for our animals matters, and how we can help them when they're unwell. Our term 3 ends on Friday **13th February** and activities will resume again on Monday **23rd February**.

This year we will be celebrating our 60th anniversary.

We would like to mark the occasion by producing a memory book and wondered whether any of our readers ever attended or worked with us during the 60's? If so, it would be lovely to hear what it was like, maybe you have some photos or personal memories you could share? If you can, then please get in touch.

We still have a few places left, so if you would love your child to be part of this amazing pre-school family please contact Tina Driver: 07805 796353

lestonpreschooladmissions@gmail.com

FIELDS LANE DEVELOPMENT

A TMBC decision on this proposal has now been postponed till 18th February. Protect Our Medway Valley (POMV), along with colleagues from the Parish Council's planning committee remain determined to do all we can to oppose these plans. We are preparing to speak at the meeting and are distributing details of how to make final objections to these proposals.

As well as lobbying by email those councillors voting on the development, we need as many people as possible to join us in a protest lobby from 18.30 on decision day. The address is Gibson Building, Gibson Drive, Kings Hill ME19 4LZ. Bring the family and let's make sure our protest is heard inside the building!

We will post confirmation of the date around the village or contact POMV directly. Let's prevent this happening and keep our village green! *Dave Mitchelmore, Convenor POMV 07799 433874*

WATERINGBURY CHURCH SERVICES IN FEBRUARY

Benefice website

www.mwmpchurches.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 booklet.

Refreshments are served after these services - please stay for a chat if you can.

Sunday 1st - 10am - Morning Praise led by Barry Fisher

Saturday 7th - 3-5pm - Messy Church (for children and their carers). Messy Church is our monthly family and children's group that is a totally different approach to Church. We have Bible lessons, crafts, games and much more. If anyone would like to come along or find out more, they are very welcome to email us at messychurchwateringbury@outlook.com

Sunday 8th - Holy Communion with Rev Gary Townsend

Sunday 15th - 10am - All Age Worship

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

Sunday 22nd - 5pm - Benefice Refresh Service in Mereworth This month's topic is 'The Practical Conclusion -

CS Lewis' explanation in *Mere Christianity* of how Jesus' life is shared.'

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Sunday 1st March - 10am – Matins with Barry Fisher

ASH WEDNESDAY 18th FEBRUARY to mark the start of Lent there will be two of Holy Communion services in the benefice:

10am in St Lawrence, Mereworth
7.30pm in St Dunstan, West Peckham

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**WORLD DAY OF PRAYER – A SERVICE FOR EVERYONE
FRIDAY 6th MARCH - ST JAMES THE GREAT, EAST MALLING
Service at 10.30am - Refreshments afterwards**

**BENEFICE LENT COURSE IN WATERINGBURY CHURCH
Wednesday evenings at 7.30pm
25th February, 4th, 11th, 18th and 25th March**

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 there will be a time of prayer. It's free and everyone is welcome to join for all 6 sessions or for as many as you can manage.

REV GARY WRITES

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

PEOPLE INVESTMENT

Christmas seems a long way behind us now but this is the first opportunity I've had to put into *Rostrum* my thanks to all those involved with the life of St John the Baptist Church whose hard work and generosity over Christmas have been such a blessing. Our church building benefits greatly from the generous donations made by visitors to our services over the Christmas period and its maintenance is important if we are to continue to make it available for use by those who attend church regularly and those less so. But as Rev John Smallwood in Peter Seller's 1963 film 'Heavens Above!' put it, 'Father, Son and Holy Ghost are not a firm of builders!' The building is important but it's people that really matter and it is people God really cares about.

By far the greater gift in all the work that went into organising the services and running them are the people themselves that made it all happen and those we were able to welcome as a result of their efforts to our services over Christmas.

The season of Lent begins this month and as preparation for Good Friday and Easter some films from a series called *The Chosen* will be shown at Wateringbury church every Wednesday at 19:30 beginning on 25th February. Do consider coming along. It will be a great way to reflect on

the investment God has made in giving His one and only Son to suffer, die and rise again for us.

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

Could you help look after the finances of West Peckham Church?

The vicar at West Peckham church is looking for a volunteer with suitable experience to be the treasurer and gift aid secretary for the Parochial Church Council. The role is voluntary and is vital to the successful running of St Dunstan's Church. If you think you could help with this please contact the vicar, Rev Gary Townsend on 01622 813178 or email: gary.rev@outlook.com

CHURCH THANKS

Christmas Craft Bazaar Many thanks to all stallholders, caterers and customers. Your support raised a fantastic **£1,528** to help with the upkeep of our ancient church.

Thank You to the Voices Across A20 choir and conductor Jonathan Overell for a most enjoyable evening on Friday 5th December. The concert was repeated in Snodland church and the proceeds from both evenings divided equally between Wateringbury and Snodland. So, each received an amazing **£1,012**.

The Grumpy Innkeeper Thank You to all from Messy Church who contributed to making this film, especially Rev Gary who played the Innkeeper and to producer/photographer Evie. It was a fun way to tell the story of the first Christmas and enjoyed by those at the All Age Service on Sunday 21st December.

Messy Church thanks Ruth Dunn, who started Messy Church in Wateringbury 9 years ago, for all her hard work and dedication. Ruth has now handed over the leadership to Evie Skiffington.

SHEENA AND GORDON'S JAMS

Sheena and Gordon are delighted to confirm that they have presented the church with a donation of **£699.22** as a percentage of their sales during 2025. This is a good increase on 2024 which was £531.82. In 2025 they made 175 batches of produce, which was up from 143 the previous year and reflects the fact that they attended 18 events this year, an increase from 14 in 2024. Once again, they have ended the year with very low stocks and production has already commenced with the first of their stalls scheduled for March. They are currently calculating how many Seville and Blood Oranges are needed for the year as well as having to find a new wholesaler as the existing one has unfortunately moved.

Sheena and Gordon are very grateful for the continued support from Nathan and his team at the Post Office and thank everyone who has supported them over the year either at official events, from the Post Office, or via doorstep sales in Mill Lane.

DECEMBER PARISH COUNCIL NOTES

Allotments - There are 2 vacant plots. It was agreed one allotmenteer could change plots.

Anti-social behaviour - Since the visits by the T&M Anti-social behaviour team had been beneficial to the village it was unanimously agreed to continue funding visits from the team in the forthcoming financial year.

Bequest from Syd Thompsett – Two community benches have been purchased and will have dedication plaques. One is for the cremation area in the cemetery the other for the grass area at the village hall.

CAMEO Coffee Mornings - Cllr Vanessa Young will organize these, the first being Friday 9th January 2026. Thereafter, the second Friday of each month. 10.30am to 11.30am in the small downstairs room at the Village Hall. The aim is to give residents a chance to meet others from different parts of the village ('CAMEO' - Come and Meet Each Other).

Cemetery – Fees for the cemetery were reviewed and agreed - full details are on the parish website. Some recent graves need additional soil to keep soil level with the surrounding grass surface. All gravestones will be 'topple tested' to comply with regulations to ensure all are safe.

CPRE - In response to a letter the Parish Council have agreed to join the Council for the Protection of Rural England.

Lorry Watch Scheme - It was agreed not to proceed with this scheme, due to the lack of support from Kent Police.

Playing Fields – The quote was accepted from Elm Fencing to repair the fencing and to provide an access gate for Wateringbury Football Club. Tenancy Agreements have been agreed for the Football Club and the Cricket Club to cover their use of the facilities in the coming year.

Speedwatch - During November the teams observed 170 speeding vehicles with 16 letters being sent by the police to repeat (twice or more) offenders and 3 letters sent to high end offenders (45+ mph in 30mph zone).

Tender documents for the new maintenance contracts have been created and will be sent to local companies for quotes.

Village Lock-up - The quote for re-pointing from Southern Stone Ltd was accepted. The work to be carried out in Spring. A quote from Elm Fencing was accepted for replacing the fencing.

JANUARY 2026 PARISH COUNCIL NOTES

Nicki Cooper is our new **Parish Clerk**. Her contact details remain the same as for the previous clerk: tel. 07943 937694
clerk@wateringburyparish.gov.uk

Sarah Hudson informed the meeting about the request for extension of the deadline for response to Croudace's appeal to build 66 houses on **Fields Lane** to after **21st January**.

If TMBC's Planning refuse the planning application, Croudace can appeal to the Planning Inspectorate, who would make the final decision. The TMBC's Planning Committee meeting will go ahead on **18th February**.

KCC matters –the KCC budget will be delayed as the discussions about the budget were continuing. It was unlikely that the council tax could be lowered by a reduction in KCC's expenditure but there would be no closures of libraries or refuse centres.

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Cemetery – There were several applications for headstones. There was a complaint about a hole for new grave which was dug too close to an existing grave.

Cemetery car park - Cars were seen at the cemetery car park late at night. Several empty nitrogen canisters were found there.

Road related matters - a meeting will be arranged with the KCC Highways representative to discuss road improvements; in particular an enhanced crossing near the school and yellow line/s in the Brucks area.

PC received a complaint about a van parked on the grass verge along Tonbridge Rd in front of a house in Upper Mill. An accident had been nearly avoided when the van had been joining traffic on Tonbridge Rd. The resident had explained that it was the only place on his land where the electric van could be charged.

Speedwatch – the speed monitoring group had been unable to carry out their sessions due to bad weather. The analysis of their 2025 records showed the reduction in the numbers of speeding cars.

Village car park – The CCTV to monitor the hall and car park will be upgraded.

High water supply charges - PC will contact the water company, Castle Water, to investigate the reasons for very high water bills in the PC's amenities. Drayhorse Meadows' renter water bills are also extremely high.

The draft PC's budget for 2026/7 was reviewed and approved by councillors. The increase in the precept for the year was estimated at 1.4% at band D.

The next monthly general meeting is on **Tuesday 3rd February** in the Village Hall Upper Room and starts at 7.30pm. Members of the public are welcome to attend meetings. Approved minutes of council meetings are published on the Parish Council website, Wateringburypc.org.uk