

## Welcome to your June magazine

### VILLAGE DIARY

June	
<b>1<sup>st</sup> 7.30pm</b>	Parish Council and Planning Committee Meeting Cancelled. Please see May PC's notes for information
<b>6<sup>th</sup> 2:30 pm</b>	Footpaths Group Walk starting at the Village Hall
<b>22<sup>nd</sup> 7.30 pm</b>	Provisional Parish Council Highways and Transportation Committee – the meeting and venue, dependant on changes to the lockdown rules

### VILLAGE ROAD ISSUES/SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

The Parish Council would like to thank everyone who responded to our request for comment on the road issues in the village and their suggestions as to what might be done to improve the situation. All responses have now been collated and put together into a document that will be passed to the firm of consultants who have been engaged to provide a detailed survey of all the approaches to Watlingtonbury and list suitable changes to the highway that would deter speeding and improve pedestrian safety.

A copy of the working document, which includes all the collated responses, is available from the parish clerk on request.

#### **YARD AND BAKE SALE IN AID OF DEMENTIA UK CAR PARK AT SCOUT & GUIDE HQ GLEBE MEADOW**

**SATURDAY 5th JUNE 10am – 3pm**

Lucky dip, toys and teddies, clothes, shoes and bags, books, games,  
Bric-a-Brac, plants, tombola, crafts, cakes, biscuits, drinks and lots more.

**Please wear face masks and remember to keep social distancing.**

For more details or to offer donations please phone  
07792904622

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

**Golden Wedding Congratulations** to Peter and Hilary Cayzer who were married at St Margaret's Church, Barming on 19th June 1971. Peter worked for most of his career in his family's garage business at the top of Bow Road. Hilary's father owned The Handy Stores.

**Congratulations** to Sarah Hudson who has been elected as Kent County Councillor for Malling Rural East.

Our sincere **thanks** to Trudy Bailey who for many years volunteered as a Rostrum editor. She moved to Northumberland last year but still continued working with Rostrum remotely. We are grateful to Trudy for her hard work, enthusiasm and commitment. The Rostrum team will miss her, both professionally and personally. We wish Trudy, Pete and Eley enjoyable walks on the beautiful beaches and the countryside surrounding their new home and every happiness in this new chapter of their lives.

## **WATERINGBURY CE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

We have been ever so busy here in school and, as the weather slowly continues to warm up, our opportunities to be outside increase. We are so lucky to have such amazing outdoor space including the pond area, which has been teeming with frogspawn; the fields and playgrounds, which are brilliant for football or den building; as well as opportunities to plant and grow vegetables that the kitchen then cook.

On St George's Day it was great to see so many of the children in their various Scouting uniforms. The uniforms and badges have changed an awful lot since I was a Brownie! This was a new tradition for me but one that was obviously very important to the pupils here in school.

A huge well done to Year 5 and 6 who came 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Maidstone area for the Sportshall Athletics competition which we entered just before Christmas. The pupils had to do a standing long jump, vertical jump, speed bounce, ball throw and a sprint. A massive 'thank you' to Mrs Brazil for organising this.

Recently, Year 6 were out on the roads around school earning their Bikeability badges. This is a fantastic opportunity for pupils to develop their road safety knowledge and understanding. The pupils worked in small groups with two instructors supporting and teaching. I am so proud to share that every pupil in Year 6 earned both their level 1 and 2 badges!

Our new headteacher, Miss Debbie Johnson, has been into school to meet the staff and pupils this term. We are really excited to be welcoming her into our school family and can't wait for September. She has plans to visit again soon to get to know the wider school community and to start making plans for the future. Mrs Anneka Osborne - Interim Head of School  
[www.wateringbury.kent.sch.uk](http://www.wateringbury.kent.sch.uk)

## **WATERINGBURY HISTORY SOCIETY**

The Society is working towards and looking forward to the first post-lockdown general meeting on Wednesday 15th September. Details of the speaker and topic will be given here nearer the time.

David Barrow Chairman

## **WATERINGBURY FLOWER CLUB**

The club has no events planned for the coming months yet but they intend to organize outdoor meetings in gardens locally. Jean Schofield WFC

## **VILLAGE HALL COVID UPDATE.**

By the time you are reading this, under Step 3 of the Government Covid-19 Recovery Road Map (effective 17<sup>th</sup> May), most of our village hall regular activities should be running again. As required by government guidelines, we are currently on version 10 of this 50 page document, the hall has been made "Covid-19 Secure" and strict social distancing, cleaning and Track & Trace rules have to be followed by those using the hall. Some groups and activities have decided to wait for Step 4 of the Road Map before starting again, which at the time of writing is scheduled for 21<sup>st</sup> June. This is when the government hope to remove all legal limitations on social contact, which will mean social events, parties etc. can take place in the hall.

However it looks likely that the Step 4 date will slip and in addition some Covid rules will be retained. Until such time as Step 4 is achieved and any associated rules are known, we cannot accept firm bookings for any social activities/events. We

have decided we will need a six week break after Step 4 to see how things settle down and to establish the arrangements required to have social events safely at the hall again.

So simply, the hall activities during this phase:

**Road Map Step 4 (21<sup>st</sup> June?).** Authorised regular users only plus provisional bookings can be made for dates after 6th Aug. **From 6th August** authorised regular users plus agreed social events compliant with our Terms & Conditions and any remaining Special Conditions. N.B. if the 21<sup>st</sup> June date slips the 6<sup>th</sup> August will move correspondingly.

Our experience so far is that the social distancing rules work well with regular user activities as both the hirer and those attending are committed to the rules. We will need to achieve the same commitment between the hirer and those attending for social events.

Please use [wvh.enquiries@gmail.com](mailto:wvh.enquiries@gmail.com) rather than 07535320552 for your bookings.

Mike Hoiles

### **WATERINGBURY FOOTPATH GROUP**

Last month two groups walked in the woods towards Kings Hill. We were hoping to see the spring flowers at their best and weren't disappointed. Bluebells were flowering in dappled shade under the trees together with wood anemones and one group had a good view of a beautiful Early Purple Orchid in flower close to the footpath. The other group would probably have seen it if our orchid expert had been with us to point it out! Although both days were chilly, the flowers and early leaves on trees were sure signs of the seasons advancing.

As the Covid restrictions are relaxed I hope I will not need to organise people into groups of six. I'll let Rostrum know our plans and everyone will be welcome to join us. If lots of people turn up, we may need to split into smaller groups. My intention is to keep to the recent pattern of walking on the first Sunday of most months, leaving the Village Hall at 2pm in the winter and 2.30pm in the summer. I hope that we will also have some mid-week walks, in which case, I'll let people know by text. If anyone else wants to help choose, check and lead a route that would be great.

If you are interested in joining our walks and haven't already contacted me, please let me have your mobile number so I can keep you updated. Provided restrictions allow, our next walk will be on **Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> June**, leaving the Village Hall at 2.30pm. Lisa Dean 077 5953 9032

### **TESTON AND WATERINGBURY PRESCHOOL**

In our final term this year, we focus our learning around the book 'Mad about Minibeasts!' by Giles Andreae and David Wojtowycz. This book is the perfect way to learn outside to encourage the children to explore and see what minibeast they can find in the garden. This brilliantly beastly rhyming book, a series of mini poems about snails, slugs, beautiful butterflies and bustling beetles, will delight the children.

To coincide with our topic, we will be welcoming our very own hungry caterpillars to enable the children to see them grow into beautiful butterflies before releasing them into our garden. I wonder what names the children will give them this year!

We have also introduced a wormery for the children to explore what worms do below the soil and learn about how important they are to our garden.

In our craft activities we will be celebrating Father's Day, with the children making mini beast cards for their dads and grandads.

Our plan is to run sports day again this year in July and this term we will be helping the children practice their sports day events in readiness for the big day.

If you are interested in joining our pre-school, please contact

Tina Driver on 07805 796353 or email

[tandwngroup@gmail.com](mailto:tandwngroup@gmail.com)

## **FIRST WATERINGBURY GUIDES**

We are now meeting outside and thoroughly enjoying seeing friends again and having tremendous fun. Our first week was Rounders on the Playing field – it was pitch dark before we finished and bitterly cold in the wind but only for the leaders as the girls were running around and keeping warm. Our second week was in the orchard playing Capture the Flag. There are rules, but frankly, I don't think anyone took any notice. Importantly, the girls had great fun. Feedback from one dad was the girls were buzzing when they got back in the car. That of course, is why we do it and gives us a great deal of satisfaction.

As I write this, what we are planning for this Friday involves outdoor cooking on a wood fire. It's rather unfortunate that the April showers have arrived late. We are hoping against hope that we won't get wet on Friday. Drizzle we can cope with, full downpour rain tends to put the fire out! The following week it can rain for all it likes as we're at Mote Park on the swan pedalo and learning how to paddle board. I suspect it may not only be rain that makes the girls wet!

Our waiting list has not yet moved but we are working with the brownie leaders to decide when the next set of girls can join us. If your daughter is interested in joining us, please register her on the Girlguiding website and we will contact you to arrange a visit. Brownies do have spaces now and you can register your daughter for brownies on the same website. Rainbows are aged from 5-7, brownies 7-10 and guides 10-14. Sheena, Emily and Hayleigh 1<sup>st</sup> Wateringbury Guides

## **CROSSROADS CARE KENT- 'WE STILL CARE'**

Following a particularly difficult year for unpaid Carers, **Crossroads Care Kent** wants Carers across Kent to know that "We Still Care". Our staff have been working throughout the pandemic, providing urgent, vital support. Now that there is an easing of lockdown restrictions and shielding, we want to remind people that if you, or someone you know is looking after someone at home, who needs some help and support, we are here for you.

As Kent's leading Carers' charity, Crossroads Care Kent can provide **free**, in-the-home replacement care to enable an unpaid Carer to take a short break - do essential shopping, go for a walk, see a friend, or attend a health appointment to stay well themselves. Our urgent care team works around the clock to offer support when situations get too difficult, or in the event of an emergency. Our volunteer support team can offer someone to talk to, befriending, or practical help around the house or garden.

If you, or someone you know, is an unpaid Carer in need of help and support, you can speak to us on **03450 956 701** or visit [www.crossroadskent.org](http://www.crossroadskent.org) to find out more. Our services are free of charge and we work across the whole of Kent.

## **WATERINGBURY SCOUT GROUP**

If you have ever been within half a mile at the end of a Beaver meeting, you will have heard the words "WE WILL DO OUR BEST", chanted with great gusto! When our youngest Scouting members start out, they learn this is a fundamental part of being a Scout and when invested, they each promise "to do my best, to be kind and helpful and to love our world". We could not be prouder of our Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorers in Wateringbury. Along with a lot of fun and friendship, they take this promise seriously too. The leaders keep a record of the number of volunteering hours our youth members contribute to their community - it is a staggering total and has benefitted many projects and charities which they have chosen to support. Here are a couple of examples:

Most recently (and visibly), you may have seen the Cubs gardening at the church. They have a number of small gardens in the churchyard which they maintain.

Many of our Explorers support the Beavers, Cubs and Scouts as Young Leaders, assisting at meetings every week and at camps. They are a valuable link between the adult leaders and youth members and make the setting up, running activities and tidying away so much easier. In the last few years, we have seen several of our past Scouts become Young Leaders and continue their training to join the adult leadership team too. We'd also like to thank our Explorers for the excellent commitment shown during lockdowns and especially to all those who led the many varied and unique online meetings to keep us smiling and engaged.

You will see all our sections out and about, undertaking many different activities and challenges during their meetings this summer. Give us a wave! We are very pleased to be a part of our lovely village community.

Hazel Mitchell, Assistant Explorer Leader

The **mobile library** will be at Bow Road on a Friday from 11.25 - 11.55am on the following dates: 18 June, 16 July, 13 August and 10 September. At the moment the mobile is continuing with the **Click and Select** service from Coldharbour library. Here is a link to information: <https://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/libraries/mobile-libraries-during-coronavirus>

Books can also be borrowed from the **village telephone library**

## **HEART OF KENT HOSPICE NEEDS YOUR HELP**

The charity is currently looking for volunteers to help as retail assistants in their shops and as 'Compassionate neighbours' to offer friendship to someone in your local community. For more information on volunteering, please call People Services on 01622 792200 or go to [volunteers@hokh.co.uk](mailto:volunteers@hokh.co.uk).

## **NEWS FROM OUR BOROUGH AND COUNTY COUNCILLOR SARAH HUDSON**

Thank you to everyone for all your support at the local elections in May, and for allowing me to become your representative at County Hall. Now the hard work begins!

Have your say! There's a boundary review. And the number of Borough Councillors on TMBC is reducing by 11.

This affects Watringbury as the population is too small to be a standalone ward. One suggestion is to merge with Mereworth which, I think, is a brilliant suggestion. We are in the same Benefice, we share the A26 and the problems/issues that this entails, and have other similarities, I'm sure.

Please write in and make your views known. One way or another, there will be changes in 2023 at the next Borough Council elections.

[https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/have-your-say/27207?fbclid=IwAR34jXoRLA4BLZnoIX4rfeU\\_Blb1xJGIEKlwBcpntCpVKijOKi-Tj4EELw](https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/have-your-say/27207?fbclid=IwAR34jXoRLA4BLZnoIX4rfeU_Blb1xJGIEKlwBcpntCpVKijOKi-Tj4EELw)

The Friends of Watringbury will be having another Community Tidy later this month. If you would like to become more involved in keeping our lovely village lovely, then please email [michaeljwilliams123@btinternet.com](mailto:michaeljwilliams123@btinternet.com) for more information. Many hands make light work!

## **NEWS FROM OUR MP TOM TUGENHATT**

Early in May we all had the chance to turn out and vote for our County Councillors and Police and Crime Commissioner, in the first elections since the Covid19 pandemic.

There can be no doubt that life has changed beyond recognition for all of us since March last year. We've all had to take measures we would never have dreamt of, and every community has come together like never before.

Part of that is because we've been lucky to have strong local leadership in our towns and villages, including here in Watringbury. Kent County Council has supported these efforts and their contribution to our recovery cannot be underestimated.

In Sarah Hudson, we have a strong, local and powerful voice for Watringbury at County Hall. The result was decisive and I look forward to working with Sarah over the next few years.

I was also pleased to see Matthew Scott re-elected as Police and Crime Commissioner. He has brought respectability back to the role. It is one which means our Police force are much more accountable than before, when it was an unelected committee scrutinising Police performance.

Local elections are often dominated by lower than usual turnout, so I'd like to thank everyone who voted, whoever it was for. In my 6 years as an MP I have learned that working together with elected representatives is key to making sure that policies can be pursued in everyone's best interests. I look forward to doing so with Matthew and Sarah

## **GARDENING FOR WILDLIFE IN WATERINGBURY**

Firstly, I'd like to thank those of you that attended our Kent Wildlife Trust (KWT) 'Gardening for a Wilder Kent' event in my garden in April.

I was disappointed that the unseasonal weather meant that there were fewer flowers than expected. The early bulbs, heathers and pulmonarias are just finishing but many of the fruit trees are now in blossom. and they are buzzing with life!

In previous years we have been encouraged to adopt a 'No Mow May' strategy, leaving even a small area of lawn unmowed for at least a month. This allows wild flowers to grow through, encourages pollinating insects and provides food and habitats for a wide range of invertebrates including the caterpillars of butterflies and moths. Since we are about a month behind, perhaps we could all try this strategy until the end of the summer.



The stars of my open garden were undoubtedly the two young hedgehogs that were brought by the 'Kent Mammal Group' on route to a new, safe home to be fed and watered for a few weeks before release.

Many visitors left with hedgehog home plans and a better understanding of how we can all support this threatened species. Providing water in a vessel that they can easily access is key (the birds will also benefit) as well as ensuring that they can travel from one garden to the next by leaving gaps in fences. Hedgehogs travel quite a distance in their search for food and have up to four different homes, so if you can get together with your neighbours to establish a 'wildlife corridor' you're more likely to see them in your own garden.

Pauline Knutton

## **NETTLESTEAD AND WATERINGBURY PRESCHOOL (NWPS) AND OUT OF SCHOOLS' CLUB**

Three weeks into the term and we have already done so much and been lucky enough to have visitors! Ducklings, Queenie and Biggie - the children enjoyed learning how to care for them and what they eat.

This term we have looked at Spring, related wildlife and mini beasts (bugs)! We have some caterpillars that are growing so quickly, and the children are looking forward to seeing them change into beautiful butterflies, that we will release so the life cycle can start all over again. They have tried on 'bug glasses' to help them understand how an insect sees the world and made bug houses.

The children have enjoyed role play activities, such as pizza hut, marching bands, catwalk divas and artists, on safari, wash day and a firm favourite, baby bath time!

If you are interested in any of the services the setting offers, please do not hesitate to contact us. Childcare, Education and Out of School Clubs, including holiday club.

01622 813120, [enquiries@nwps.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@nwps.org.uk),  
<https://nwppreschool.org.uk/>

## **A VIEW FROM THE P~~EW~~ SADDLE: 'SECRET BIKE PARK HEAVEN'**

"Take the left" the lead cyclist says and we veer off the main track onto a smaller, narrower, rougher track leading into dense sticky wood. I've never done anything like this in my life. It's a bit like that bit in Star Wars where the X Wings are skipping down the death star's trenches trying to avoid smashing into the sides, only here the sides are trees, the occasional branches and tight spots between trunks that we can hardly get the handlebars through. Sudden plunges down into little valleys and then the inevitable need to hit the pedals hard and climb the other side. Where is he taking us? "This way, just keep going" he shouts back. This is trust.

I am new to MTB (Mountain Biking). And I am totally addicted. It grew out of a couple of injuries due to running ('told you' I imagine some saying at this point.) I didn't have my own MTB but my son had one that he has grown out of that fits me (there is another whole discussion there about watching your children literally exceed you over time) . . . another day. Thing was the Bike needed a lot of maintenance so for a couple of weeks I spent a few hours in the garage with YouTube and my brother on Skype as my lead advisors working through 'replacing tyres,' 'putting on a new chain', 'adding a new derailleur,' 'changing gear cables'. I had really enjoyed that. There is something in the science literature about the link between doing something technical with your fingers and your brain, and focus and relaxation. For some people its knitting, others lego, others prayer beads and me, at this point, changing bits of an old bike.

So the bike was renovated so I could join the pop up Bike Group. The injured runners became temporary MTB-ers with some experts to lead. 'Bike Park' is where the lead cyclist is taking us. (It is not far away but the location is strictly secret so shhhhhh!) I had no idea what was coming. Shooting out of the narrow woods suddenly we fly over a bump and the land just falls away to what feels almost vertical over a little 'cliff edge' and

frankly its terrifying. We hurtle down and then up and bounce over the next bumpy ridge. Both wheels, for a fraction of a second, actually leave the ground. Then into the next corner and bump and drop and rise. I am laughing hysterically. It's like a roller coaster. One drop and rise after another, each seeming more ludicrously impossible. 'Heaven is a Bike park' I think.

The thing is when you go over the edge you just have to commit to the drop. You cannot break. You are in full flight and there is only one option. You have to focus entirely on the moment because if you think about anything else you might just stack it. We are all of an age that 'stacking it' requires longer recovery time than the young (Jealous? Me? Certainly not!!!). Totally unnecessarily risky. Bliss.

Later, at the end of the excursion debrief, there is a discussion about thoughts of 'what happens if we stack it and can't work and the business goes under and . . .'. I just don't get those thoughts. I just get 'whoooooooooooo'. I am not really sure what, if any of this is particularly 'theological'. I once attended a seminar on the theology of driving (given by a priest who I think quite liked driving.) I can't remember much about it. Perhaps there is something about being out in the world, being attached to something that connects with you, connects to the world in a vivid and fully embodied way, and then takes you, with a few others, into moments and spaces that are . . . well not quite of this world. It certainly takes me back to that child's eye view of the world that newly looks upon experience and seeks to connect; maybe in ways we grownups might from time to time lose sight of. Maybe there is a spirituality of MTB-ing? Or maybe it is just an adrenaline fix with a bunch of mates 'at a certain time of life' at the end of the week. I don't mind either way. *Bob Bowie*

## **WATERINGBURY CHURCH - SERVICES IN JUNE**

[SJB Church web site:](http://www.wateringburychurch.org.uk) [www.wateringburychurch.org.uk](http://www.wateringburychurch.org.uk)

[Church Face Book Page:](https://fb.me/wateringburychurch) [fb.me/wateringburychurch](https://fb.me/wateringburychurch)

[Friends of SJB Church](http://www.fowc.org.uk) [web site www.fowc.org.uk](http://www.fowc.org.uk)

**Services in Church** For the time being Covid regulations mean that it is not feasible to hold an 8.30am Prayer Book Holy Communion Service on the 3rd Sunday in the month. Week by week services at St John the Baptist church are as below:

**6<sup>th</sup> June** - 10am – Morning Praise

with Barry Fisher

**13<sup>th</sup> June** - 10am – Communion with Rev Gary

**20<sup>th</sup> June** - 10am - All Age Worship

**27<sup>th</sup> June** - 10am – Communion with

Canon Liz Walker

**4<sup>th</sup> July** - 10am - Matins with Barry Fisher

***To comply with Covid regulations it is important that those hoping to attend a service notify their wish by emailing before 2pm on the prior Saturday to***

[office@wateringburychurch.org.uk](mailto:office@wateringburychurch.org.uk) / 01622 813852.

Our short on-line worship will still be available every week for you to enjoy at

**<http://tiny.cc/krymmz>**

It is available at any time.



## **WEEKLY ZOOM BENEFICE BIBLE STUDY GROUP**

**Thursdays at 7.30pm for about an hour** Rev **Gary Townsend** invites you to join him for bible study. To join please email [gary.rev@outlook.com](mailto:gary.rev@outlook.com) for the link to the meeting.

## **THOUGHT**

A person is a person through other persons; you can't be human in isolation; you are human only in relationships.

*Desmond Tutu*

## **CHURCH ANNUAL MEETING**

The Annual Meeting was held by Zoom on 11<sup>th</sup> May and was well attended.

**Election of Church Wardens** At the Annual Vestry meeting two nominations were received for **Elizabeth Gummer** and **Peter Bond** who were duly elected. Rev Gary thanked them both for their past and continued service to the parish, a sentiment echoed by all present.

**Electoral Roll** There are 74 people on the roll.

The full reports, which are commented on below, can be read on the church website [www.wateringburychurch.org.uk](http://www.wateringburychurch.org.uk)

**Accounts** Church Treasurer Jane Hambly thanked Peter for his help with the accounts as she was new to the roll. Peter Bond expressed his sincere thanks to everyone who had maintained their regular donations to the church over the past year in exceptionally challenging times which had left the church in a secure financial position.

**Church Wardens' Fabric Report** There are no major concerns re the condition of the building. A handrail along the entrance path had been installed and is proving a useful aid.

**Church Wardens' Pastoral Report** Peter and Liz expressed sincere thanks to all those who have assisted in Covid times to help deal with the necessary restrictions.

**Vicar's Report** Rev Gary said it had been a joy to worship across the benefice and he thanked all at SJB for their support and warm welcome. He and Sharon look forward to everything the Lord has in store for us all in the coming year.

**PCC Lay representatives.** Those elected to serve on the Parochial Church Council are: Alastair Byron, Christine Byron, Alice English, Barry Fisher, David Merry, Kate Millar, Eddie Scarlin, Gordon Self, Sheena Stewart and Mike Witts.

Rev Gary thanked all for their service and commented it was lovely to have a full PCC who worked so well together.

### **Any Other Business**

Barry asked the meeting's opinion of the proposal by KCC to **put a pedestrian island in the A26 opposite the church and use the church layby as road carriageway** to make it wide enough for a central island. The church standing committee had been told of the proposal last December and had expressed their grave concerns about the loss of the lay-by. What would happen to funeral and bridal cars? What about parking for those attending church and social activities? The layby is often used by drivers to take mobile phone calls and for general day-to-day parking. There was no other parking and often cars are parked up to Lodge Close. After a general discussion it was agreed that volume and speed of traffic were problematic but that this proposal was not the answer. All present expressed their overwhelming opposition to the scheme. Residents are asked to email their views to [lan.Grigor@kent.gov.uk](mailto:lan.Grigor@kent.gov.uk) with copies to [clerk@wateringburypc.org.uk](mailto:clerk@wateringburypc.org.uk) and [sarah.hudson@tmhc.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.hudson@tmhc.gov.uk)

### **OPEN AIR WORSHIP**

In my sermon in Wateringbury for Rogation Sunday I talked about the blessings which God gives us in clean water, food and fresh air and our prayers are to be for these. The London Parks are great examples of these outdoor blessings and I referred to worship al fresco especially the massive Prayer Vigil for 80,000 people led by Pope Benedict XVI on 18 September 2010 in Hyde Park.

On Rogation Sunday we would normally be outside walking through the fields and asking (rogare) a blessing on the crops. But like other services these have been cancelled over the past year. Open Air services have played a part for many of us in our spiritual development. Firstly there has been the Good Friday Walk of Witness which is common across the country. People carry the cross through the streets and have stations for prayers and readings. At West Malling it is one of the biggest services of the year and draws from all denominations, stopping in the Abbey and at other places such as outside Tesco. As it has become bigger so it has taken longer. Palm Sunday has an outdoor dimension and the only hymn sung so far this year at West Peckham was in the churchyard as we processed singing 'All glory, laud and honour'. Most churches will carry their palms with a ceremony in the churchyard.

A lot of pilgrimages have begun these past few years and some have appeared on television most notably the Camino de Santiago, St James Compostella in Spain and the routes to Lough Derg in the Irish borderlands. Two years ago we inaugurated a local pilgrimage from Old East Peckham church (St Michael's) to St Dunstan's West Peckham, then to Holy Trinity, East Peckham and back up to St Michael on the high ridge. We have walked it again during the Covid and it is delightful. Climbing back up to St Michael reminded me of our time at Oberammergau when we stayed at Imst in Austria and had to take part in the night-time ascent to the Lawrencehutte, carrying flares to light our way. It was steep and daunting but we love St Lawrence who is associated with flames.

Also in 2000 we went on a Rochester diocesan pilgrimage to the Holy Land led by Bishop Nazir Ali. Many of the services were in the open air. The very first was in the Shepherds' Fields in Bethlehem where I had to act as cantor and sing out the opening line of 'While

Shepherds watched'. Then we had a service on the boat as we sailed across the Sea of Galilee - this included throwing a net into the dark waters. My favourite service was in the Roman amphitheatre at Caesarea from where St Paul set sail for Rome and we held a communion service as the Mediterranean lapped at the shore behind us.

Finally our next outdoor service at Mereworth will be the V.C. Service at the grave of Admiral Lucas on 27 June. He was the first recipient of the honour. The sea cadets attend and we read the description of his brave action in the Crimean War and have a two minute silence. It will be the first Sunday after the end of the lockdown then and we can breathe a sigh of relief in the open air as did all those whose lives Lucas saved by thinking not of himself but of others. *Canon Brian Stevenson*

## **APRIL HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE NOTES**

Cllr Fielding reported receiving a considerable number of responses to the *Village Road Traffic Suggestions*. She was still expecting more responses and will analyse and compile a list of problems and proposed solutions.

The Parish Council (PC) will engage a **specialist consultant** to advise on feasibility of the proposed traffic solutions before presenting them to KCC Highways. PC felt that it should strengthen their position dealing with KCC who are not responsive to PC's requests, e.g. ignoring the request for 40mph speed limit in the approach to the village from Pizienwell Rd, although there is such a limit on the approach to Hadlow, also on A26. KCC informed PC in the past that a 20 mph speed limit from the traffic lights to the Railway pub would need to be self-policed by installing traffic calming measures at the PC cost.

Present at the meeting were two **representatives from Nettlestead**. They have similar traffic problems and wanted to learn and support PC plans to reduce speed in Bow Rd and ban heavy lorries over 5 tonnes from both villages.

In the **public discussion** two main issues were raised: the high level of **pollution** generated by heavy traffic flow; the **damage** caused by vibrations to 337 Tonbridge Rd (cracks in walls and ceilings, tiles falling from the roof and distortion of a door frame). The road by 337 is too narrow for large lorries to pass each other and the pavement opposite is very dangerous for pedestrians

## **MAY PARISH COUNCIL NOTES**

**Election of chair for coming year** - No members of the council offered to stand for election as chair so, under the rules, the present chair Michael Wells will remain in post on a month by month basis until a new chair is appointed.

**Election of vice chair** - Patrick Gregson was unanimously elected

**Co-option of Councillors** - Christian Ball and Geraint Owen expressed a desire to serve on the council and, were unanimously co-opted to the parish council.

**Report from Borough Councillor Sarah Hudson** - The Community tidy up on

1<sup>st</sup> May had been well supported with as many as 20 people working in Bow Road and in

the car park. Ivy has been removed and the fence will be painted by members of Grow 19 College, East Malling. Planters had also been provided on the central reservation. Sarah had funded the project from her Borough Councillor's budget.

**Mr Roger Roud**, has been elected Mayor by T&MBC.

**Crime Report** - Ewatch has reported the theft of a purse and bank card which had been used. Councillor Hudson understood an arrest had been made.

**Playing Fields** - A site meeting with the contractor had been held regarding the track from Fields Lane and a quote was awaited. A quote to repair damaged rope at the play area was accepted. Councillors unanimously agreed to accept a quote of £75 from Playsafe for regular inspections of the play equipment.

**Village Hall Wall** - Following a site inspection a quote was awaited for repairs to the wall which had previously been damaged.

**Speedwatch** - the team was now up to full strength as more volunteers joined. The team was thanked for its continuing work. The number of vehicles reported to the police as speeding at various locations on the village roads continues to rise.

**Cemetery** – compliments on its good condition had been received.

**Annual Government Statement/ Return for year** - Councillors unanimously approved the details on the form and arranged to sign and submit it.

**Arrangements for June meeting** - Due to the cessation of the National Dispensation on 6<sup>th</sup> May to allow councils to meet virtually councillors were asked to pass a resolution (Resolution 101) to allow the Parish Council (PC) to suspend all future meetings and delegate certain decisions to the parish clerk and two councillors. All councillors would be emailed prior to any decisions being made. A large venue would be needed to allow for safe social distancing to be maintained. The main hall in the village hall was not available and the upper meeting room usually used by PC was too small to meet the Covid criteria. The school hall was suggested for PC meetings but in the absence of a firm booking the resolution needed to be adopted and after discussion was unanimously agreed. Subsequently, a majority decision has been taken not to have a PC meeting on the 1st June.

**Public discussion** - A resident raised concerns about the proposal by KCC to create a gateway with a mandatory 50mph limit close to the junction of the A26 with Pizienwell Road. PC were working to achieve a 40mph limit on this approach to the village, so why are KCC not listening?

**Planning** - PC commented on the following planning applications: Coppice Court, Teston Road (retrospective) Resiting of building for dog training by 3 metres as a metal pipe had been found and the owner of the pipe could not be traced. (*No objections*)

5 Hanbury Close Garage conversion and creation of bike store (*No objections*)

White Cottage 171 Tonbridge Road Listed building consent to divide existing large family bathroom to form one *ensuite* and one family bathroom: restoration of western chimney (*No objections relying on the conservation officer to ensure the integrity of the listed building is maintained*)

501 Red Hill change of entry on to Teston Road (*No objections*)

3 Upper Mill creation of entrance drive using community grass verge onto A26. *Objections had been raised by neighbours. PC had reservations, in particular, the safety aspect of the exit from the proposed driveway onto A26.*

## **ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

The Chairman's report, report from the school and budget report were taken as read, copies can be found on the PC website [www.wateringbury.org.uk](http://www.wateringbury.org.uk) A resident thanked parish councillors for their hard work on behalf of the village

*Approved minutes of the meetings will appear on the Parish Council website [www.wateringbury.org.uk](http://www.wateringbury.org.uk) in due course.*

## **GROUPS USING THE PLAYING FIELDS**

Any group, other than football or cricket, wishing to use the playing fields for group activities should first contact the Parish Council giving details of activity/dates and times and confirmation of public liability cover. Contact the Clerk on [clerk@wateringbury.org.uk](mailto:clerk@wateringbury.org.uk) or 01622 817068. Thank you.