

Welcome to the first issue of 2018

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Tony Gosby for his delightful cover sketches

All distributors for their help in delivering Rostrum promptly round the village.

Christine, Trudy and Ted

VILLAGE DIARY

FEBRUARY

4	Footpaths Walk	Village Car Park	2pm
6	Parish Council Meeting followed by planning committee	Village Hall	7.30pm
7	Coffee, Craft & Chat outing to Hempstead Valley		10.30am
8	Women's Institute	Village Hall	2pm
21	Coffee, Craft & Chat	Church	10.30am
21	Simply Soup Lent Lunches	Church	12-1.30
21	Aviation on the Medway talk (Hist Soc)	Village Hall	7.40pm

MARCH

4	Footpaths Walk	Village Car Park	2pm
6	Parish Council Meeting followed by planning committee	Village Hall	7.30pm

VILLAGE FETE 3 JUNE 2018 REGRETFULLY CANCELLED

Since the last appeal for volunteers to join the organising committee more existing members have had to withdraw their support for a variety of reasons. Thank you to the 2 people who did express an interest in helping. It is therefore with great regret that the decision has been taken to cancel this year's village fete. We hope to hold one in 2019 provided we have the volunteers. The Parish Council, who were also unable to assist, wish to express their thanks to those who have worked so hard in organising and running what has been a very well organised and successful day which was greatly enjoyed by everyone whether they were residents or visitors. *John Ibbs (Vice Chair Fete Committee)*

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

Congratulations to Rostrum's **Trudy Bailey** who celebrates a milestone birthday on **28 February**.

New Arrival Congratulations to Mike and Sue Barlow on the arrival of their first grandchild **Max Michael** who weighed in at 8lb 4oz on 31 December in Margate Hospital. Congratulations too to parents **Fran and Tom Humphreys**

David Skinner

It is with great sadness that we report the death on 18 January of David of Bijou Nurseries. Rostrum extends its condolences to Rosemary, Louise, Jo and their families

Thank You

A great big thank you for all the messages, prayers, presents and cards sent to us for our 70th wedding anniversary and for Ted’s birthday. **Ted & Doreen Vincent**

Thank you Friends It’s said “If you want a good job done, do it yourself” and that is precisely what a band of “oldies” who call themselves “The Friends of Wateringbury” have done. Mike Williams has gathered volunteers to spruce up our village, which has been looking very shabby over recent years. They first undertook to clean the many signs around the village and more recently they have cleared up the heavy build up of leaf fall down Bow Road. I am particularly grateful for this as I use a walking stick and have stepped on unseen twigs underneath the leaves causing me to stumble. I want to take this opportunity to say thank you for your efforts keeping our village looking clean. Well done “The Friends of Wateringbury”. *Patricia Jolly*

A Groan! If you were travelling up or down Red Hill one Sunday afternoon in January you might have seen two people litter picking. Every time we walk up or down the road we comment on the amount of litter which spoils our village. The views across the valley are delightful but the litter is not! Those who passed us on foot congratulated us and one couple promised to finish the job as we only managed to get halfway having filled the two bin liners we took with us! We collected mainly drinks cans and fast food containers with sweet wrappers next on the list. We even collected glass milk bottles. Where does it all come from? *A Villager*

VILLAGE PEOPLE - MICHAEL CAYZER

It gives me much sadness to announce that my partner Michael Cayzer, a resident of Wateringbury for many years, passed away on 19 December 2017. I, together with other members of Michael's family, would like to thank everyone for their kind support and messages of condolence following Michael's passing. It has been a great source of comfort to us all and we sincerely thank you. In sadness Peter Farr

Michael Cayzer A Tribute

The January meeting of the Parish Council was unusually sombre, for Michael Cayzer was absent for the first time in over 25 years. For many years the Cayzer family owned the garage on Bow Road. Michael was renowned for his habit of serving fuel with his burning cigarette held behind his back as a “safety precaution”. However, Michael will be best remembered for his commitment to enhancing the village. When there was an unexpected shortfall of £200,000 funding for the new Village Hall, the alternatives were a much delayed project or a smaller building. Michael persuaded the Parish Council to cover this funding gap so the project could proceed as planned. The initial plans for Phoenix Park included provision for areas of open public space. Michael negotiated with T&MBC and the developers for these open spaces to be consolidated into a four acre site, entrusted to the Council - resulting in doubling the size of our Playing Fields at no cost to the parish. After Michael led objections to proposals to build additional facilities on Drayhorse Meadow, the owners sold the land to a gypsy family. They hoped to take up residence there under the special rights for travellers. The Supreme Court ruled against them and required they vacate the site. Michael saw this as an opportunity for the Council to buy the 6½ acres of Drayhorse Meadow thus safeguarding it from future development. The village owes much to Michael. *Richard Tripp*

VILLAGE POST OFFICE REFURBISHMENT

Please note our Post Office will be **closed from 25 January and will reopen on 9 February.** During this time customers can use Teston PO in Teston Village Stores on Tuesdays and Thursdays 9am-4pm.

FOOTPATHS GROUP

Next Walks

4 February Meet village hall 2pm for local walk

4 March Meet village hall 2pm for local walk to the woods for early spring flowers

First may I wish all a Happy, Healthy, Safe and Peaceful 2018. Our December walk took us along Old Road, passing Wistaria Cottage then across Danns Lane to Kings Hill following the edge of the golf course and passing the WW2 gun-port, crossing Canon Lane, to join the path to Gransden.

The 7-mile Boxing Day walk, which I normally do alone, was a success, despite rain forecasted we were blessed with excellent walking weather, along the river to Yalding to join the Greensand Way, observing the deer near Moat Wood, to East Peckham old Church after a stop for lunch. We returned via Park Road, Pizien Well and Old Road.

New Year's Day was a tad wet, I was surprised to see so many harden walkers out. Due to the conditions underfoot, we walked out to Rock Farm, Gibbs Hill and Pizien Well and returned along Old Road avoiding a lot of muddy paths. KFR ☎ 813763

BABY AND TODDLER GROUP

After a very busy December which included lots of Christmas craft, we ended the term with our Christmas party. We now look forward to another enjoyable and active year. This term our craft sessions will be winter themed.

We meet every Wednesday and Friday 10am to 12noon at Watringbury Village Hall. There are lots of toys to play with, we also have craft and singing sessions. If you would like to see what we do why not come along. The cost is £2 for the first child and £1 for any others. The price includes tea and coffee for adults, with snacks and drinks for the children. For more information please contact Linda on 01732 522437.

WATCH Club 4pm-6pm in Village Hall

The club is for young people aged 10-18. Its next meeting is on

Sunday 25 February for Mardi Gras, Pancakes and Games.

WATERINGBURY CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

We are delighted that Ofsted inspectors have judged our school to be Good in all areas following a two-day inspection before Christmas. Inspectors said: "Leaders, staff and governors share the vision, ambition and determination to provide the best possible learning experience for pupils. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning, pupils' outcomes and behaviour are now good. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy all they do, work hard and want to do well."

Our Early Years provision for the youngest pupils in our school also received praise with inspectors saying: "Children are happy, settle well into the routines of the day and develop their confidence and independence. They share and cooperate, and play and learn well together." In addition, the report commended our above average Year 1 phonics screening results and Year 6 reading, writing and mathematics standards as well as our whole school focus on outdoor learning opportunities and healthy lifestyles.

We are delighted that the report recognises our vision, ambitions and aspirations for the school and the combined efforts of everyone involved with the school – staff, governors, children, parents, volunteers and our wider community – to improve outcomes for our pupils and give them a breadth of experiences. Nothing is more important. As Headteacher, I'd also like to thank everyone for all the messages of congratulation and support we've received since Ofsted published their report. Thank you for continuing to support Watringbury School in so many different and valuable ways. It truly takes a village to raise a child.

Chasey Crawford Usher – Headteacher

www.watringbury.kent.sch.uk

JANUARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING NOTES

Mr Stephen Tickner was co-opted on to the Parish Council.

It was announced that **Mr Michael Cayzer**, former Chairman and member of the Council for over 25 years had died in December. It was agreed that donations of £50 each should be sent to the RAF Association and Diabetic Association in his memory.

The recently refurbished **Village War Memorial** has been given Grade II Approved, Listed Buildings Special Architectural Interest status. The Council will now be responsible for its upkeep.

County Councillor, Matthew Balfour, advised that the proposed budget should be published soon. Council tax is likely to be increased, primarily to support the work of Social Services. The Wateringbury crossroads project will still go ahead although no specific timetable has been decided. Utilities in the crossroads area are being investigated. Cllr Balfour reported that he ceased to be a member of the cabinet as of the day prior to the meeting but he welcomes the opportunity to spend more time on local matters.

Due to substantial cuts in funding, changes are foreseen to the way the public bus service is run. The possibility of using Social Services/ Health Service/ Age UK and voluntary drivers using an integrated and computerised system have been considered.

Borough Council, Simon Jessel advised that T&M's budget would be published in approximately 4 weeks' time. Changes have been made to the structure of the planning areas in an attempt to reduce costs. The future usage of the Gibson Buildings is being considered with the possibility of them being used as a magistrates court, or maybe selling them off, or renting them. Cllr Jessel advised that he will be stepping down in the April/May 2019 election.

Crime reports taken from the Kent Police website for the area in October 2017 showed 5 violent crimes, 2 burglaries and 1 public behaviour crime. From the e-Watch website reports were made about damage to several vehicles and licence plate thefts in Bow Road and Phoenix Drive during mid December. The Council is finding lack of detail provided in the reports frustrating and will investigate if freedom of information is preventing this from being known.

Village Sign near the school Only one quotation for the repair of the sign had been received despite numerous invitations. Newly appointed Cllr Stephen Tickner advised that he would be able to provide names of contacts who could be approached for other quotes.

Tom Tugendhat MP is asking for support for the funding of a slip road off the M25 at Sevenoaks (Jct 5).

During December the Highways Speedwatch team carried out 7 sessions over a period of 7 hours. During this time there were 142 observations of speeding vehicles. The observations also highlighted 2 vehicles being driven without Road Tax and/or MOT. During the whole 2017 calendar year, the group carried out 135 sessions over a period of 178.4 hours and in this time there were 4110 observations of speeding vehicles. Councillors discussed their frustration at their inability to take further action on motorists who repeatedly break the speed limit. A request will be made to the police to install a camera at the crossroads traffic lights to capture images of vehicles that jump red lights. The traffic light on the Bow Road/Village Hall corner had been knocked down over the Christmas period.

A report of **fly-tipping in Pizien Well** was made. Fines of £400 can be imposed upon offenders.

The **Village Warden** is no longer resident in the parish. An up to date report is to be sought.

Persistent water leaks on Waterside Mews/Bow Road are creating a mess to road and pavement areas.

During the public session it was reported that a gate had been erected along the track to Drayhorse Meadow which was causing an obstruction in an area previously used for passing vehicles.

At the Planning Meeting the following applications were considered: No objection to Single Storey porch and rear extension, alterations to windows and internal layout replacement roof and install cladding at 4 Upper Mill and Extension to double Garage at 1 Broomcroft Cottages 189 Canon Lane. Details of conditions 12 (acoustic protection) and 15 (external lighting) Abbeyfield Greensted 16 The Orpines - comment lighting nearest to number 51a The Orpines needs to be shielded to avoid light problems for the resident.

Next meeting The public are very welcome to attend the next meeting of the Parish Council at **7.30pm in the village hall on Tuesday. 6 February.**

DECEMBER PARISH COUNCIL NOTES

Election of Vice Chairman Michael Wells was unanimously elected to the post.

Crime Report Details of reports taken from the Kent Police website for September 2017 recorded a total of 9 crimes: 1 burglary in or near Cobbs Close, 2 violent crimes in or near Redhouse Gardens and Bow Terrace, 1 criminal damage arson and 1 public order on or near Leney Road, 1 criminal damage arson, 1 theft, 1 public order on or near Shell service station and 1 anti social behaviour on or near Waterside Mews. Councillors expressed their dissatisfaction at the lack of detail available.

Drayhorse Meadow repairs will be made to the chestnut fencing.

Kent Association of Local Councils Councillor Wells had attended the 70th Annual General Meeting and outlined the proceedings.

Joint Parishes Flood Group Councillor Frances Fielding had attended the launch of the Medway Flood Partnership's Flood Action Plan. Since January all agencies, national and local, had been working together to reduce flood risk within the Medway catchment which covers the land drained by the rivers Medway, Teise, Beult, Bourne and Eden. Over 9,000 properties are at risk of flooding, thankfully Wateringbury has only 6.

The Action Plan contains a combination of capital investment and maintenance projects, natural flood management techniques and community resilience measures. The largest of the capital investment projects is the enlargement of the Leigh storage barrier using traditional engineering methods. Smaller measures involve maintaining sluices and ditches, weed cutting, clearing debris etc. Natural Flood Management includes techniques to slow the flow of the water and reduce the impact of flooding using tree planting, re-meandering rivers and creating wetland areas where water can be held temporarily. Community resilience promotes actions to reduce the impact of flooding and help for communities to function during a flood. One specific action is to allow road closures in Yalding and Collier Street to prevent flooding of properties from bow waves created by vehicles. The action plan sets out what the different agencies will do in the next 5 years. The partnership will continue to monitor, review and develop the plan over the next 25 years.

Village car park Conflicting information had been received from representatives of T & M council who own the car park. The chairman is to seek written clarification hopefully before the January meeting when options can be considered.

Repairs to Play equipment following an inspection report councillors voted unanimously to effect the repairs recommended.

Speed Watch two new volunteers had offered their help. In October 284 vehicles had been observed speeding through the village in the 11 one-hour sessions the teams had been operational. Councillor Wells reported that interactive village speed signs with cameras to record vehicles are on trial with Kent Police.

Planning The Council had no objections to the application for a single storey extension at 1 Home Farm Cottages, Red Hill.

Public Discussion Time The demolition of Greensted and the problems this was causing to the owners of one property in particular were reported by its owner. He said a temporary entrance to the site was to be created on the Tonbridge Road. Building work will continue for at least one year and will include the removal of the bank (about 24ft in depth) and pile driving for the foundations.

Thanks a resident thanked councillors for their work for the village during the year. The chairman thanked his colleagues and the public for their support in 2017 and wished all present a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

WAR NEWS _FEBRUARY 1918

February	16: Dover shelled by German submarine. 21: British forces take Jericho 25: introduction of compulsory food rationing
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The Western front was relatively quiet in February 1918 and the village again suffered no deaths on this or any of the other more active war fronts.

The parish magazine of February 1918 was largely dedicated to the issue of divorce. Colonel Warde, the Conservative Member of Parliament for the Medway Towns, and Greville Livett, the Wateringbury vicar, were both exercised by the prospect that parliament might relax the current divorce laws. It was proposed that separation for 3 years should become grounds for divorce. Colonel Warde lived in Barham Court, Teston, which during WWI was used as a hospital for wounded servicemen and he was closely connected with Wateringbury. The Wateringbury branch of the Mothers' Union meeting at the end of January had unanimously condemned the new divorce proposals. The vicar was proposing a petition to parliament.

Divorce was an expensive business at the time, although since 1857 an individual act of Parliament was not required, and the only grounds for divorce were adultery. The very high cost involved, rather than the absence of adultery, resulted in very few divorces actually taking place. The law was not symmetrical, women having to prove aggravating circumstances as well as the husband's adultery. Wateringbury had experienced a high profile divorce case in 1892 when Hanbury, one of the owners of the Kent Brewery in Wateringbury, was successfully divorced by his wife. Hanbury's rather odd and unsuccessful defence had been that he was temporarily insane due to the effect of alcohol! Divorce Law seems an odd issue to pursue during a war and no change to the law was actually made until many years later (1937).

The Kent Messenger's reporting of a fatal accident on Canon Farm in February provides some insight into life during the war. Canon Farm was growing vegetables for a government contract. This involved the preparation and drying the vegetables indoors where a machine was used. The belt of the engine broke and hit 50 year old farm labourer, Herbert Chapman from Barming, on the side of his head. Herbert at 50 was too old for military service. He was taken to the West Kent Hospital, Maidstone where he died a few days later. Despite the slaughter a few miles away across the English Channel, which was shortly to resume, the inquest was very thorough. The family were represented by Brachers (still a well-known Maidstone firm of solicitors). As it was a government contract there was a Treasury solicitor present. The District Factory Inspector and a civil engineer working for the Ministry of Food also attended. The house doctor at the hospital, Dr. Zachariab, also gave evidence. The machine had already been improved to avoid another problem.

Terry Bird -

More details at (<https://www.sites.google.com/site/wateringburylocalhistory/>).

CREATIVE WORKSHOPS IN WEST MALLING.

Textile artist and embroiderer Angela Collins will be providing some exciting workshops in 2018 at The Clout Institute, West Malling. At just £25 per day including refreshments they provide excellent value for money plus all sales profits will be donated to the Dogs Trust and Alzheimer's Society. These workshops are suitable for anyone interested in embroidery, mixed media and paper craft. Call 07766 117779 or email saturdaystitcher@gmail.com for all the dates and more information. The next workshop are on **17 February, 17 March and 21 April.**

TESTON AND WATERINGBURY PRE-SCHOOL

Our theme for term 3 is 'Our World' thinking of holiday destinations, modes of transport and the importance of looking after our world. With spring approaching we will be keen to keep an eye on our garden to see which birds and animals the children can see, and also which insects come and stay at our bug hotel!

As you may be aware it is the Chinese New Year on Monday 5 February (year of the dog) and to celebrate this, the children will be making Chinese lanterns and learning to write their name in Chinese. During this term our older children have been continuing with their phonics groups that we started in September, and our parents have the opportunity to come in and discuss their children's progress throughout the term. Tina Driver

WATERINGBURY WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

At our meeting on **8 February**, starting at 2pm in the village hall, Brian Laverick-Smith is coming along to tell us about his experiences whilst piloting Hovercrafts, in his talk "Bother on the Hover". The competition for February is 'something in a bottle'. Visitors are very welcome, why not come along and join us for the afternoon.

In January our speaker was Ian Porter who returned to tell us about the 'Real Downton Abbey' - what domestic service was really like. Ian revealed several secrets about 'life below stairs', and explained the many differences experienced by people in service and the life portrayed in Downton Abbey. Contact between servants and employers were very limited, with screens etc. supplied for servants to retire behind should they accidentally meet a member of the 'family'. A very different life to the one we know today.

HISTORY SOCIETY

A Happy New Year and welcome back to all our members and visitors.

Our **next meeting on Wednesday 21 February** will be a talk by **Mr. James Preston - Aviation on the Medway** when he will speak about Kent's long association with aviation.

Our talk on 17 January was Going, Going, Gone a light hearted look at the day to day activities of a Medway based auction house, given to us by Mr Cyril Baldwin who entertained us with amusing stories of his life as an auctioneer. Mr. Baldwin kindly stepped in at the last minute due to our booked speaker being unwell.

Do come along to the Church and enjoy

SIMPLY SOUP LUNCHES IN LENT on 3 WEDNESDAYS 21 February, 7 and 21 March From 12.15 to 1.30pm

There is no charge - donations are invited for a different charity each week

LENT DISCUSSION GROUPS

During 5 weeks in Lent there will be the opportunity to meet in the church vestry to discuss a different topic each week. There will be two sessions each week on Monday evenings 7.45-9pm and Wednesday lunch times 1-2pm. So go along to whichever session suits you in the week. The first meetings are **Monday 19 and Wednesday 21 February** and continue until Monday 19 and Wednesday 21 March.

CHURCH THANKS

Big Christmas Card

A very big thank you to everyone who signed the Big Christmas Card and made a donation to The Mother and Child Appeal which is part of the Send a Cow organisation. As a result of everyone's generosity we have been able to send **£332.50** to the office in Bath. In addition, HM Government will double the amount given so that the charity will have available the sum of **£665** to carry out the admirable work it does in six African countries. Thank you again for your support. *Jane and Ted*

12th Night Quiz

The winner was Syd Thompsett, with 49 out of a possible 50 correct answers. Our Congratulations to Syd, and to the runner up Gill Smith - who is a member of Wateringbury History Society. There were 6 people with a score of 49 so we put the names into a hat, the others were: Mrs P. Cogdell, David Gill, Jeff Hann, Debbie and Allan McAllister. Very well done to all of those, and we are sorry we can only award two prizes. The amount raised for church funds was just over **£180**. The answers are on the church website. *Jan & Mike*

LOST PROPERTY

A variety of items have been left in the Church over the past few months. Please look and see if anything you are missing is there. Any items unclaimed by end of February will be re-homed.

BENEFICE SERVICES IN FEBRUARY

Church Face Book Page: fb.me/wateringburychurch

SJB Church web site: www.wateringburychurch.org.uk

Friends of SJB Church web site www.fowc.org.uk

<p>Sunday 4 February</p> <p>8.30am Holy Communion - East Malling</p> <p>9.45am Family Service – East Malling</p> <p>9.45am Food for Thought – Teston</p> <p>10am Holy Communion – Wateringbury</p>	<p>Sunday 11 February</p> <p>9.45am Holy Communion– East Malling</p> <p>9.45 Come & Praise - Teston</p> <p>10am Morning Praise – Wateringbury</p> <p>6.30pm Evensong - Teston</p>
<p>Sunday 18 February First in Lent</p> <p>8.30am PB Communion – Wateringbury</p> <p>9.45am Holy Communion – East Malling</p> <p>9.45am Parish Communion - Teston</p> <p>10 am Family .Service – Wateringbury</p>	<p>Sunday 25 February</p> <p>8.30am Holy Communion – East Malling</p> <p>9.45am Morning Praise – East Malling</p> <p>9.45am Come& Praise - Teston</p> <p>10am Holy Communion – Wateringbury</p> <p>6.30pm Parish Communion - Teston</p>
<p>Saturday 3 February Messy Church in Wateringbury - 3-5pm</p>	
<p>Every Monday – 2-3pm – Scout & Guide HQ, Glebe Meadow – Toddler Praise</p>	
<p>Every Thursday - 9am in East Malling Church – Holy Communion</p>	
<p>Pilsdon Community, 27 Water Lane, West Malling – Rev Viv Ashworth invites you to the Barn Chapel to join members of the community for a Communion Service every Wednesday at noon and 6pm on Sundays</p>	
<p>For Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals and other arrangements please contact the</p>	

Vicar Rev Nick Williams on 01732 843282 or email father.nick@btinternet.com

For all other enquiries, please contact the Administrator on 01622 815218 or

email parishofficeemwt@gmail.com

Special Services in the Benefice

Saturday 3 February 3-5pm – Messy Church in Wateringbury

Ash Wednesday Services - 14 February

10am - Wateringbury

6.30pm - East Malling

IN OUR JOYS AND SORROWS - FROM THE PARISH REGISTERS

Baptisms - We welcomed into the family of the Church:

Sadie Ann Boswell (26 November)

Jessica May Vera Tate (10 December)

We extend our deepest sympathy to the loved ones of:

Charles Willson (Funeral on 12 December)

Joyce Benstead (Burial of Ashes on 3 November)

Carol Alexandra Merry (Burial of Ashes on 19 December)

Messy Church has arrived in Wateringbury!

Our next sessions will be on

SATURDAYS 3 FEBRUARY and 3 MARCH in our church and is for families with young children up to about 8 years of age. Come along with your children, bring gran and grandad! We intend to meet **once a month on the first Saturday in the month from 3pm to 5pm.** Each session will be light touch Christian teaching with lots of messy and not so messy activities. There will be a chance to join in action songs, paint, make things, role play and more. We will finish with tea. (There is always food involved at Messy Church!) If you would like more information please e-mail me on ruth.dunn33@btinternet.com or phone 01622 812342

COFFEE BREAK – Wednesdays 7 and 21 February - 10.30-12.30

For our meeting on 7 February an excursion to Hempsted Valley is planned. If you would like to come please let Pauline know and she will let you know the arrangements and arrange transport. On 21 February we are 'back to normal' in church. Further details from Pauline 01622 814673

FAIR TRADE FORTNIGHT

26 February – 11 March

Do try and buy at least one product during Fair Trade Fortnight. When you do you will not only enjoy a first-class product you will be helping the producers who are guaranteed fair prices for their products. Producers work in groups and are paid an additional small premium which must be used for a project to benefit the whole community, ie the local school or medical facility. The decision on where to spend the premium rests with the local community.

Sundays Cool meets in the vestry during the 10am Church Services on the first and fourth Sundays in each month. It is for children and young people. Children aged 4 and under are asked to take an adult along with them.

Secondary Division (age 11+) meets on the second Sunday of the month at 10am in the Vestry for late breakfast, prayer and discussion.

PRIESTLY PONDERINGS

Rev Nick Williams

The Vicarage, 2 The Grange,

East Malling

parishofficeemwt@gmail.com

01732 843282

Brothers and sisters in Christ

I trust you all had a restful and enjoyable Christmas and New Year celebration and managed amongst the busyness to find some time for yourselves.

2018 is now upon us and in the Church has got off to a busy and hopeful start. As you may recall last year I asked about what you felt the Church should be doing to provide something for the many people who don't necessarily feel that the normal round of Church services is something they want to engage with. I can't say that the suggestions were overwhelming but those conversations I did have with people highlighted that for some the services were too formal and staid whilst others felt that more needed to be provided for our youngest people and their families, especially when those families were unfamiliar or indeed uncomfortable with formal services.

January therefore saw the launch of what we hope will be two regular services.

On 6 January between 3pm and 5pm (and on the first Saturday of every month at those times) the benefice 'Messy Church' launched at Wateringbury Church for children from all the Churches in the Benefice. There was a really encouraging start with lots of families attending. I know some of you will be unfamiliar with Messy Church so here's a summary of some of the things it involves:

- Messy Church is a form of church for children and adults that involves creativity, celebration and hospitality.
- It's primarily for people who don't already belong to another form of church.
- It typically includes a welcome, a long creative time to explore the biblical theme through getting messy; a short celebration time involving story, prayer, song, games and similar; and a meal together at tables. All elements are for people of all ages, adults and children.
- It's a church for people at all stages of their faith journey and of any age
- So if you think this is something you might want to be involved in then please go along in February and join in.

The second service (SOS) at East Malling, again for the whole benefice, was on the 21 January at 7pm so it will have taken place by the time you read this but they will be taking place regularly. This service promises a time of modern worship, prayer and reflection and is intended for those who like less formal worship although everyone is welcome.

So as you can see a busy time lies ahead of us and I hope to see you at one of the services on offer across the three Churches. *Rev Nick Williams*