

**Welcome to the double July/August issue of
Wateringbury Village Magazine.**

VILLAGE DIARY

JULY

- 3** **Footpath Group** - meet at Village Hall at 2.30pm
5 **Parish Council meeting** - Village Hall - 7.30pm
followed by Planning Committee
14 **WI meeting** - Village Hall - 2pm
18 **Footpath Group** - meet at Village Hall at 10am
20 **History Society** - outing to Yotes Court Vineyard
and West Peckham Church tour
Flower Club meeting - at East Malling Institute Hall
at 7pm

AUGUST

- 7** **Footpath Group** - meet at Village Hall at 2.30pm
11 **WI Great Comp Garden (GCG) visit** at the Village
Hall car park at 1pm for a lift or 1.30pm at GCG car
park
17 **Footpath Group** - meet at Village Hall at 10am
Flower Club meeting at East Malling Institute Hall at
7pm

Village Celebrations of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee 2022

Wateringbury Jubilee celebrations started with a three day Jubilee Flower Festival in the Church with magnificent displays created and donated by local clubs and organisations, including Rostrum.

Old and young enjoyed the festive atmosphere of the 'Jubilee Fun' on the Sports Fields organised by Cllr Sarah Hudson. A disc jockey and a live band with singer added to the happy ambiance. Groups of people had picnics, enjoyed wine or beer from the bars and listened to the music. Children played with friends, including jumping on the bouncy castle.

Jazz lovers enjoyed a free afternoon jazz concert at Ramblers Rest by Bow Bridge.

There were also neighbourhood parties which gave smaller communities the opportunity to celebrate the Jubilee in style and to see old and meet new neighbours. A big thank you must go to all who helped in organising these events.

I was invited to the Mill Lane neighbourhood party, where both the atmosphere and food were excellent. Mill Lane owes much to the organisers, Pauline and Mandy. Lucy prepared and ran a series of traditional children's games, which were great fun not only for the children but also the onlookers. Finally, Biyun and Peter, recent newcomers to the village, deserve special thanks for hosting their neighbours in their most magnificent garden. It was most enjoyable afternoon for all.

Editor

VILLAGE PEOPLE *Please let us have your news and tributes by 17 August for our September edition. Entries are free. Email www.rostrum2@hotmail.com or phone 01622 812023*

RIP Colin Wallis (1934 - 2022)

We are sad to announce the recent death of Colin Wallis.

Colin was born in Wateringbury in 1934 and lived for most of his young life in Teston where his grandfather and father ran the local garage. He returned to live in Wateringbury in 1996 when he and his wife Cathie moved to Old Road. They lived happily there together in their lovely cottage with its beautiful garden. Colin could often be seen working in the garden which was both his passion and his hobby.

Colin had a rich and rewarding life. He was a talented architect and artist, an outstanding goalkeeper (Mereworth, Town Malling and Maidstone Reserves), a keen ornithologist, a competitive golfer and he also had a taste for fine wine and good food. His humour, humanity and smile will be greatly missed by his family and friends.

The family would like to thank everyone for the many kind messages they have received from friends and neighbours in the village. They would also like to extend a special thank you to all the staff at Loose Court Care Home who looked after Colin with such care and compassion in the last few months of his life.

Tessa Fyson's Funeral - Thank you from family

Lynn, Hugh and Joanna would like to say a big 'Thank you' to everyone who joined them for Tessa's Service of Thanksgiving at St. John the Baptist on 6th June. It was truly wonderful to see the church so full, and to receive so many warm, affectionate comments from everyone. The church itself looked fabulous with all the flowers from the Jubilee festival, and everyone had pulled out all the stops to make this a truly memorable and fitting tribute. Thank you! and God bless you all.
Joanna Fyson

HISTORY SOCIETY

The early summer outing this year on 20th July is in two parts. Non-members are welcome.

Part 1 is a talk in West Peckham Church at 11.30 by Canon Brian Stevenson on "West Peckham and the Larkins" Tickets cost £3.

Part 2 is a guided tour of the Yotes Court Vineyard with wine or apple juice tasting starting at 2pm. Tickets cost £22.

Tickets for either or both are available by calling 01622 812148.

WOMEN'S INSTITUTE – The WI Inspiring Women

At our June meeting we heard a fascinating talk by Peter Batty and his wife Carol on the history of East Malling Research Station. After a brief history of the village and of the Agricultural Revolution, Peter moved on to the Research Station itself. Founded in 1913 it was developed on 13 acres of land given by KCC and with £2,500 donated by fruit growers. It became and remains a world renowned centre for the study of food plants, in particular fruit. This was a most interesting insight into food production at a time when there is a national discussion on this subject.

The winners of the competition for a recipe using fruit were Janet Marshall and Janet Talbert.

On July 14th we will welcome Janie Ramsay and her talk "Life in the Antiques Trade." The competition will be a vintage item precious to yourself.

The August 11th garden meeting will be at Great Comp Garden. We will meet at the Village Hall car park at 1:00pm where lifts can be given to anyone who needs one. We can then assemble at Great Comp at 1:30 to see the garden followed by the opportunity to buy refreshments in the cafe at 3:00pm. *Margaret Malsher*

WATERINGBURY FOOTPATH GROUP

In June we enjoyed two walks using the new kissing gate and improved bridges on the footpath going eastwards on the south side of the river from Bow Bridge. KCC has been involved in upgrading these (this is the route of the Medway Valley Walk) and they will enable more people to enjoy this lovely walk safely.

In the first field after the new gate, we kept our distance from the horses while admiring their young foals. On the mid-week repeat of the walk we saw a somewhat unsteady very small foal and were told it was just four days old. At Tutsham Hall we turned right to follow the lane up to Hunt Street, noting that the old damson trees on the grass verge and the old apple trees in the horses' field on the right-hand side have all been removed, leaving no visible trace. We walked along Hunt Street as far as the junction with Small Profits, where we turned along the footpath going downhill, enjoying the views. Our circuit back to the new gate passed Bow Hill Cottages.

Our plans are that walks will be leaving the Village Hall on:

Sunday 3rd July at 2.30pm
Monday 18th July at 10am
Sunday 7th August at 2.30pm
Wednesday 17th August at 10am

Everyone is welcome. If you haven't previously been on these walks with me, please contact me if you want more information or if you want to be kept updated about our plans.

Lisa Dean 077 5953 9032

NETTLESTEAD AND WATERINGBURY PRE-SCHOOL

This term we have been celebrating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. The staff set up a projector and screen so they could show the children pictures of the Queen, her coronation and members of her family. The children also watched the Queen's soldiers and listened to the music they played with their instruments. The children made their own sandwiches using their fine motor skills when spreading their butter on the bread or cutting their cucumber. We all had a picnic outside where the children ate their sandwiches as their morning snack!

Last month, we looked at life cycles. The staff introduced 5 caterpillars to the playroom and watched with fascination how they changed into chrysalises and then finally into butterflies. Once the butterflies were all hatched and ready to leave, the children took them up to the field to be released and say goodbye.

The children have also been practising their mark making skills by drawing their own houses and how many windows and doors does it have? What rooms are in the house? The children enjoyed describing their homes to their friends! Kay Severn/Nisha Reed email: manager@nwps.org.uk

FIRST WATERINGBURY GUIDES

Our canal boat trip was very enjoyable and despite my pessimism regarding the weather, we were lucky and didn't get any rain. The girls worked well in teams both on and off the boat and quickly learnt how to operate locks safely. Chris, our skipper, encouraged them all to steer and there was great competition over who would steer through the various tunnels on our trip. We also went through a flight of seven locks and in all encountered 13 locks each way. One of the tunnels has a

kink in the middle where the Victorians starting building from both ends, obviously well before modern technology designed to make sure they met exactly in the middle. The kink makes a difficult manoeuvre especially if another boat is coming the other way as there is only a few feet to pass each other!

Since our return we've made Jubilee hats, had wide games in the village orchard and Mini Olympics on the village Playing Field. We've got a Division Activity Day shortly involving climbing, fencing, archery and many other activities as well as a Water Fun Day which includes rowing, canoeing and rafting. Sailing is also on the agenda in the next month.

Are you an adult that would secretly like to join in with our fun? We could take more girls if we have more leaders whether in uniform or just as a unit helper so please do come and join the fun and have something valuable to add to your CV. Please contact me on 01622 815416 or email to sheenastewartx3@gmail.com.

Sheena Stewart and team. 1stWateringbury Guides

TESTON & WATERINGBURY PRE-SCHOOL

Wow! June already, where has the time gone? We are just getting over our Queen's Jubilee celebrations, packing away the bunting and flags; and we start another exciting, fun packed term at our preschool.

So, this term our themed book is *Spinderella* by the brilliant children's author Julia Donaldson. Where she tells us about a family of spiders who live on top of a ceiling light at a school. Spinderella is bonkers about football and wants to play with her brothers and sisters, but there is just one problem she doesn't know how many spiders there should be. We learn along with Spinderella as the story unfolds.

We will be giving our children fun and interesting activities as we read the book together to bring the learning to life. These will include in our craft activities: making spiders using card and wool to encourage fine motor skills. Giving our spider a name and deciding which team he will be on, just like in the book. Making number matching games using lolly sticks, paper and card, spider web painting and much more. We will also be making yummy spider snacks. We will be practicing team games and number matching games.

Our children are able to go bug hunting in our safe outdoor space, looking under stones and hedges to find spiders using a magnifier to watch them more closely. We will be playing host to our very own Caterpillars this year. Watching and learning about the different stages until they turn into beautiful butterflies that will be released into our garden. I wonder what interesting names the children will give them this year?

Some of our older children will be leaving us in July and moving on to their chosen primary schools in September. We have had the pleasure of inviting their reception teachers into our preschool. This is so valuable for our children, as they will have a familiar face when they start school. We will also be helping the children become more independent with dressing during our PE sessions.

We celebrated 'Father's Day' by making popsicle cards for that special someone.

As you can see, we will be very busy learning and having lots of fun.

If you would like your child to be part of this exciting, happy preschool it is not too late for this September as we have a limited number of spaces left. Or if your child is coming up two and you like the sound of what we do, you can contact Tina Driver on 07805796353

or email tandwngroup@gmail.com. We're on Facebook too!

Wateringbury PC Chairman's Report

The year ahead fills all involved with a sense of optimism, life returns to a new normal after the pandemic and we continue to build on strong foundations. We now have a working relationship with KCC Highways and while I facetiously dream of pedestrianising Wateringbury cross roads, we are finally seeing recognition that you are no longer just entering Wateringbury – you are entering Wateringbury Village!

The Parish Council commissioned local Highways consultants to produce an informed solution to the speeding issues around Wateringbury. Whilst no magic wand will implement all of these proposals immediately – we now have a strategic plan and funds in place to work towards slowing vehicles down. As KCC conduct the next phase of surveying our roads and allocated funding – we will continue to push for as much change as possible within the remit of the Parish Council.

All of this could not have happened without input from the village – over 70 suggestions went before the Highways consultants and the information collected by the speed watch team – lead by David Merry – deserve continued recognition for the information that formed the back bone of our arguments for more targeted road changes to mitigate poor driving choices.

Our local PCSO, Josh Vincent, continues to provide a visible deterrent in and around the village for speeding drivers. And I'll take the opportunity to encourage every resident to create a queue of slow-moving traffic behind them as they traverse the Village. If we all drive to the limit, so is every vehicle behind us.

We watch intently as policy changes at central government may continue to afford us more protection from development in the local area. The suggestion of making development a more transparent and open process and removing the stealthy ability to only post an orange site notice is encouraging.

As we prepare for a summer of festivities, work continues between the church and Parish Council to establish a Jubilee Memorial Garden at the cemetery and we look forward to creating an additional area of remembrance. Both the jubilee celebrations and the village fete look to be fantastic events and I look forward to seeing as many residents and their visitors as possible sharing our green spaces!

It should make us exceptionally proud that on any given day in our village there are an army of volunteers at work and play. Our local Scout and Guide groups are flourishing, the local football club is developing both boys and girls teams, responsible dog walkers everywhere helping collect any wayward rubbish, and it is only right that we take the opportunity to thank not just the small number I have mentioned, but all of the local volunteers for their contribution whether we experience their positivity directly or indirectly as residents of Wateringbury Village.

None of this happens without the continued efforts of our Borough and KCC councillor, our two village wardens, our Parish clerk and each of the Parish Councillors that continue to serve our amazing village.

On behalf of the Parish Council, I wish you all a prosperous continuation of the year.

Patrick Gregson Chairman of Wateringbury Parish Council

Tonbridge and Malling Ramblers

For full details of walks and walk leader contacts, see www.tonbridgeandmallingsramblers.org.uk or

FROM SARAH HUDSON, BOROUGH AND COUNTY COUNCILLOR

A big thank you to everyone who came along to the Jubilee picnic at the beginning of June. Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves and it was so good to see so many people having fun after the last couple of years!

The footway and crossing improvements are underway and hopefully will provide pedestrians with safer places to cross the A26, and help slow down through traffic.

Wishing everyone a warm, and enjoyable summer break.
Sarah Hudson

FROM OUR MP TOM TUGENHAT

We have so many fantastic businesses on our doorstep. Some are small branches of big national companies, with many others being smaller local business. They create jobs, and a better service for everybody.

For some, the results are international – NIAB EMR in East Malling have transformed the science of agriculture, looking at ways that we can farm and grow more efficiently. They've just seen £11 million invested in their new Green Tech Hub, a state-of-the-art research facility that they kindly asked me to open.

For others, they are national – Trooli is an amazing, ultra-fast broadband network that has only just opened new offices in Kings Hill. This nerve centre of the new online economy will help many of us stay connected and see opportunities grow for businesses.

If you are thinking about starting up a new business, or know of somebody who may be, please let me know. I'm always happy to promote those who take a chance on us, and I will do all I can to support the growth of our community and the wider area. Tom Tugenhat

WATERINGBURY FOOTBALL CLUB

Wateringbury FC celebrated their end of season presentation night on Saturday 11th June. The evening was a great success and over 350 trophies, medals and awards were given out to the local children through the course of the celebrations.

The club are approaching 200 children members and going from strength to strength with both girls and boys covering every age group.

John Ibbs, who has been associated with the club for 25 years in too many roles to mention and Jenny Harman who has been the club treasurer since 2015, both decided that the time has come to 'hang up their boots' after the presentations. The club would like to thank them both for their huge contribution over the years for everything they have done for WFC.

Membership for the 2022/23 season will be open in the coming weeks. If your son or daughter is interested in football next season and would like to join our fine club, please contact:

Girls - Sam - samp@wateringburyfc.co.uk

Boys - Andy - andy@wateringburyfc.co.uk

General enquiries - Tony - tony@wateringburyfc.co.uk

Tony Garrett

WATERINGBURY SCOUT GROUP

Cubs have a blast!

The Cubs started back after half term with a top rate meeting - we were at Maidstone Fire Station where they had such a great time and were all so excited. They climbed into the cab of a fire engine (the other one being out on a "shout") and sat where the fire officers sit, they were shown a whole lot of the equipment that is stored in the engine and were allowed to try to pick up the jaws of life (used to cut through car frames in an accident). Later they had a real blast, literally, when each Cub had a go at knocking over a metal bucket with a jet of water blasted out of a hose, superb fun! We got to see how high their ladders can go (pretty high - about 8 or 9 floors!) and finally they all had a good laugh as Akela was dressed in full, rather large, firefighting clothing and equipment. We left the fire station after thanking all the firefighters for everything they do by giving them a few edible treats.

The next week was just as good as we paid a visit to Kenward Trust to meet and feed their alpacas, Luigi and Pepe being just two of them; their goats, one was called Gertrude and their ducks too. We had time for a snack break which consisted of alpaca shaped shortbread biscuits and a drink; a play on the slides, swings and climbing frame and an exploration of the woods and the badger sett in there. What a wonderful place just on our doorstep. *Nicola Plane - Cub Scout Leader*

WATERINGBURY CRICKET CLUB

Wateringbury has been contributing to competitive cricket as early as 1630, and have been playing in the 'fields behind the brewery' since 1848 with the current club there since 1985. Playing cricket requires a good surface, the cricket square, which costs around £1000 a year to maintain, sometimes more. We work on the outfield too, which means the lower field stays both flat and green. Nicer for family picnics and games when the cricket isn't on.

Cricket brings people together, having a strong social element, both representing the village, and in connecting village life in the locality. We have had over 284 people representing Wateringbury since 1985, including a woman player for a few seasons from 2003.

Currently enjoying a minor resurgence, we only play friendly cricket and enjoy a good relationship with many clubs who enjoy playing us. Cricket takes an afternoon to play, including a traditional tea in the middle, so while doing our best to win, we are always mindful of wanting it to be an enjoyable experience for all. We invariably find ourselves in a local pub after the game to celebrate, commiserate, make excuses, exaggerate performance and have a drink and maybe some food together, players and families alike.

We practice on Thursday evenings at Fields Lane and welcome people of all ages and ability, regardless of gender or experience. You don't have to be a sports nut or watch it on the telly to enjoy a quintessential part of village tradition and life.

Matt Rye

FLOWER CLUB

The club had a great evening in June with a trip to Goddard's Green Garden near Cranbrook. We were treated to a private tour with the owners and enjoyed the beauty of the house and its versatile gardens full of beautiful plants and a joy to the eyes and the senses, completed with summer refreshments.

On **20th July** we have a visit of National demonstrator, Vanessa Wellock, from Yorkshire. She has not demonstrated in Kent so far, so quite a coup for us.

The **17th August** is also a treat with Eleanor Bracken from London and Overseas flower clubs with her *Snapshots* presentation. She has been helping to train new demonstrators for NAFAS for many years and we look forward to welcoming her to the club.

The Kent County Show is in July and so any of our club members who enter and win prizes will also be mentioned in the next issue.

We look forward to welcoming you to our club. Talks cost £8. *Jean Schofield for WFC*

GARDENING FOR WILDLIFE

Shortly after writing my last article, bemoaning the lack of rain, it rained relentlessly for a number of days! I'm writing this on the hottest day of the year so far which just illustrates how variable our weather is. One way of coping with these fluctuations is to install water butts. Ours were close to empty a month ago but are now topped up and in daily use around the garden. We also use them to top up the pond when necessary, as rain water is less likely to cause algae blooms than tap water and better for plants and wildlife in general. It is also more environmentally friendly.

You may have seen some disturbing news regarding the decline of our native butterflies in the news recently.

However, we as gardeners can help to rectify this situation by planting butterfly friendly plants. Most of us know that buddleias attract butterflies but, if you can, also ensure that you provide food for their caterpillars, which will support the whole cycle. Unfortunately, one of the main food plants are nettles, which support Commas, Red Admirals, Small Tortoiseshells and Peacock Butterflies. Many grasses also provide a food source as do thistles, vetches, honesty and garlic mustard, which is the favourite food of the Orange Tip. Holly and ivy support my favourite butterfly which is the Holly Blue and this is also the symbol for Kent Wildlife Trust.

If you can set aside a small area of your garden to support one or more of these plants you will be playing your part in protecting this beautiful insect for the future. Another way, would be to take part in the 'Big Butterfly Count' which takes place from the middle of July. All details and resources are available from the 'Butterfly Conservation' website.

Pauline Knutton

JUNE PARISH COUNCIL NOTES

Cllr Richard Tripp was appointed a trustee and Chairman of the Sports and Recreation Association.

Sarah Hudson, Borough Cllr and County Cllr, reported on the following:

- The Jubilee picnic, supported by over 500 residents, was very successful.
- The Fete committee continues preparation for the event on 19th June.
- A problem with sub-contractors has delayed works on traffic calming measures and a new village gateway
- The Orpines resurfacing is planned for July
- Heritage boards - the site is agreed. The funding will be available from the Members grant if PC agrees to apply for it.
- Participation in the consultation on the future use of Tonbridge Castle is requested.
- The speed limit in Mereworth will be reduced to 40mph from Willow Wents to the Street.
- Ukraine-currently 1165 individuals are matched with sponsors in Kent.
- Allington recycling centre - same day appointments are available.

Wateringbury Cricket Club (WCC) - Matthew Rye made a presentation about the WCC to the PC, seeking a contribution to replace their practice net, costing £662. Cllr Sarah Hudson suggested that WCC applies to the Members Fund held by her as a KCC councillor.

Crime report - there was 1 reported case of harassment in May.

Traffic matters – there was no reduction in the number of cars speeding in the village. PC will contact the Police to carry out the speed checks as previously agreed.

Cemetery – the plan to build a Memorial Garden in the cemetery and potential contributions to the projects were discussed. The architect's drawing of the Memorial is available on PC website.

Playing Fields - the equipment in the younger children playground is in a very poor condition. PC proposes to replace the equipment and put it next to the older children playground. The anticipated cost will be in the region of £66,000. Grants will be sought to cover the costs of the new equipment and installation, but they are unlikely to cover the cost for making good the old area, estimated at £7,600.

Allotments – PC will write to remind the users that cars are not permitted to drive on the bridleway leading to allotments.

Wardens – Cllr. Geraint Owen resigned as Village Flood Warden.

In **public discussion** it was emphasized that major PC project expenditure should be presented to the villagers for consultation in different media.

In response to a report from a member of the public, PC will write to Clarion Housing Association to formally request they clear rubbish from the fenced wooded passageway behind the bus shelter in Bow Road.

Planning - Councillors are leaving the decision to the planning officer for the flowing retrospective applications:

4 Warden Mill Close – change of material finish from brick to render

157 Pizienwell Road – change of use from agricultural land to residential curtilage

153 Pizienwell Road - change of use of land to residential amenity land
PC Councillors had no strong opinion on the **name of a new street** for 4 houses being built on the former Cromar Nursery site near the North Pole pub.

The next Parish Council meeting followed by Planning Committee is on Tuesday, 5th July at 7.30pm in the Upper Room of the Village Hall. There is no meeting in August.

Approved minutes of these meetings will appear on the Parish Council website www.wateringburypc.org.uk in due course.

JUBILEE FLOWER FESTIVAL THANKS

The Flower Festival was very successful with many Village Organisations producing amazing arrangements. The church was filled with beautiful flowers and was enjoyed by many visitors from far and wide over the three days.

Many thanks to all the arrangers, stewards and catering volunteers and to everyone who worked so hard behind the scenes to make it all possible.

WATERINGBURY C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL ART EXHIBITION

The Wateringbury C of E Primary School's Art Exhibition held in St John the Baptist Church on 21st May was a great success and enjoyed by everyone who attended.

Every child in the school contributed to the paintings, drawings and models which were on display. The standard was outstanding and our thanks go to all the children and teachers for their inspiration and hard work.

Thanks are also due to members of the Church who provided free refreshments and a warm welcome, and to Rev. Gary for conducting the 'Service of Celebration'.

The prize winners chosen by the school staff were:

KS1: Scarlett, Lower KS2: Peggy, Upper KS2: Nate, and Overall: Jack.

CRAFTERS COFFEE MORNINGS

We meet fortnightly on Wednesdays from 10.30 to midday for coffee and chat – craft is optional! You would be warmly welcomed, so do come along for the company.

Our next meeting in July is on the 13th in the church, for further dates and information please contact Gillian on 01622 813976.

WEEKLY ZOOM BENEFICE BIBLE STUDY GROUP

Mondays in July 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 for the link to the meeting. The group will be taking a break in August and resume on 5th September.

IN OUR JOYS AND SORROWS –

From the Parish Registers

**Baptism - 22nd May – Joseph Haffenden-Hilden
Funeral - 6th June – Tessa Fyson**

WATERINGBURY CHURCH - SERVICES IN JULY AND AUGUST

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

Church Face Book Page: fb.me/wateringburychurch

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

Services in Church at 10am each Sunday Week by week services at St John the Baptist church are as below:

3rd July	Matins with Barry Fisher
10th July	Holy Communion led by Canon Brian Stevenson
17th July	All Age Worship led by All Age Team
24th July	Holy Communion led by Rev Gary Townsend
31st July	Benefice Service of Holy Communion led by Rev Gary Townsend
7th August	Morning Praise with Barry Fisher
14th August	Holy Communion led by Rev Gary Townsend
21st August	All Age Worship led by All Age Team
28th August	Holy Communion led by Rev Gary Townsend

REV GARY WRITES

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

Proverbs 29:18:

Where there is no vision, the people perish.

At the end of May this year I and my little team of church youth workers had an afternoon and early evening hike and camp-out with six of our regular Youth Group members and four of their invited friends.

The Youth Group hasn't been running for very long and this was the first trip we'd had of this sort. We wanted an outdoor event that wouldn't take us far from home, but which would give us a good opportunity to engage in some outdoor pursuits with our young people. The ideal venue was Manor Farm and thanks to the kindness and hospitality of William and Frances English we had a lovely time. We did our hike, played rounders on a meadow pitch especially cut out for us by the Estate, enjoyed a BBQ and, as a special treat, were provided with a talk on Estate honey production by local village resident Beekeeper, Aleksandra Witkowska followed by honey-tasting taken within previous 24 hours from the hives. Afterwards each member of the Youth Group was presented with two small jars of honey to take home and share and compare from 2022 and 2020!

William gave us all a very interesting introduction to the history of Manor Farm which dates back to the 13th Century. William and Frances are the 10th generation of a wider family estate in Kent and have a vision for developing their ancient manor into a brewing and distilling business; Wateringbury has

historically been long associated with brewing since 1778.

You may not know that we have a church Youth Group. We meet for a youth service in Mereworth Church at 17:00 during school term time and our aim is to bring young people to faith in Jesus Christ. We seek to do this through teaching, worship, prayer, pastoral care, and encouragement to participate in acts of service for the churches and wider community. The hope is that by encouraging young people in these things they will get to a point where they can make informed decisions about committing their lives to following Jesus. The group is open to those who already identify as Christians and those who are questioning and interested in the Christian Faith. It's for those aged 11 – 17 but we welcome people of any age to the youth service in Mereworth church where there is modern worship, games, food, Bible teaching and prayer.

The Church and Manor Farm have been part and parcel of village life in Wateringbury for centuries. Looking back into the history of both is fascinating. There are other groups and places of great historic importance in Wateringbury that are integral to the village's history and stand to make further contributions to the ongoing life of the community here. Let's be thankful to God for all that's gone before and is with us still and let us be praying for guidance and inspiration from God our Father as we look to the future.

Have a great summer and I hope you get to enjoy something of the 'great out-doors' too!

*Revd Gary Townsend
Priest-in-Charge of Mereworth, Wateringbury and
West Peckham.*