

### Welcome to our March 2021 issue.

In recent months two or three contributors/advertisers have been disappointed that their contributions to Rostrum did not appear in the magazine. For reasons unknown their emails were not received. We always acknowledge safe receipt of all emails sent to [rostrum2@hotmail.com](mailto:rostrum2@hotmail.com) so if your email is not acknowledged by 17<sup>th</sup> of the month please phone one of the team (numbers on back cover). Contributions, which we welcome, should be no more than 250 words (half a Rostrum page).

We will shortly be contacting all existing advertisers and those on our waiting list to invite them to book advertising space in the magazine until December 2021. Anyone interested in advertising in our magazine for the first time should contact us without delay. *Christine, Ela, Terry and Trudy*

### VILLAGE DIARY

<b>March</b>	
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> 7.30pm</b>	Parish Council Meeting followed by Planning Committee via Zoom – contact parish clerk for access details <a href="mailto:clerk@wateringburypc.org.uk">clerk@wateringburypc.org.uk</a>
<b>4<sup>th</sup> 7.30pm</b>	Zoom Confidential individual meetings with our Police and Crime Commissioner (see article for details)
<b>April</b>	
<b>6<sup>th</sup> 7.30pm</b>	Parish Council Meeting followed by Planning Committee via Zoom – contact parish clerk for access details <a href="mailto:clerk@wateringburypc.org.uk">clerk@wateringburypc.org.uk</a>
<b>Every Friday 11.15-2pm Community Fridge in the village hall</b> Saving food waste, helping local producers and the local community. Take what you need - pay what you can. To book a slot <b>email <a href="mailto:sarahhudson500@gmail.com">sarahhudson500@gmail.com</a></b>	
Please see the <b>Footpaths Group Walks</b> paragraph for full details on walks during the pandemic restrictions	

**Village Free Telephone Box Library** which is close to the village sign at the Cross Roads is now open. Thanks go to our Borough Councillor Sarah Hudson and The Friends of Wateringbury Village for making this community asset possible. During these covid times there is hand sanitizer for use before browsing the books. All returned books should be placed in the black bin next to the Box for 3 days' quarantine. **Book Donations** will be welcomed and should be taken to Sarah in the village hall at the Community Fridge sessions on Fridays 11.15am-2pm

**VILLAGE PEOPLE** *Please let us have your news and tributes by 17<sup>th</sup> March for our April magazine. Entries are free.*

**RIP Irene (Rene) Randall (1938-2021)** Many will have fond memories of Mrs Randall who worked as a dinner lady at our school for many years. The Randall family moved into Glebe Meadow in 1968 and Rene lived there until 2019 when as her dementia worsened, she moved to be cared for by her son Gary and his family. Rene was one of life's lovely ladies, she simply got on with everyone she met and did not have a bad

word to say about anyone. She will be greatly missed by all those who knew and loved her.

**Hooray for Rostrum** My boiler stopped working this morning and the plumber I use was too busy so I consulted Rostrum and found Gavin who lives in the village who came straight round, assessed the problem, went off on his job in Orpington and came back with the new valve when back in the village! What a star and thanks to ads in Rostrum!! *Ruth Dunn*

**MEET KENT'S POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER**  
**On Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2021 from 7.30pm-8.30pm**

Borough Councillor Sarah Hudson will be hosting an online "advice centre" via Zoom with Kent's Police and Crime Commissioner, Matthew Scott. This is to provide an opportunity for residents in Malling Rural East which includes Watlingtonbury to speak directly to our Police and Crime Commissioner about crime and anti-social behaviour concerns locally. If you would like to attend:

1. Email [sarahhudson500@gmail.com](mailto:sarahhudson500@gmail.com) with your name, address and a brief summary of the issue you wish to raise.
2. You will then be sent a time and a link to Zoom.
3. You join just before your allocated time and will be admitted to the meeting from the waiting room so you can have your say. **This is not a public meeting**, it will be just Sarah and Matthew Scott - and you! So it will be confidential.

**FLOWER CLUB**

February 17<sup>th</sup> saw the club have its AGM by Zoom - once business was concluded the members were treated to a live demonstration of 3 arrangements by our own Jean Schofield. Our March demonstrator is Linda Porritt from Sussex area. Linda represented the UK at the Nafas world flower show in India 2019. If you would like to join us details are on our website [www.watlingtonburyflowerclub.co.uk](http://www.watlingtonburyflowerclub.co.uk) *Jean Schofield WFC*

**New book: COMING HOME LOST by Jennifer Button**

*"Come you from over by there to over by here and stand you by me now, I don't want you coming home lost." Polly Evans*

This book tells the moving story of three very different yet remarkable women, whose lives span the period from 1900 to 2018. Where possible each character speaks for themselves. Where not, their story is relayed through the memories of friends and family, it is set between London's West End and the small Welsh mining town of Brynauon. Perched on the side of the Wye valley, this little town and its inhabitants are the real stars of the story.

The main protagonist, Fliss Jenkins was raised in Brynauon by her grandmother, Polly Evans, a determined, formidably courageous Welsh woman. Returning to Wales for her gran's funeral Fliss, a junior

doctor in a London hospital, overhears a remark which reveals how little she knows of her beloved gran. She knows even less about her absent grandfather. Her curiosity is roused and she starts to dig into the past, unearthing an intricate web of secrets and lies. Fliss takes on the role of detective by asking questions, interviewing witnesses, researching letters and documents only to discover she has collected a giant jigsaw. Many pieces have been lost or damaged, some have been removed deliberately. The truth is always just beyond her grasp. Eventually a picture begins to emerge but is not at all what Fliss is expecting.

COMING HOME LOST is now available to buy online via Waterstones, Amazon and other well known book distributors, and will soon appear as an audio-book, narrated by Kirsty Hoiles - Watlington's very own West End Star.

Writing can be a lonely occupation, so I welcome any comments or opinions you want to share about my work. You can of course post reviews on Amazon and Waterstones if you purchase your copy through them. I hope you enjoy my book. Keep reading and remember "A good book is a great friend."

Jennifer Button [jennifer.button007@gmail.com](mailto:jennifer.button007@gmail.com)

## **SAYINGS OF NELSON MANDELLA**

Do not judge me by my successes, judge me by how many times I fell down and got back up again.

Resentment is like drinking poison and then hoping it will kill your enemies.

## **WATERINGBURY CE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

This month we want to pay tribute to everyone who has played any part in keeping our school running safely and our pupils learning – whether remotely at home or in school. Our staff, pupils, parents and governors have risen to every challenge thrown at them during these unprecedented times. Everyone can be very proud of their collective efforts which have helped to keep everyone as safe as possible and which have enabled us to keep our school open to vulnerable children and the children of critical workers. We do not underestimate the effort and sacrifices that everyone has made over the last year to support our pupils while juggling their own individual circumstances and concerns.

We continue to provide high-quality purposeful and practical learning for key worker children and for remote learners at home. We have weekly family challenges as well as themed weeks and days including Friendship Week and World Book Day on 5<sup>th</sup> March. During a recent school tidy, our Office Angels unearthed some wonderful memories from the school's history. These included photos, record books and other assorted memorabilia. Some of these artefacts are now on display in the school entrance hall. We were delighted to welcome Rev. Gary Townsend into our school community at the end of last term. He has

already led a number of remote Collective Worship assemblies and engaged the children with his songs and stories

Against the backdrop of the pandemic, we are also operating with a new interim leadership structure while we undertake a full headteacher recruitment process. This is now under way. Karen Slade and Viki Garrett from Slade Primary School are acting as Executive Leaders and Anneka Osborne is our Interim Head of School. Everyone has stepped up to this additional leadership challenge and we want to thank our entire school team, as well as parents, for the support shown to our temporary leadership team.

We would also like to pay tribute to Chris Clark and Mark Warren who have recently stepped down from the governing body after many years of service. We are extremely grateful for their contribution to governance of the school, including their leadership of the governing body at different times, and to the challenge and support that they have provided to school leaders in the pursuit of school improvement. We are currently looking to appoint new governors to our Resources Committee. If you have financial, personnel, health and safety and/or facilities management expertise or experience and would like to make a difference to our school, please contact Gail Isted at **[gisted@wateringbury.kent.sch.uk](mailto:gisted@wateringbury.kent.sch.uk)** for more information.

Finally, we have so far raised £11,729 towards the costs of expanding two cramped classrooms – a project that became even more critical with the onset of the pandemic. This project will benefit every child in our school with a transformed learning space for our Year 5 and Year 6 pupils. **We still desperately need to raise more and would welcome any donations** – large or small – from local businesses and individuals who are in a position to help. Please donate online at **[www.givey.com/classrooms2020](http://www.givey.com/classrooms2020)** or through online banking to Wateringbury CE Primary School, Sort code: 60-60-08, Account no: 79300839 (using reference: *ClassroomExpansion/Your surname*). Cheques, payable to Wateringbury CE Primary School, can also be dropped off to Gail Isted at 25 Phoenix Drive, Wateringbury.

Thank you everyone for your continued support.  
*Gail Isted (Chair, on behalf of the governing body)*  
**[www.wateringbury.kent.sch.uk](http://www.wateringbury.kent.sch.uk)**

### **UNEXPECTED DELIVERY**

Years ago, I was a member of an organising committee putting on a charity event at the massive Beltring Hop Farm complex. We decided that it would be a great idea to give those attending a hot cup of Bovril. I phoned up the promotion department at Bovril and the helpful young lady I spoke to felt it was a great way to advertise the product and asked me how many people would be attending the firework extravaganza.

I suggested a figure of 15,000 although I had no idea as this was the first event of this kind we had staged. We had, in the past, put on a Country Fayre at this venue and had had visitors in excess of this number.

A few months later I had just come in from work when my wife asked me to ring an elderly lady who lived at the same house number on the Tonbridge Road but in Teston village one mile down the road. When I spoke to the lady she asked if I could collect immediately a delivery she had taken in for me. I drove along wondering why it was so urgent! I rang the doorbell and the lady opened the door as far as it would go and invited me in. I squeezed through the narrow gap and could barely believe my eyes. The whole of the ground floor was filled with cases of Bovril and insulated cups. The staircase was also piled with cases so there was no way that the lady could have got upstairs to her bedroom. Luckily I had access to a transit van and a storage facility and was able to accommodate the large shipment.

Thanks to the kind hearted lady the free Bovril was a great success at our event and needless to say the surplus was used at many another of our fund raising events.

*Michael Williams*

## **FIRST WATERINGBURY GUIDES**

Our profiteroles and rocky road bites made over Zoom went surprisingly well and thanks are due to the parents who were overseeing activities. Our chocolate haggis for Burns Night had an interesting appearance but we were reliably informed that they tasted very nice. The virtual sleepover was a first for us and we were delighted that sixteen girls joined us for the evening. It was lovely to hear the fun and laughter even if it was over Zoom. Musical statues has a whole new look done virtually!

Some of the girls made dens to sleep in but despite the best intent, most ended up in their usual bed. We met in the morning over Zoom to make eggy bread - a new experience for some girls but again proved successful for most. We took part in a workshop provided by Microsoft and had a virtual tour of America where we were able to 'visit' 3 national parks and find out about the visitor numbers, the size and other interesting facts. We had to plan our trip and calculate the number of miles we would travel. We were able to choose our photos of the parks to make a presentation of our trip. By the time you read this we will have tried pancakes for Shrove Tuesday (on a Friday) and salt dough modelling. We still live in hope that after Easter we will be able to meet up outside and we're beginning to think about what we would like to do. *Sheena, Emily and Hayleigh*

## **REV GARY WRITES**

Mothering Sunday falls on the 14<sup>th</sup> of March this year. I must say I've always loved it just as I've always loved the spring time and Lent. It's true that Mothering Sunday is not for everyone. For some it can be a reminder of what they've lost or never had – a mum whose child has died, a child bereft of a mother, the couple who can't have children, the mum who struggles as a single parent, those families in which there is

abuse, the mother who fears she has failed her children in some way. Sadly the list could go on.

Things often go wrong in relationships and often in those that matter the most. And even when the relationships are good as they should be a family can still end up having to face suffering of one kind or another.

Like many Christians I have reflected on the sufferings of both Jesus and His mother at the cross: *At the cross her station keeping stood the mournful mother weeping ...* Those words are from an old Christian hymn that reflects on Mary's agony as she witnessed her son's sufferings – an agony made all the more acute by her devotion to him. And it's all a reminder to us that even for the very best and good of human lives in this world there is pain and sorrow.

I well remember one of the great Easter hymns I was taught at school which contains the words: *We believe it was for us he hung and suffered there.* Perhaps for a while that's what Mary didn't understand: 'Why must he suffer like this and why must I?' But I'm sure she did come to understand because everyone who has accepted the teaching of Christ and his Apostles on the subject of suffering and salvation knows that in dying for our sins God makes His greatest appeal to us to be reconciled to Him. Our own sufferings can serve to move us to see our need of returning to our Heavenly Father from whom we have strayed so far. The life, sufferings and death of Jesus Christ were necessary to restore that essential and fundamental family relationship which has been broken in us all – the relationship between each of us and our Heavenly Father. Lent is a good time for reflecting on these things.

I do look forward to Mothering Sunday but more than that I look forward to the great events of Good Friday and Easter Day when we are reminded of Christ's great sacrifice for us and of his glorious triumph over sin and death.

Gary Townsend. [gary.rev@outlook.com](mailto:gary.rev@outlook.com)

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

TMBC have sent a comprehensive response to the Local Plan Inspector – we now await their response in order to determine what our options are regarding the Local Plan.

I have been busy attending meetings including the important Budget for 2021/22 which was set on February 23<sup>rd</sup> with a full Council meeting via Teams. All of our meetings are live streamed on the TMBC YouTube channel. Just search for 'TMBC meetings' on YouTube.

It was announced that the Angel Centre in Tonbridge is now a Covid-19 mass vaccination centre for West Kent. It operates by appointment only upon receipt of a letter from the NHS. No-one under 70 needs to contact the NHS as people will be invited when it's their turn. Anyone over 70 who has not received a

vaccination invitation should contact their GP without delay.

Asymptomatic Covid testing can be booked online via KCC, and the local sites are at the Hop Farm, Larkfield Library and Sessions House at County Hall. It would be fantastic for as many people as possible to get tested every fortnight. 1 in 3 people show no symptoms.

I have arranged a Zoom event with the Kent Police & Crime Commissioner, Matthew Scott. This takes place on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> March from 7.30pm. There are more details in the magazine.

The sorting office at Watlington Post Office closes on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> March. As I understand it, our postmen will remain the same, but the post will be coming from Snodland each day, so there may be later delivery times. Failed deliveries should still go to the post office, rather than be returned to Snodland, which should save us a journey.

The Community Library is up and running – and is already proving popular. We have received many donations of books so there will never be any shortage of supply. Returned books are to be placed in the black bin next to the phone box, so that they remain out of circulation for 72 hours, under Covid regulations.

The Community Fridge has recently been awarded a grant of £3,000 from Clarion Futures. This will be used to enhance the range of food on offer, and at the same time help small, local food producers. We support a local fruit and vegetable wholesalers who buy their produce from local farms as much as possible. We buy in lovely fresh bread, still warm from the oven, from Teston Bakery. In doing so, we all help each other. We now regularly get over 75 visitors each session, and the impact we are making in reducing food waste is quite significant. We have been operational for exactly 1 year now, and have collected over 2,700kg of food, the equivalence of 6,500 meals, saving 8,635kg of carbon dioxide. This would all have gone to landfill.

## **TESTON & WATERINGBURY PRESCHOOL**

The focus for Term 4 is based around the book 'Clifford's Manners' by Norman Bridwell. It is about a big red dog called Clifford who models good behaviour during his day-to-day activities. Children can learn important social skills such as saying, 'excuse me', and being kind to others together with expressing and talking about their feelings in different situations. The children will also be recycling their rubbish, just like Clifford.

This term we will also be celebrating World book day. On Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> March we will all be dressing up as our favourite book character and reading different types of books such as 'Penguin says please', 'The Bear who shared' and 'What if everybody did that'.

To help with our fundraising, we have a 'bags to school' collection from Teston village hall at 09.00am on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2021. **If you are having a clear**

**out of clothes, handbags, shoes, belts and towels please bag them up and bring them along to Teston village hall between Monday 22nd and Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> March 09.00 – 3.00pm.** All monies raised will go towards craft material for the children. We thank you for your support. 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)

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

The speed and scale of our vaccine rollout across Tonbridge and Malling is impressive and we owe a huge debt of gratitude to everyone, from the NHS and volunteers to the pharmaceutical companies and transport workers, who have made this possible. I am delighted that Malling Primary Care Network were set up so quickly, providing vaccinations to us all at Avicenna Medical Centre in Leybourne. It was testament to their organisation and also dedication to vaccinating the most vulnerable members of the community as quickly as possible. We are lucky to be served by such wonderful heroes who are dedicated to helping us all stay safe. For many, it has been the first time out of the home in nearly a year.

A key part of our vaccination process is the mass vaccination centres. We can't rely on our GPs to vaccinate everyone – they have normal appointments as well – and we need to make sure we all get our vaccinations as quickly as we can. As soon as it was confirmed that around four mass vaccination centres would be planned for Kent I pushed strongly for one to be in our area. Tonbridge, the largest town with the most available space, made perfect sense for this. Thanks to the commitment of Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council to the project, I am delighted that together we successfully promoted the Angel Centre. For many of us, we will have to wait a while yet, but progress so far is exceptionally good and we must focus all our efforts on making sure we have our doses quickly. Throughout the pandemic I've tried to keep everyone as up to date as possible. Please visit my website, [www.tomtugendhat.org/covid19-vaccine](http://www.tomtugendhat.org/covid19-vaccine) which I keep updated regularly if you want any further information on the rollout locally.

### **WATERINGBURY'S FORGOTTEN PAST**

What are Agatha Christie's connections to our village and Guides? How did Little Cockington on Tonbridge Road get its name?

It is a tale of two Devon families the Mallock family of Cockington Court and their great friends the Miller family of Torquay; both families sharing a love of amateur dramatics. The Miller family's daughter became the author Agatha Christie. Charles Herbert Mallock married Margaret Iris Bazley-White in Chelsea in 1906. They had at least two children. Christopher whose birth was registered in Newton Abbot in 1912 and Patience Iris registered in



Paddington, London, in 1915. Charles died from gas poisoning during WWI and in 1922 Margaret married John Savile Bogle in Kensington and was known as Mrs Mallock-Bogle. John died in 1940 and is buried in East Malling. The family at this time were living in Hollingbourne.

By around 1950 Margaret and Patience had moved to Watlingtonbury and were living in the Watlingtonbury Place gardener's cottage (now known as Hall's Croft). Patience became Captain of Watlingtonbury guides who sometimes, during the Summer, held meetings in the grounds of Watlingtonbury Place.

Agatha Christie maintained her friendship with the Mallock family and according to Helen Hutchins, a former housekeeper, in the early 1950s whilst Agatha was staying with her old friends in Watlingtonbury, she was working on 'The Mousetrap', adapted from her short radio play 'Three Blind Mice' written a few years earlier. 'The Mousetrap' opened in the West End in 1952 and would still be running now had it not been interrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Agatha Christie dedicated her book 'Why Didn't They Ask Evans' to Christopher C Mallock, Watlingtonbury Guide Captain's older brother. Other names Christie used in her books have Watlingtonbury connections. Have you spotted any?

Later Patience lived in a new bungalow built in the grounds of Hall's Croft which she named Little Cockington, clearly taken from her grandfather's Devon estate Cockington Court. Mrs Margaret Mallock-Bogle, formerly Bazley-White (died Hampstead 1970) had at least two siblings with Watlingtonbury connections. Her sister, Grace Winifred Bazley-White married Thomas Henry Style in 1905 at St George, Hanover Square. The Styles lived at Watlingtonbury Place. Margaret's brother Richard Booth Bazley-White lived at Watlingtonbury Hall, (junction of Pizien Well Road and Tonbridge Road). Richard, his son and their Nanny tragically lost their lives when the house burned down in 1927.

## **WATERINGBURY FOOTPATH GROUP**

Another month, but the walking news remains the same in that group walks are not permitted. Hopefully the restrictions will loosen and I'll be able to arrange some sort of group walks. If you are interested and haven't already done so, please let me have your contact details so I can get in touch when I'm planning a group walk. Text or phone me on 077 5953 9032 or direct message me on Facebook.

In the last month the weather has made walks more challenging with the usual winter mud, ice and high river levels plus this year's snow making some routes very slippery or even impassable. At times I have chosen to walk on our local pavements and lanes rather than some of the footpaths, but nevertheless I've still seen and heard lovely things that lift my mood: a kestrel hovering overhead; banks of snowdrops and clumps of daffodils; birds collecting twigs to build nests; catkins dancing in the hedgerows.

Then there's the pleasure of getting back home, having a hot drink and some cake. *Lisa*

## **PARISH COUNCIL HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT COMMITTEE MEETING**

The Zoom meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> February was well attended by village residents. The purpose of the meeting was to enable councillors to gain ideas and support from residents when compiling the **Village Highways Improvement Plan 2021 for KCC**. Councillors and residents all expressed their disappointment with the responses received from KCC over many, many years in our efforts to improve the safety of the A26 and Bow Road/Red Hill. Other villages seem to be able to gain improvements which our village is denied. For instance Watlington is the only village between Tonbridge and Maidstone which does not have a 40mph speed restriction zone before vehicles enter the 30mph village envelope.

Residents expressed deep concerns and suggested improvements which could be made about: vehicles exceeding the speed limit; large lorries speeding through the village often at night which cause severe vibrations to houses; lorries ignoring weight bans; the frequent dangers caused by vehicles jumping the red lights at the cross roads; the poor phasing of the lights which causes traffic congestion.

Councillors resolved to ensure its Highways Improvement Plan for 2021 contained cost effective, achievable goals with the hope that KCC would be minded to fund these proposals. **More suggestions from residents will be very welcome and should be sent to the parish clerk.**

## **NEW ENERGY EFFICIENT STREET LIGHTING FOR THE VILLAGE**

Apart from the main roads, most of the street lighting within the village is the responsibility of the Parish Council. It is in need of refurbishment.

The Council has authorised updating of its street lighting columns in the following roads: Danes Lane, Pizien Well Road, Old Road, Canon Lane, Mill Lane, Lodge Close, Love Lane, Red Hill, The Orpines, Fields Lane, Cobbs Close, The Brucks, and Warden Mill Close.

This work will refurbish the columns and make them ready to receive new lanterns as described below. Work is planned to start within the next two months.

Our existing lighting uses obsolete and energy inefficient light sources. The Council wants to replace them with 3000K Warm White light LED lanterns, which will use about 70% less electricity and significantly reduce our carbon footprint.

The government has created the SALIX scheme whereby councils can receive an interest free loan to cover the cost of installing energy efficient street lighting. The interest free loan repayments will be

spread over five years, so the cost of repaying the loan will be largely offset by the lower electricity bills.

The cost of the proposed new LED lights will be in the region of £13,000 and we plan to request a SALIX loan of £12,000

This year, the street lighting electricity budget is £2,883. With LED lighting, the electricity cost would be about £870 – a saving of over £2,000 pa. After allowing for the loan repayment of £2,400 pa, the net cost to the parish will be about £400 pa. This will have a negligible effect on the rates. Once the loan is repaid, over a 5-year period, we will benefit from a reduction of about £2,000 in our annual electricity bill.

To obtain a SALIX loan, we have to demonstrate that we have the support of the village for this energy saving, environmentally friendly project.

**It is vital that everyone demonstrates their support for this initiative either by emailing our Clerk [clerk@wateringburypc.org.uk](mailto:clerk@wateringburypc.org.uk) or voting on the Wateringbury Parish Facebook page.**

## **FEBRUARY PARISH COUNCIL NOTES**

**Appointment of Vice Chair** - At the start of the meeting councillors unanimously voted Councillor Frances Fielding to this post.

**Borough Councillor Sarah Hudson** reported TMBC had sent a comprehensive response in the form of a 22 page letter to Central Government regarding its actions on TMBC's Local Plan. A reply is awaited.

The Angel Centre in Tonbridge will shortly open as a covid mass vaccination centre for West Kent. Sarah recommended that we all have regular tests to check we are not Covid positive (she goes every fortnight). Our local free testing centres are at the Hop Farm Complex and Larkfield Library.

Sarah is working with the relevant departments to try and solve the problems of flash flooding near the junction of The Orpines with A26. The local Post Office Sorting Office next to The Post Office is to close in March. Packages which are unable to be delivered to households will still be available for collection from the village Post Office.

The Telephone Box Library opened on 1<sup>st</sup> February.

**Local Crime Figures** - Attempted theft of laurel plants from Lodge Close, window broken in Bow Road, building lock was stolen Trees were damaged and a fence post knocked down when a 4 x 4 vehicle and an off road bike were driven through them in Red Hill

**Street Lighting** - Many of the street lights owned and maintained by the Parish Council (in side streets) need to be repaired at an estimated cost of £4,500-£5,000. Councillors agreed to proceed with the work. Residents will be consulted about the Council's proposed replacement of all its lamp-heads with LED lanterns. The running costs of LED lights is substantially lower than the present ones. This would

reduce the local carbon footprint and electricity costs by about 70%. So it is a win-win proposal.

**Playing fields** - Councillors agreed to repair and replace as needed chestnut fencing along the boundary. Following a safety report Richard Tripp and Frances Fielding had inspected the play equipment. Councillors unanimously agreed to accept the estimate of £1,890 for repairs. The chairman thanked them for their help.

**Allotments** - There were six people on the waiting list for an allotment. It was proposed that existing plot holders who were neglecting their plots and therefore not meeting the terms of their rental agreements would not have their annual tenancies renewed in the Spring.

**Speedwatch** sessions had been suspended due to covid lockdown regulations.

**Rev Gary Townsend** attended the virtual meeting and at the open forum introduced himself to councillors and said he hoped to play a full part in the life of the community.

**Planning** - there were no new planning applications.

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

## **WATERINGBURY CHURCH - SERVICES IN MARCH**

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

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

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

Short on-line worship is available every week at

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

Our weekly service lasts for approximately 20 minutes and consists of opening and closing hymns played on our church organ, a bible reading, prayers and a reflection. ...

At 9.30 every Sunday there is a live Zoom Service from Mereworth with a reflection by Rev Gary. The link changes each week so if you would like to join in live worship via zoom please email [gary.rev@outlook](mailto:gary.rev@outlook).

**Sunday 7th** with reflection by Rev Gary Townsend

**Sunday 14th** Mothering Sunday introduction by Rev Gary and reflection by Barry Fisher

**Sunday 21st** with introduction by Rev Gary and reflection by Kate Millar

**Sunday 28th** Palm Sunday with reflection by Rev Gary Townsend

**Easter Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> April** with reflection by Rev Gary Townsend

At the time of Rostrum going to press (17<sup>th</sup> February) we are unsure when it will be safe to open our village church for Sunday Services. **Information on Services at Easter will be available nearer the time on Church noticeboards in the village;**

**Church facebook page** [fb.me/wateringburychurch](https://www.facebook.com/wateringburychurch)

(You don't need to belong to facebook to visit this page)

**SJB Church website** [www.wateringburychurch.org](http://www.wateringburychurch.org)

**via email** [gary.rev@outlook.com](mailto:gary.rev@outlook.com)

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

**Every Thursday evening 7.30pm for about an hour.**

**Rev Gary Townsend** invites you to join him for a weekly bible study time. Each week one of the set bible readings for the previous Sunday is read. Rev Gary gives a short introduction which is followed by general discussion. To join please email [gary.rev@outlook.com](mailto:gary.rev@outlook.com) for the link to the meeting.

### **IN OUR SORROWS - FROM THE PARISH REGISTERS**

We extend our deepest sympathy to the loved ones of.:

**Irene (Rene) Randall** whose funeral and burial in the cemetery took place on 11<sup>th</sup> February.

Although the church is closed for Sunday services it is open for funeral services with mourners limited in line with Government regulations at the time. Please contact Rev Gary for guidance and support by email or by phoning 01622 813178.

### **LICENSING OF REV GARY TOWNSEND**

In these Covid times it was not possible to hold the planned for Induction Service in Mereworth church. This will be held at a later date when it is considered safe to do so. To allow Rev Gary to start his ministry in the benefice of Mereworth, Watlingtonbury and West Peckham he was licensed by Bishop Simon Burton-Jones of Tonbridge on 30<sup>th</sup> January in an online service. It was a joyful occasion which had the maximum 100 Zoom links so was probably attended by nearly 200 people. In the after service "chat" many from Gary and Sharon's previous parishes expressed their heartfelt thanks for their ministry with them.

Gary thanked all who had made him feel welcome by sending best wishes with cards, phone calls, emails and acts of kindness in the form of flowers, wine, jam, etc and to those who helped prepare the Rectory for them.

Those who were unable to join in the live zoom service on 30<sup>th</sup> January and would like to view it should request the link from [gary.rev@outlook.com](mailto:gary.rev@outlook.com)

### **CHURCHYARD SPRING CLEAN SATURDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> MARCH**

We hope to be able to hold our annual Spring Clean of the Churchyard (socially distanced). So if you can spare an hour please come along to the churchyard with appropriate tools any time between 10-noon. Up to date info will be on facebook.

### **CHURCHYARD PLANT SALE 2021**

Government and Diocesan Restrictions permitting we hope to hold our **Annual Churchyard Plant Sale on Bank Holiday Saturday 29th May from 10-1pm**. If you are dividing perennial plants or have spare seedlings please consider potting them up and donating them to our plant sale. All proceeds go

towards the cost of upkeeping our beautiful and ancient village church. All donations would be most welcome preferably labelled and priced.

### **ENJOY OUR CHURCHYARD**

Although the church is closed at the present time our beautiful churchyard is always open and has a couple of seats to allow you to take a break during your daily exercise to sit and reflect, pray or simply watch the world go by. At this time of year there are snowdrops and spring bulbs to enjoy too. Give it a try sometime.