

THE VOICE

MERROW METHODIST CHURCH MAGAZINE



JULY 2025

Message from the Manse

Are We Supporting or Straining Our Ministers?

A Church-Wide Reflection

Dear friends,

I write with a sincere desire for the growth of God's kingdom and the well-being of those who serve within it.

Ministry is a sacred calling, yet it is also a path filled with unseen struggles.

Ministers dedicate their lives to serving others, pouring out their hearts and spirits.

However, behind the scenes, they often wrestle with challenges that go unnoticed, challenges that can lead some to consider stepping away. It is important to note this is not a matter of lack of faith, but of insufficient support, appreciation, and understanding.

This is a moment for honest reflection, not judgment.

Are we strengthening our ministers, or unknowingly adding to their burdens?

A Shepherd Without Strength

Recently, a minister in Central Ottawa, Canada, shared his experience.

For 28 years, he faithfully led, counselled, and served his congregation. Yet behind his unwavering service, he was exhausted.

The demands never ceased—late-night calls, financial worries, church divisions.

Whenever he hinted at needing rest, the response was always: *"The work of God never stops."* He felt guilty for wanting a break.

One Sunday, after delivering a heartfelt sermon, he collapsed in his office, physically and spiritually drained. Weeks later, he stepped away from ministry—not because he lost faith, but because he was broken. His departure shocked the congregation, who only then realised: a shepherd cannot lead if he is struggling.

The Silent Struggles of Ministry

Ministry involves far more than sermons and worship. Ministers guide, counsel, and inspire. But behind their public roles, many bear emotional, spiritual, and administrative burdens.

They carry expectations to be always available, always strong, unwavering in faith. Yet behind closed doors, they wrestle with exhaustion, loneliness, discouragement, and sometimes burnout. When ministers face gossip, criticism, or unreasonable expectations, it can lead to deep emotional wounds. A church that values and uplifts its ministers becomes a source of strength. Conversely, when ministers feel undervalued or unsupported, many leave—not necessarily from God, but from ministry itself.

These struggles affect all ministers, regardless of background or culture. Indigenous ministers, overseas presbyters, and those new to ministry all face unique challenges.

For foreign ministers, subtle or overt racism adds another layer of hardship. Many question their legitimacy, enduring silent struggles while continuing to serve.

A Call for Change: What Can We Do?

Ministers are human—they feel, they hurt, and they need love and respect. Churches play a vital role in creating environments where ministers are supported and cared for:

Encourage them: A call, a visit, or a word of affirmation can make a significant difference.

Recognise their struggles: Do not assume they are “fine” just because they preach well or not.

Address systemic challenges: Tackle unrealistic expectations and administrative overload.

Foster supportive structures: Leadership training, pastoral support groups, and counselling resources are essential.

A Shared Responsibility

Let us ask ourselves:

- Are we strengthening our ministers, or unknowingly draining them?
- Are we mindful of the weight they carry?
- Are we creating an environment where ministry can flourish?

When we invest in their well-being, we strengthen the entire church community.

A Hopeful Future: Standing Together in Christ

Supporting our ministers is obedience to God’s command to love one another. When ministers thrive, the church flourishes. Today, let us lift them, encourage them, and stand alongside them.

Ministry is a shared journey—thriving on love, compassion, and support. Let us walk together in faith, reflecting Christ’s love to the world.

We are pleased to invite everyone to the sectional United Service at Sheerwater Community Hub on 29th June at 10:30 am. Led by Rev. Gillaine Holland and Rev. George Quarm, this gathering will be an opportunity for worship, reflection, and strengthening our unity in Christ. We look forward to seeing you there and sharing in this special time together.

Postcode of Sheerwater Church. - GU21 5PJ Dartmouth Ave.

Thank you, and God bless.

Devotedly yours,

Rev. George Quarm.

EDITORIAL NOTE



July

The church's year is drawing to a close.
Church groups enjoy a sweet, refreshing rest;
A time to ponder what has gone before,
Face change and greet the future days with zest.
We've now begun our Anniversary year;
A year of celebrations for us all.
A picnic first and then a 'Songs of Praise',
Each month will offer something to enthral.
October brings a quiz, so form a team,
A concert, offers please to Gillian Varley,
And finally to close this year in style
December brings a Christmassy finale.

Any items for inclusion in the **AUGUST/SEPTEMBER** issue of "The Voice"
should be sent to me by: **JULY 22nd**

***Please note that this will be an edition covering 2 months**

via email: gillianbrierley13@gmail.com

by hand

or by post to: Gillian Varley - 4, Merrow Croft, Guildford. GU1 2XH

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office@merrowmethodistchurch.org.uk

PROPERTY LETTINGS

ADMINISTRATOR:

01483 537655

lettings@merrowmethodistchurch.org.uk

PRAYER SUPPORT GROUP:

This is a small group willing to put time aside for praying each day for special needs within the Church community. Your request will be passed on to other members of the group, where it will remain confidential.

The prayer contact for will be:

PAULINE DANIELS 01483 854054

EDITOR – ‘The Voice’

GILLIAN VARLEY

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Important: It is our practice at Merrow to publish THE VOICE on the website. This is an important source of information about the life of our church and we want to share it with others. However, if you feel uncomfortable with a mention on our web page we will be happy to omit your name and any other personal details in any future issue if requested to do so. Please advise at the time of submitting the copy.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN JULY

Stewards for Sunday worship:

Date	Time	Vestry Steward	Worship leader	P/A; A/V	Door Stewards
July 6th	10.30	Hugh Bradley		Glenys Magill	Wendy Bradley Jan Marshall
July 13th	10.30 AFC 6.30 ATS	Suzanne Burnham Hugh Bradley	Doreen Siame	Cari Rayner Glenys Magill	Julie Wallis Maggie Woolcock
July 20th	10.30	Iris Walker		Jane Vinall	Joyce Goodall Glenys Magill
July 27th	10.30	Joan Wells	Gillian Varley	Cari Rayner	Wendy Bradley Jan Marshall

Communion stewards:

	Preparation	Assisting
July 6 th 10.30am	Doreen Siame Suzanne Burnham	Julie Wallis

Flower Rota:

July 6th Joan Wells
 July 13th Doreen Siame
 July 20th Catherine Winder
 July 27th Suzanne Burnham

Organ Rota:

Gillian Varley: morning services
 Hymnal + : evening services

Women's Fellowship

on Monday July 7th
will be an afternoon tea.

Action for Children

AFC will be celebrating 156 years on Sunday 13th July 10.30 pm
when the Rev. Dr Paul Glass will be leading the service.

The theme for AFC Sunday this year is
'Driven by love, we take action for children'.

Driven by love... We pray for vulnerable children. We give to support vulnerable children. And we campaign for the lasting change needed to create more safe and happy childhoods.

Driven by love, we take action for children

Suzanne

Church Bible Study

We have two Church Bible Study groups
One is held on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday mornings of each month
at the home of Pauline Daniels (see below for address)
The other is in the evening and held once a month in the church.

Morning Bible Study

at Lavender Cottage, Marlyns Drive, Burpham.
On Tuesday July 8th & 22nd at 10.45am
led by Gillian Varley
Continuing our study of Mark's Gospel

Evening Bible Study

On July 31st
At Merrow Methodist Church
led by Julie Wallis

Number 5 and Mulberry House

Your donations are always needed
And gratefully received

Weekly Coffee Morning

on Thursdays from 10.30 - 11.45

If you are free, do drop in for a drink and a chat with others from the church and local community.

Each month there will be one Charity Coffee Morning which will raise funds for a different charity every month

- usually on the 2nd Thursday -

when there is always a tempting selection of cakes on offer

In July
you are invited to a
COFFEE MORNING

On July 10th

10.30 to 12pm

The charity will be **ALL WE CAN.**



This is a Christian International Development and Relief Organisation which works with global partners to end poverty.

DIARY DATES & NEWS

On June 22nd our Church began to celebrate its 70th year with a celebratory service led by a previous minister, the Revd. David Coote.

He took as his theme “Challenging Times”

The choir opened the service with the Introit ‘Make a joyful noise’ and a full church ensured that the congregational singing continued making a joyful noise with rousing hymns and a song, with energetic actions, led by David ‘Allelu, allelu, allelu, allelujah, praise ye the Lord.

An organist’s - eye view
as Gill Vinall shared her story of her long and fulfilling association
with Merrow Methodist Church.



For more photographs and a fuller account of the day
see the August/September issue.

Don't forget

SATURDAY AUGUST 2nd – Our 70th Anniversary Picnic

Sheila Shackleton--- A Tribute from Megan Swayne

Whenever I think of Sheila, I smile! She was one of the first people I met when we moved to Merrow in September 1972 and came to worship at Merrow Methodist Church. She asked Kirsty if she would like to come out to Junior Church to the Beginners class of about 12 children aged 3-4 which she taught. Kirsty and I went to see Bushy Hill Playgroup the next week and there was Sheila again with her welcoming smile. The following term, I was asked by Dorothy, the Leader, to join the playgroup staff and working alongside Sheila.

I realised quickly what a lovely person she was with a huge dose of imagination and fun, as well as the ability to fit very neatly into a child's world. Later when the Ducker family moved to Bristol, Sheila and I had the great pleasure of working together and running the playgroup for over twenty years alongside other staff members who came for shorter spells.

Sheila had the imagination to turn anything into a game, her 'Storytime' was always exciting but when she told a 'Naughty little Sister' story—the children were all convinced it was about Mrs Shackleton's own little sister!

Sheila loved animals and insects, all of them, -- well apart from spiders! and she taught the children so much about plants, vegetables, and flowers and the wonderful world we live in. She was a hard worker and even made putting away the toys fun, but she was always ready to give a lot of thought to a problem or to discuss a different way of setting out the equipment. Sheila also helped with Tuesday Club, our club for Mums and tots.

Sheila was an Assistant Guider when we started 3rd Merrow Guide Company, and she also ran the Church Youth Club.

When it was suggested that we set up, with the other Merrow Churches, a weekly Lunch Club, for elderly folk in the area, Sheila joined the rota of volunteers, setting up the dining room and acting as Hostess serving food and chatting to the guests. She had a fine sense of humour too –when I cooked Lasagne for the first time she afterwards came into the kitchen saying, “The guests enjoyed that, but I told them it will be Chinese food next week, and asked them ‘how are you at eating with Chopsticks?’” Oh Sheila!!

In the Church too Sheila took her turn cleaning, and Harvest always saw her busy decorating the area around the lectern, and the radiator tops, as well as helping to distribute the gifts later. Sheila was one of the longest serving members of Merrow Methodist Church and I'm sure other members can add to my list. She had a very strong faith in our Lord and Master. We were privileged to know her.

Thanksgiving Service for the 80th Anniversary of Christian Aid

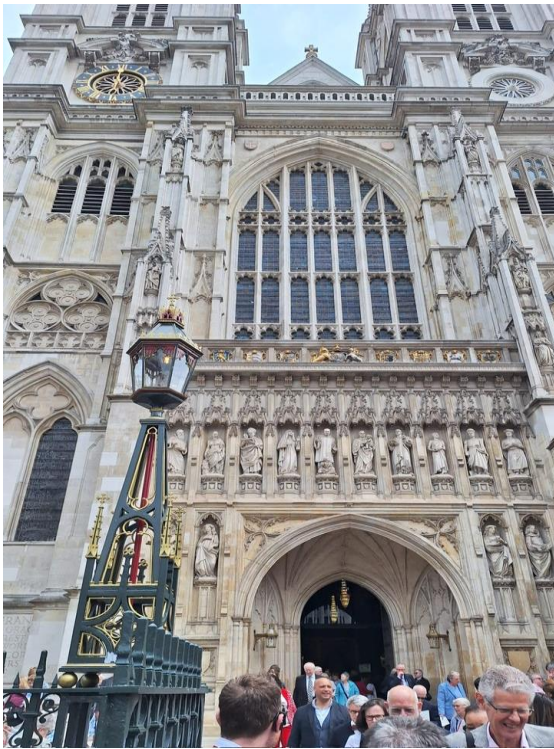
2025 is certainly becoming the year of anniversaries – what with the VE day commemorations in May and also Merrow's 70 year anniversary (just in case you have forgotten!), Christian Aid is also reflecting on their 80th Anniversary.

Christian Aid was set up by a group of British and Irish Churches at the beginning of May 1945 to help with the millions of refugees created by the 2nd World War.

In the fifties, Christian Aid week was launched and the work was expanded to include Africa, Asia etc.

Christian Aid week is always the second week of May – around VE day. This reflects the charity's original starting cause – the refugees from the Second World War.

Over the years at Merrow, a lot of money has been raised for Christian Aid. For many years, Rosemary Mills organised street collections throughout the Bushy Hill and Merrow estate. Lyn McKay then took over the role and the baton has now passed onto myself. As such, when I received the invitation to attend the Thanksgiving service at Westminster Abbey Service for Christian Aid – I felt that Merrow should be represented.



On Thursday 12th June, both Joan Wells and I went up to Westminster Abbey to attend the service. We arrived promptly for doors opening to ensure good seats – we got to choose front row on the Nave. On the opposite side were classes of school children – some had been singing outside the Abbey.

As expected with Christian Aid, it was a very international service. The High Commissioners of Zambia, Bangladesh and Sierra Leone attended, The Ministers were from all over the country and world.

The address was from the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches who was also a Minister in South Africa. The theme was that no matter how dark the world gets, if you have, and know, God, you will always have hope.

It finished with – – if you get anything from this message, it is HOPE.

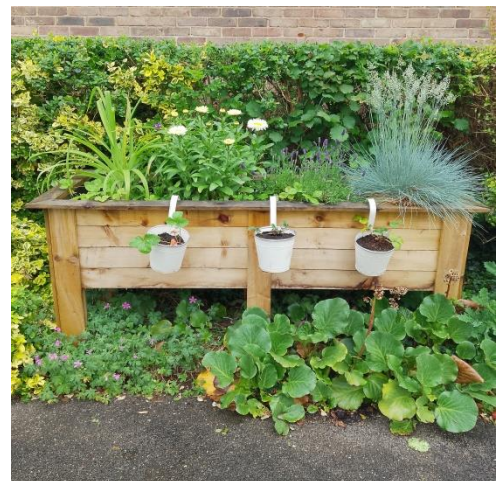
It was an inspiring service and we were both very pleased to have gone.

The Church poster for this month



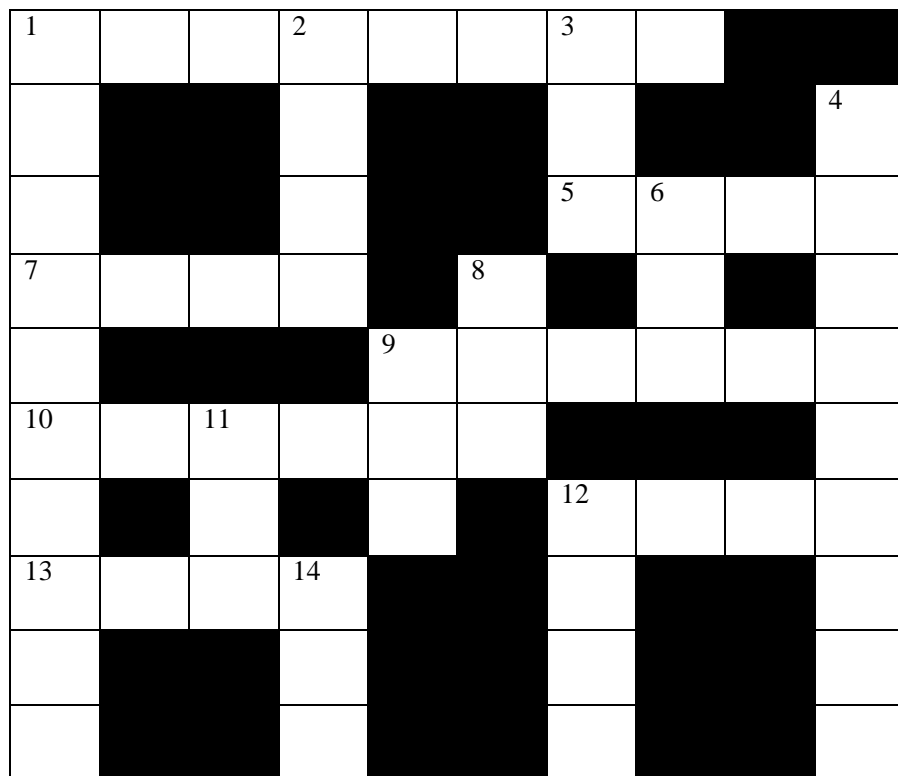
‘He’s got the whole world in his hands’

New additions to the Church Garden



JUNIOR PAGE – for the young and young at heart

A Summer Crossword:

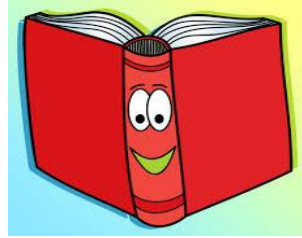


Clues Across:

1. The summer weather you hope for
5. You will see these on the horizon at the seaside
7. You play, dig and lie on this at the beach
9. An internet word game
10. They live in burrows
12. You might catch one in a rock pool
13. These can fly high
15. Wear this at the beach

Clues Down:

1. Too much sun may give you this
2. You may do this if you run too fast
3. 3 clockwise compass points
4. Fun to ride in at sea
6. Builders carry bricks in one.
8. Sit in the shade if it gets this
9. Paying games you may - - - or lose.
11. You play cricket with this
12. Ride in these on the dodgems
14. 3 more clockwise compass points



Story time

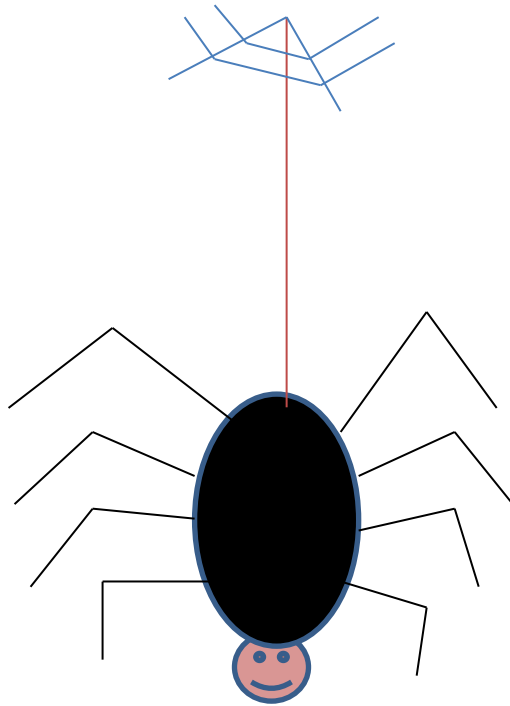
The Spider and the Fly by Mary Howitt

"Will you walk into my [parlour](#)?" said the Spider to the Fly,
"Tis the prettiest little parlour that ever you did spy;
The way into my parlour is up a winding stair,
And I have many curious things to show when you are there."
"Oh no, no," said the little Fly, "to ask me is in vain,
For who goes up your winding stair can ne'er come down again."

"I'm sure you must be weary, dear, with soaring up so high;
Will you rest upon my little bed?" said the Spider to the Fly.
"There are pretty curtains drawn around; the sheets are fine and thin,
And if you like to rest awhile, I'll snugly tuck you in!"
"Oh no, no," said the little Fly, "for I've often heard it said,
They never, never wake again, who sleep upon your bed!"

Said the cunning Spider to the Fly, "Dear friend what can I do,
To prove the warm affection I've always felt for you?
I have within my [pantry](#), good store of all that's nice;
I'm sure you're very welcome—will you please to take a slice?"
"Oh no, no," said the little Fly, "kind sir, that cannot be,
I've heard what's in your pantry, and I do not wish to see!"

"Sweet creature!" said the Spider, "you're witty and you're wise,
How handsome are your gauzy wings, how brilliant are your eyes!
I've a little looking-glass upon my parlour shelf,
If you'll step in one moment, dear, you shall behold yourself."
"I thank you, gentle sir," she said, "for what you're pleased to say,
And bidding you good morning now, I'll call another day."



The Spider turned him round about, and went into his den,
For well he knew the silly Fly would soon come back again:
So he wove a subtle web, in a little corner sly,
And set his table ready, to dine upon the Fly.
Then he came out to his door again, and merrily did sing,
"Come [hither](#), hither, pretty Fly, with the pearl and silver wing;
Your robes are green and purple—there's a crest upon your head;
Your eyes are like the diamond bright, but mine are dull as lead!"

Alas, alas! how very soon this silly little Fly,
Hearing his wily, flattering words, came slowly flitting by;
With buzzing wings she hung aloft, then near and nearer drew,
Thinking only of her brilliant eyes, and green and purple hue—
Thinking only of her crested head—poor foolish thing! At last,
Up jumped the cunning Spider, and fiercely held her fast.
He dragged her up his winding stair, into his dismal den,
Within his little parlour—but she ne'er came out again!

And now dear little children, who may this story read,
To idle, silly flattering words, I pray you ne'er give heed:
Unto an evil counsellor, close heart and ear and eye,
And take a lesson from this tale, of the Spider and the Fly.



Gill's trills

A trill for July

My message for this month is plain,
It is 'I do not trill in vain.'
My plea last month has brought replies,
'Tis surely manna from the skies.

Your talents, such a fine array,
November's concert will display;
Some choral, some on instruments,
Some poems with varied temperaments.

There's solo singing, dancing too,
With sketches placed between the two,
Duets, quartets it never ends
So come along and bring your friends

An evening you will long remember
The date? The fifteenth of November.

Ken's Pen

A Methodist minister asked his wife, on her 50th birthday, "If you could have anything in the world for one day, what would it be?" She replied "I would like to be ten again.". An hour later he drove her to the fairground, paid for her to go on the bumper-cars, big dipper, and many other rides. They then went to McDonalds and had burger, chips and a coke. Next they went to the cinema; popcorn, hot dogs and fizzy drink. When she got home, tired and feeling unwell, she collapsed into bed. "Well" asked the minister, "what was it like being ten again?" "I meant my dress size " she moaned.

Ken's Pen continued

Do you sometimes long to be able to talk about your faith to a relative, friend, or work colleague, but feel inadequate. Do you wish you could preach the Good News?

A story: At a social gathering a well-known actor was asked to recite something to entertain the guests, one of whom, an old minister, asked for Psalm 23. The actor agreed, and read the Psalm perfectly, his voice and diction was perfect. He received a tremendous round of applause. Then the actor turned to the minister, and asked him to do the same. Reluctantly, he agreed, explaining that his voice and diction would not be up to that standard.

However, when he finished, there was not a dry eye in the room. The actor rose, and his voice quivered as he said "I reached your eyes and ears, but he has reached your hearts. The difference is this ; I know the Psalm, but he knows the Shepherd. "

If you know Jesus as a friend and Good Shepherd, what you say to your friend will be far more effective than a brilliant sermon.

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With more greetings from Puddletown and an invitation for tea/coffee if you're down this way, Ken Mills (01305-849328)

HERE
IS
AN
EMPTY
SPACE.

????????????????????????????

If you have something of interest which you would like to share
on this page
Please send it to the editor –details on P.5

POETRY CORNER

Answer July by Emily Dickinson

Answer July—
Where is the Bee—
Where is the Blush—
Where is the Hay?

Ah, said July—
Where is the Seed—
Where is the Bud—
Where is the May—
Answer Thee—Me—

Nay—said the May—
Show me the Snow—
Show me the Bells—
Show me the Jay!

Quibbled the Jay—
Where be the Maize—
Where be the Haze—
Where be the Bur?
Here—said the Year—

At night by Amy Lowell

The wind is singing through the trees to-night,
A deep-voiced song of rushing cadences
And crashing intervals. No summer breeze
Is this, though hot July is at its height,
Gone is her gentler music; with delight
She listens to this booming like the seas,
These elemental, loud necessities
Which call to her to answer their swift might.
Above the tossing trees shines down a star,
Quietly bright; this wild, tumultuous joy
Quickens nor dims its splendour. And my mind,
O Star! is filled with your white light, from far,
So suffer me this one night to enjoy
The freedom of the onward sweeping wind.

SCAMS & WARNINGS

Super strength nail glue

The Chartered Trading Standards Institute is issuing a stark warning to the public about extremely potent and dangerous nail glues which could leave users with skin irritation, redness, blistering or even burns to the skin.

These nail glues are being promoted to consumers that use false nails on social media platforms.

These products often come with no ingredient labelling or instructions and pose a serious risk to members as the strength and possible side effects are unknown.

Airport drop-off charge.

Gatwick Airport advises passengers to go through its official website to pay the charge as fraudsters are persuading people to transfer funds to an account unrelated to Gatwick Airport.

Phishing

Since 2020, over 41 million phishing attempts have been reported to the Suspicious Email Reporting Service — a powerful sign that the public is staying alert to online threats, helping to protect themselves and others. But cyber criminals aren't giving up - they're constantly finding new ways to trick people into clicking malicious links, sharing personal information, or handing over money

Scam Emails

If you, or someone you know gets scam or nuisance mail, the National Trading Standards Scams Team's Investigators want to see it!

They already use the mail that they receive from Scam Marshals to great effect through their disruption techniques, but the team would like to see more and put a stop to these mailings being posted unsolicited to consumers

Send Mail (no Need For A Stamp)

To:

NTSST, FREEPOST, MAIL MARSHALS

NB

If something sounds too good to be true, it probably is!!

Prayers worth sharing



A Summer Prayer

May we breathe in the beauty of summer with its power of transformation.

May this beauty permeate all that feels un-beautiful in us.

May the God of summer give us beauty.

May you seek and find spaces of repose during these summer months.

May these moments refresh and restore the tired places

May the God of summer give us rest.

*May you be open to times of celebration and recreation
that are so much a part of summer.*

May you find happiness in these times of play and leisure.

May the God of summer give us joy.

May your eyes see the wonders of summer's colours.

May these colors delight you and entice you into contemplation.

May the God of summer give us inner light.

*May you feel energy of summer rains penetrating thirsty gardens,
golf courses, lawns and farmlands.*

May these rains remind you that your inner thirst needs quenching.

May your inner self be refreshed, restored, and renewed.

May the God of summer give us what we need for healing.

*May you savour fresh produce that comes to your table
and enjoy the fruit of summer's bounty.*

May the God of summer give us a sense of satisfaction in the works of our hands.

May you find shelter when the stormy skies of summer threaten your safety.

May the God of summer give us shelter

when inner storms threaten our peace of mind and heart.

*May you enjoy the unexpected and find surprises of beauty and happiness
as you travel the roads on summer vacation.*

***May the God of summer lead us to amazing discoveries
as we travel the inner roads of our soul as well.***