

KENT POLICE



The last twelve months have been extremely successful for Kent Police in Staplehurst with a reduction of **15.5% of all crime recorded**. We have seen a reduction of 30.4% for anti-social behaviour, 34.1% for vehicle crime. This has been due to a number of operations conducted by Kent Police targeting suspects and bringing them to justice. We have also deployed our Mobile Police Station on a number of occasions to offer crime prevention advice and to provide a visible reassurance. The Partners and Communities Together (PACT) process continues in earnest and the following areas are being dealt with by ourselves and other agencies:

1. Parking throughout the village.
2. Young people causing a nuisance in the Parade.
3. Vehicles speeding through the village.

We have tackled these issues throughout the year including the issuing of several anti-social behaviour letters sent to parents of known nuisance youths along with regular patrolling to deter anti-social behaviour. Speeding continues to be an issue and in the last twelve months Kent Police has conducted twelve speed checks in Marden Road / Headcorn Road / Cranbrook Road and Station Road. During these checks 95 people have been warned, 28 people have been issued with fixed penalty fines and 2 people have been reported to go to court. We try to conduct these checks at different times of the days to deal with issues raised by the community and will continue with this throughout the next twelve months.

In 2009 we launched PACT surgeries, which are held in the library between 10:00 and 12:00 on the last Saturday of each month. This is your opportunity to speak to the Police and KCC Warden to discuss any issues that you may have. Thank you for your continued support in making Staplehurst safe. PC Marc Pennicott & PCSO P Gardner

GROUP REPORTS TO ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2009

FREE CHURCH

As a church our overall goal is "Enabling everyone to experience Jesus", in which we aim to serve some of the many & diverse needs of the community of Staplehurst. We strive to monitor the needs of the community matching them to our resources, identifying opportunities for offering God's grace to those in need.

Many will know of the delay to our building demolition which put our program back considerably but we are pleased to report that our plans have now been advanced to ready for tender stage although at present we cannot proceed further until sufficient funds are in place. We are grateful to the Lord that since we began four years ago we have so far been able to raise £450,000 towards our one and three quarter million pound target.

Because we have no building of our own we have been enabled to be more effectively involved in the community through the hire of a variety of buildings in which to hold all the events we offer. Currently we use the following buildings in which are held:

Our weekly Toddler Club using the Village Hall provides a safe place for small children to play whilst their parents and carers (both church members and non-members) are able to socialize. We number at present some 30 adults and 50 children.

Our fortnightly youth club, held in the village youth centre on Friday nights for Year 5 upwards, caters for, on average, 20-30 teenagers by offering various activities such as craft work, listening to music and general chatting with friends, quizzes, table tennis, snooker, etc.

Our puppet team, "Ps'arms Puppets", regularly perform at local churches, residential homes, and local events such as the Village Carnival, groups such as the W.I. Guides and Scouts, and assemblies at some fifteen local schools in the Maidstone/Cranbrook area.

We are actively involved in Staplehurst Primary School which at present hosts our morning services and other outreach events. As a result we have been growing in numbers! Our pastor regularly takes assemblies, as does the Ps'arms Puppet team. One of our members is the Chair of Governors and 3 of our members are on the staff.

Our evening services are held by kind permission at the URC in the High Street.

An activity for Senior Citizens entitled "Cedars" takes place once a month in various homes. Activities include visiting speakers, lunches, flower arranging and outings to local places of interest.

Between Easter and the end of October we hold a stall at the local Sunday Market in the Station car park. Rather than selling any goods, we offer free DVDs on the life of Christ while our volunteers talk to and pray with people, many of whom would not ordinarily step inside a church building.

We regularly organise the globally successful "Alpha Course". These are ten-week "discovery courses" for folk wanting to learn more about Christianity, and as a result several new people from the village have come to faith in Christ and joined the church. Our last session was held at The Stilebridge public house and restaurant.

We cannot possibly hope to meet every need but a key objective of our current rebuilding project is to extend our capabilities for serving the community. One new area in this regard has been the very successful dance events hosted by SFC at the school and led by local dance teacher Jack Davidson.

GUIDING IN STAPLEHURST

Guiding in Staplehurst District is as active as ever, and waiting lists are held to ensure fairness in allocation of places at all units.

At the beginning of 2008 there were 2 Rainbow units for girls aged 5-7. Each unit had a maximum of 15 girls who met weekly and whose activities included cooking, singing, games, crafts and trips out. They held sleepovers which were always extremely popular and usually over-subscribed. The Rainbows visited the elderly people at Staplehurst Manor and sang to them. They also planted sunflowers in the grounds of the Medical Centre and at Staplehurst Manor to celebrate Rainbows 21st birthday in 2008.

Sadly in the summer one unit had to close due to lack of adult help. This left one unit and a list which now stands at 37 girls waiting to join. More adult helpers always required, weekly meetings are one hour long. Surely someone could be willing to give up one hour a week!

There are 3 Brownie units meeting, each with about 24 girls aged 7-11. Their activities include cookery, crafts, gardening, and regular trips out. One unit went to London to see The Lion King, another went to a pantomime. Several pack holidays were organised, both here in Staplehurst and on the south coast, which the girls and adults thoroughly enjoyed.

Again, lack of adult helpers is beginning to affect the units. Girlguiding UK stipulates that leaders must retire at the age of 60, and there are quite a few approaching that age. One unit is already managing with one leader and parent help only. It would be sad to see yet another unit have to close because of lack of help (there were 4 packs in this village 5 years ago).

The 2 Guide units each have about 25 girls ages 11-14, who have wide-ranging activities every year. 3rd Guides travelled to Switzerland for a holiday, and plans to visit Prague this year and 1st Guides are off to Paris this year. The girls work hard to raise the money for these trips, and are grateful to all who support their fund-raising activities. They made cookies which they sold at the village carnival and held jumble sales among other money-making schemes.

All the Rainbow, Brownie and Guide units have taken turns to supply decorations for the new Medical Centre. We hope you have enjoyed them when visiting the Doctor!

This village is lucky enough to also have a very active Trefoil Guild, actually the largest Guild in the county. They meet once a month for a general meeting with visiting speakers, chocolate evenings, country dancing and other fun activities. They also now have an active craft group who meet once a month, and a group of knitters too! So on three Thursday evenings every month they can be found in the Kathie Lamb Centre doing something! They also have trips out in the summer, and have a group who pop over to the theatre in Tunbridge Wells occasionally.

Staplehurstguidingpr@yahoo.co.uk

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Slowly but surely Staplehurst Neighbourhood Watch is expanding round the village. More Neighbourhood Watch signs are appearing in areas of the village where Watch members live. We now have 23 co-ordinators spread fairly evenly throughout the village. Where practical, police alerts relating to suspect callers, rogue traders, instances of local crimes etc., as supplied to us by Maidstone Police Headquarters, are circulated to co-ordinators for further distribution to their neighbours.

We hold open meetings every other month at the McCabe Centre. We started by holding them at 7.30 pm in order to attract commuters but even that time was too early for them so we switched to meeting at 5.30 in order to help our more regular attendees. When he is not on actively on patrol PC Pennicott comes along to give us a report covering recent events in the area. PCSO Peter Gardner also attends some of our meetings. The main purpose is to up-date each other and discuss local home security issues.

To further publicise NhW we ran a home and vehicle security exhibition in the Village Centre in July at which several local companies exhibited. PC Marc Pennicott and Chris Lomax (Parish Warden) and Peter Gardner (PCSO) all attended and assisted in security marking of bicycles. With the help of Mr. Bob Ham, the local member of the Lions Club we were able to give publicity to their 'Message in a bottle system'. This scheme is so important, particularly for vulnerable people, that our collective view is that it was one of the more important outcomes of the exhibition. We recruited a few new members at the exhibition and made a small profit to add to our funds. However, there would have been no profit without the generous support of the Parish Council in funding the hire of the hall, for which many thanks.

More recently we have been updating the NhW page on the village website but the intention is to make more efficient use of it.

STAPLEHURST CALENDAR 2009

Total Calendar Sales plus Donations and Advertisement revenue this year realised £2107.50. Expenditure for printing, envelopes plus V.A.T. and £10 for the stall at

The Shepherd's Market totalled £879.50. Therefore we were able to give the Staplehurst Scout Group and Staplehurst District Guides the sum of £614.00 each.

Thanks are due to advertisers, people who helped at various events to sell Calendars, also businesses who had the calendar for sale at their premises. Particular thanks to Sheela at the Post Office who, despite it being her busiest time of the year, sold over 60 copies.

STAPLEHURST HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Another successful year for our Society with varied and interesting illustrated monthly talks covering a wide range of horticultural matters. Membership fell slightly to 86, but meetings were well attended by about 50 people each month. Our Spring and Autumn shows were again fortunate to have many entries, despite the weather and these were praised by both the judges and the public. We entered the Tenterden Challenge Shield Competition and were pleased to finish third of the local societies taking part. The plant sale and quiz evening were each again very successful and the quiz much enjoyed by all. We were involved in a number of village activities including the Primary School gardening club and the Staplehurst Carnival & Fete.

Our Honorary Secretary Maurice Stevenson has retired after 19 years and the Society is greatly indebted to him for his hard work during this time.

We are pleased and grateful that our three sponsors kindly continue to support us. Despite rising costs our finances remain steady and we look forward with confidence to the coming year as a thriving friendly society. Our meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month in the Village Centre, South Hall at 8 p.m. and all are welcome.

STAPLEHURST INTEREST GROUP

Staplehurst Interest Group enjoys a programme of activities chosen by the members. Our numbers continue to grow in the Schoolroom behind the United Reformed Church each Thursday morning. We have enjoyed a varied diet of speakers, games and participation activities to ensure everyone laughs a lot and widens their interests. Some members come to those sessions that interest them, whilst others come to everything. (It may, of course, be the refreshments and chat.)

We would publicly like to thank all of those willing volunteers who have given their time and shared their enthusiasms at our sessions. Of course, if **YOU** have a desire to share a skill or talk to our group about anything that interests you, you would be guaranteed a welcome from STAPLEHURST INTEREST GROUP.

SPEEDWATCH

Our band of volunteers have been out and about in Staplehurst with the Speedwatch equipment throughout the year. The roads agreed with the police to be monitored are seven sites; in Station Road, Cranbrook Road, High Street, Marden Road and Headcorn Road, all in both directions. Teams are pleased that the majority of drivers are keeping to the speed limits, which is encouraging as this is the prime purpose of Speedwatch. However, excess speeding is reported to the police and action taken.

Regular newsletters are sent to all volunteers to keep information and enthusiasm high. With changing commitments some are able to be more active than others and so more training is often requested for those in waiting so that we can deploy our equipment more often. We hope that all parishioners will set the good example and help slow down the inconsiderate minority.

WEALD CLUB FOR THE DISABLED

We meet regularly on Fridays at The McCabe Centre for social activities, followed by a cooked lunch.

The Club is staffed by 14 volunteers some trained as escorts on the specially adapted Mini Bus. This vehicle is able to transport up to 3 wheel chair seated passengers, plus 5 fixed seats. The driving is carried out by a team of 4 trained volunteers on a rota basis.

A day visit to Tenterden Garden Centre was held in March, and further outings include a trip on the Tenterden Steam Railway, the Assembly Hall Tunbridge Wells to see 'Joseph' and a meeting at Marden Bowl's Club in June.

The Club would welcome a few more Members, so if you find it difficult to get about and would like to meet with our members please call Maggie Weller on 891870

WEBSITE

The Website Group meet regularly to discuss ways to improve the site. Our website has now attracted more than 165,000 visits since it started in July 1999. Many people use the links we provide to discover information about our community, its facilities and groups, as well as Parish Council business. We would like to express a special thank you to Ron Hegarty who in a voluntary capacity continues to monitor our statistics and records Staplehurst life through photographs. New business ventures also seek inclusion in our directory. The Forum has given opportunities to all to express opinions and join in debate. We would also like to thank Sue Bassett, Maria Norris and David Henley of Zulogic, who improve the site and keep it updated.

STAPLEHURST WI ANNUAL REPORT 2009



Wow, have we had some fun at WI this year bouncing our way through such a varied programme including so much member participation.

We acted as magistrates as we heard evidence for a trial and then we had to decide on the sentence to hand down after hearing the mitigating circumstances.

Our bra fitting evening was very popular and quite a few members were surprised (and delighted!) by the outcomes from the M&S rep.

A trip down Memory Lane found us singing along with the Rainham Oast House Theatre Group as they performed Songs from the Shows.

Seasonal Cookery activities meant tasters for all and the arrival of some recipes that we are going to put to the test in our Annual Produce Show in September. A trip up the Bell Tower was a very energetic and enlightening time!

The wind and the rain blew us around at our Garden Meeting however, stoical to the end, we beavered on.

Pam Bowles stunned us with the quality and diversity of her quilt-making which came at the same time as two of our members, returning from the WI Denman College, were also able to display their magnificent craft achievements.

Our Darts Team and our Skittles Team have both had tremendous successes in the District and our Quiz Team, The Twits, have won locally on several occasions. We hosted a thoroughly enjoyable VIP Evening at Lakeland Plastics and are now looking forward to our Clay Pigeon Shoot.

Come and join us on the 2nd Tuesday each month at 7.30pm in the South Hall.

Pam Payne
President

STAPLEHURST LIBRARY REPORT

Events and activities held throughout the past year:

Staplehurst library has had a very successful year. We continue to offer popular activities for children, including baby rhyme time, storytimes, and craft sessions. We have welcomed visits from the primary school, introducing 207 children to the library.

To celebrate Do Something Different in Libraries, a national campaign to attract new customers through non - traditional events in libraries, we hosted 3 morris dancing groups.

The reading group continues to thrive. They supported the library in running an event for all local reading groups, and a poetry celebration. We also have a well supported and valuable user group.

We supported the Kent Libraries and Archives Kent: A Great Place to Read initiative by using the attractive garden area as a place to relax and read.

Popular author Robert Rankin gave an entertaining talk in March this year.

The library runs a Home Library Service for those people unable to access the library. We also have a computer buddy available to assist people using the computers.

The library is well used as a venue for the Alzheimer Society, Voluntary Action Maidstone, Maidstone Borough Council and Maidstone Housing Trust. The Community Warden, police and borough and parish councillors have held surgeries throughout the year.

Forthcoming Plans:

We will continue to work with partners to promote and develop the service.

Services Provided:

Lend fiction and non-fiction books for all ages and interests – a free service.

Lend DVDs for a small charge.

Free computer use.

Provision of information.

Statistics:

Total number of items issued April 2008-February 2009 50, 349. This is a 2.24% increase over the same period last year.

Concluding remarks:

I would like to thank the local staff for their hard work and enthusiasm during the year. We welcome any comments you may have about the library service

Library Address: Staplehurst Library The Parade High Street Staplehurst TN12 0LA

Telephone No: 01580 891929

Email: staplehurstlibrary@kent.gov.uk

Contact Name: Fiona Jakob Lynn Finn

Opening Hours: Monday closed Tuesday 9-8 Wednesday – Friday 9-6 Saturday 10-2

MAIDSTONE RURAL YOUTH PROJECT REPORT – MAY 2009

The last year has been very successful for the whole rural project and very much so for Staplehurst in particular. The £4000 Youth Opportunity Fund grant that the project acquired has been partly spent, the youth club itself has been repainted and emptied out of some of the old equipment and replaced with new, modern equipment such as a Nintendo Wii, 2 leather couches, a large projector screen (for use with the games consoles) a dvd player and a new stereo system, which was purchased with a donation made by Chris Lomax, Community Warden from an award that he received for his work. Other minor but useful improvements have also been made such as 3 new noticeboards, a cigarette butt bin and a large Tea Urn.

We have held a number of trips and activities that Staplehurst young people have been involved in such as Midnight Ice Skating and We Will Rock You Concert in London. We held a very successful summer programme last year during which we held a community day in Staplehurst with sports, art and crafts and a barbeque and also took the young people on many trips and a 3-day residential.

The young people in the village are gradually becoming more proactive in taking part in activities. At the beginning of the year, 4 young people were successful in gaining £500 from Youth Opportunity Fund which they will use to book a trip to Treejumpers just for Staplehurst.

The club has also seen a 4 week DJ project which the young people really enjoyed as they got to record their own music and also make and record their own rap lyrics. A 4 week graffiti art course has started from tonight during which the young people will design and spray a sign for outside the youth club. We would like to thank the Parish council for their kind donation of £1000 to this project without which we would not have been able to book it.

Despite a few behavioural problems which the youth workers have stamped down on firmly, the club has some great plans for the future. The young people have written a bid to Youth Capital Fund for a new kitchen and a refurbishment of the chillout room. If this is successful, it will enable us to do cookery with the group and also section off the chillout room so that it can be a private area to talk should the young people need it.

The project has already booked and started work on this year's summer programme which includes a trip to see Wicked! In London, a trip to the London Tombs, a day out at a wildlife park, a community day and a week long residential to Wales to do adventurous activities.

We are also hoping to get some young people involved in the Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme and get them through their bronze and maybe even silver certificates. This will start in the next few weeks.

Also, we have laid the groundwork for setting up a Youth Forum for Staplehurst and this will mean sending young people on training and getting them more involved in community projects such as litter picks, Parish Council meetings and youth club committee meetings.

Last but not least, we have also employed a new Leader in Charge for Staplehurst which means the club can open an extra night a week or fortnight. Her name is Rosalie Driver and she has a wealth of experience and knowledge of youth work practise. She will be starting in the next few weeks once her checks are all in place.

On behalf of the project and the young people, we would like to thank Staplehurst Parish Council for being positive towards the club and helping as much as possible, Chris Lomax for being a great role model to the young people and being so supportive of the youth work in the village by helping out at Monday club every week and putting in the hours to help get the club looking nice, painting, clearing out etc and Paul Butcher for always speaking up on behalf of youth across Maidstone area and supporting the club.

Natalie Penfold