

STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL NOTES (for April 2010)

Annual Parish Meeting – To be held on Monday 10th May 2010 in the South Hall, Staplehurst Village Centre at 8 p.m. This is the only official meeting of the year for Parish Electors to raise local issues for discussion. It is hosted by the Parish Council but local electors do have the right to speak at this meeting. All Village Groups have been invited to submit a short report about their group's activities during the past year which will be published alongside those of the Parish Council. In addition a speaker from the Kenward Trust has been invited to explain the work undertaken by this Charity. County and Borough Councillor Hotson and Borough Councillor Lusty have also been invited to speak, together with representatives of the local policing team.

If you, as a local elector, have an interest in local governance, The Annual Parish Meeting is the meeting that you should be attending. Next year in May 2011 the whole Parish Council will be up for election, so come along to the Annual Parish Meeting to be informed; ask questions of the Council and meet the Councillors you might vote for in 2011. You could also spend the next year learning how the Parish Council operates by attending its meetings on 1st and 3rd Monday evenings (except when Bank Holidays intervene and they're moved to Tuesday as on 6th April) and stand for election yourself this time next year.

For Staplehurst Parish Council to regain its Quality Status, there needs to be an election held in May 2011 with 15+ people standing. People often criticise the Parish Council but it takes very special people to put themselves forward for election and work (voluntarily) for the greater good of the community. Are you one of these special people who should be thanked rather than criticised? If so, you should be learning about local governance and be prepared to stand for election yourself next year. Start by attending the Annual Parish Meeting!

Staple Drive Play Area – Following public consultation last month on the project proposals, Staplehurst Parish Council is likely to be deciding at its Full Council Meeting on 19th April which company is to be awarded the contract to build the new play area. Thank you to all residents and children who contributed their ideas and votes on the proposals, which have been taken into account.

Website – The Parish Council website continues to improve with additional pages of information. Local businesses and village groups have the opportunity to manage their own website pages linked from the Trade Directory and Village Life pages of the website. The Website Forum continues to be a useful source of information. However, during March difficulties were experienced by some internet browsers in finding the Council website and the source of the problem is being investigated.

Parish Information and E-groups – Copies of the Minutes of Parish Council Meetings are available at Full Council Meetings and on the Parish Council

Website at www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk . A number of e-groups are available for anyone wishing to receive direct emails of useful information about local issues e.g., Weekly MBC Plans List, Parish Council Minutes & Agendas, Press Releases, Infrastructure Group, etc. If local residents have any queries regarding Parish Council or local authority issues, they are encouraged to contact the Parish Clerk for the facts.

MBC Cleansing and Collection Services – Call Maidstone Borough Contact Centre on 01622 602162 for information about refuse services provided by Maidstone Borough Council. Alternatively much information is available on www.maidstone.gov.uk Use this number also to report any undesirable activities such as fly-tipping, dumped cars, littering etc. and help to keep the environment clean and tidy. A “pull-out” (or rear of property) collection service is also available to those who are unable to wheel or carry their refuse to the front boundary of their homes.

- **Waste Freighter** – This is a six-weekly service, the previous visit having been 21st March. The new dates had not been advised by the print deadline but should be early May. Please check the MBC and SPC Websites for details nearer the time.
- **Garden waste** - MBC Green Garden Sacks are available from Spuds 'n Buds, Henhurst Farm Shop or the Parish Office at £2.50 per roll of 5. Garden waste will only be collected if in the MBC printed green sacks and left beside your wheeled bin (or put in a blue-lidded wheelie bin hired from MBC specifically for garden waste) once a fortnight.
- **MBC Bulky Collection Service** – Phone MBC to arrange a collection (details of fees are shown on www.maidstone.gov.uk). Alternatively the Tovil tip and waste freighter are available for householder's use free of charge.

REPORT IT! PC Marc Pennicott on 07980 770575 with Community Warden, Chris Lomax on 07811 271254, PCSO Pete Gardner on 07772 226134 and Special Constable Ken Baker are the local visible policing presence in our Parish, but have emergency back up from the force as necessary. Telephone any of these officers if you witness anti-social behaviour that is not life-threatening. These are not 24/7 contact numbers so do leave a message and they will get back to you when next on duty. All crime-incident reports should be given to Maidstone Police Station on 01622 690055. If you prefer, calls to Crimestoppers are free and anonymous: 0800 555 111 but these may not be referred back directly to this parish. Life-threatening incidents, crimes in progress or serious injury Road Traffic Accident requiring urgent police attendance should be notified by dialling 999 in the usual way.

Hire of North & South Hall, Staplehurst Village Centre - To enquire about the availability of either hall, please contact the booking clerk on 01580 893280.

The Parish Office does not deal with Village Centre bookings, although we do get many enquiries!

Dog Mess & disposal – Red dog waste bins are provided at strategic points around the parish. Thankfully only a small minority allow their dogs to defecate in public areas without clearing up the mess. However, if you witness such anti-social behaviour, telephone the Dog Warden on 01622 602117 in confidence and give details of the perpetrators. Visits to problem areas can be timed to be most effective and a fine imposed when the offender is caught.

Maidstone Borough Highway-related services - MBC remains responsible for some highway services such as Street sweeping, street nameplates, street naming and numbering, park and ride facilities, concessionary fares and public transport matters. MBC Contact Centre to report most issues requiring attention is 01622 602162. For all other Highways issues contact Kent Highways.

Kent Highways - Call 08458 247 800 any time 24 hours a day 7 days a week to report any local highways issues, such as defects to the roads, footways, signs, drainage and street furniture, etc. You can also report defects online too at <http://www.kent.gov.uk/KHSFaults/> You do not need to contact the Parish Office to report such defects. Responsibility for the motorways and trunk roads are managed by the Highways Agency on 08457 504030.

Bogus Caller Advice: If any caller does not have an appointment, then ask them to wait while you check their identity. Do not be afraid to close the door and make them wait. Checking identity can sometimes be difficult and confusing to do. If so, ask them to come back at another time when you can have someone with you. If the caller is genuine they will understand and not mind returning. The local policing team in partnership with Trading Standards has introduced a **Cold Calling Control Zone** for Staplehurst. Information has been circulated and signs put up to educate residents and cold-callers about this initiative.

Neighbourhood Watch operates a scheme called Nominated Neighbour, which asks the caller to go to a neighbour who will return with them, so you do not have to deal with this alone. If you wish to learn any more about this, contact the Neighbourhood Watch Office on 01622 604395. Never give any personal details to a stranger. Remember it is your home and you should not be afraid to ask them to leave. If you are at all concerned about a caller, call Mid Kent Police on 01622 690055.

KCC Handyvan Services: The fitting of various security devices for householders is available through KCC in partnership with Help the Aged and Age concern. Please telephone 0845 026 1055 or Email: handyvan@helptheaged.org.uk for details. Website: www.helptheaged.org.uk

Parish Council Meetings held in South Hall at Staplehurst Village Centre:-

Planning Committee - 7 p.m. TUESDAY 6th April 2010
Amenities Committee – 8 p.m. TUESDAY 6th April 2010
Planning Committee – 7 p.m. Monday 19th April 2010
Full Council Meeting - 8 p.m. Monday 19th April 2010

Mrs J S Bassett, Parish Clerk
Parish Office, Village Centre, Staplehurst.
Telephone/Fax: (01580) 891761.
Website: www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk and
E-mail: staplehurst1@btconnect.com
The Parish Office is open to the public 0900-1300 hrs.
Mondays to Fridays (except Thursdays by appointment).