

STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL NOTES (for July 2010)

New Parish Council Chairman – At the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council on 17th May, after having given 7 years to the Council as Chairman (and 11 in total) Councillor Margaret Arger stood down as Chairman. Margaret was then warmly re-elected as Planning Committee Chairman. Councillor John Perry, who had been Vice-Chairman for the previous year, was elected as Chairman. Councillor Tom Burnham was elected Vice-Chairman and Councillor Bill Best was elected Chairman of Amenities Committee. A number of focus groups were also agreed and include:- Allotments Project, Council Policy, Finance, Publicity & Website, Staplehurst Rural Settlement, Toilet Team and Emergency Planning.

Parish Councillor Vacancies – The co-option to fill the vacancy created by Barry Franks took place on 17th May. Councillors were pleased to welcome John Kelly to join the Council that very evening. Two further vacancies have since been advertised and this Council hopes to have filled these by the time this article is published. Please contact the Parish Clerk if you would like up to date information or make enquiries generally about what being a Parish Councillor might involve. Do not forget that the whole Parish Council will be up for election in May 2011, so now would be a good time to take more interest and consider standing yourself in future.

At a time when the Council seems to receive more brickbats than bouquets (particularly from some Forum posters), local electors would do well to look to themselves; either to stand for co-option or election, or show existing Councillors more respect for the selfless time and consideration they give to this community. In this we should also include our two County and Borough Councillors, Eric Hotson and Richard Lusty for their support and promotion of Staplehurst's interests within the Borough and County Councils.

Staplehurst Airfield Memorial – Parish Councillor Paul Kelly was honoured to lay a wreath at the unveiling of the Memorial on 6th June, which was organised and commissioned by Mr. Ted Sergison. The afternoon included the memorial service, cavalcade of military vehicles and flypast. In a letter of thanks and appreciation to Ted for his work to achieve this lasting memorial, Chairman John Perry wrote "I thought the service and the unveiling of the memorial incredibly moving, especially as it was in the presence of two of the original serving officers. The whole project has been a wonderful event for the people of Staplehurst and a fantastic showcase for our Parish. However, I think most important of all it is a fitting memorial to those who gave so much in the course of freedom. On a personal note my Father served with the US Forces during the Second World War and on the 6th of June 1944 was with them at Omaha Beach; so for me it was especially poignant. Finally, we must not forget the wonderful spread put on by the W.I.; not only was the food great but the decorations were extremely evocative and really captured the mood."

Staple Drive Play Area – The final shape, content and quote for the improved play area was agreed on 17th May. The order was placed with Playdale, the

preferred supplier indicated by the public consultation event at Staplehurst Library. The work will include the refurbishment of the existing swings, installation of a Giggleswick combination unit and Playhouse from the Little Hamlets range together with a 2 Scafell Pike unit from the Adventure Trail range and a litter bin. It is hoped that the installation will be completed before schools break up in July for the summer holidays.

Bell Lane Toilets – The toilets are being cleaned daily and open every day from 7 a.m. until early evening, then locked at night. Staplehurst Parish Council wishes to do all it can to keep vandalism repair costs to a minimum and would appreciate it if all residents could report any damage, misuse or potential vandalism problems. For non-urgent reports, please call during office hours or leave a message on 01580 891761. If an issue requires immediate attention outside office hours, please telephone 07539 692588.

Playscheme & Over 8's Activity Afternoons 2-20 August – Staplehurst Parish Council is working in partnership with PlayPlace to deliver three weeks of morning Playscheme as well as 9 (Mon, Wed & Fri) Activity Afternoons for over 8's between 2-20 August. A flier with full details will have been delivered with the Summer Village Update in June. Booking forms to download and post are available on the Council website at <http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/playscheme.aspx> Bookings and day to day running of Playscheme this year is being administered by PlayPlace, not the Parish Office. See details about PlayPlace at <http://playplace.org/>

Website – The Parish Council website continues to improve with additional pages of information. The Reports by the Staplehurst Partnership Group have recently been uploaded at http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/staplehurst_partnership_healthcheck_report_mar2010.aspx Local businesses and village groups are welcome to manage their own website pages linked from the Trade Directory and Village Life pages of this website free of charge. Kindly contact the Parish Clerk for details. The Website Forum continues to be a useful source of local information and interesting comment.

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 http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/minutes_of_the_last_meetings.aspx . 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.

Village Update (Summer Edition) and Annual Report 2009-2010 – Every household in Staplehurst Parish should have received the Summer Village Update and Annual Report, either by post or hand-delivered by volunteers.

There should also have been a flier about Playscheme and the new over 8's Activity Afternoons together with the Health Centre Newsletter. A great deal of effort, time and energy is put into publishing and delivering these documents, which it is hoped are then read by local residents. Thanks to a band of willing volunteers, delivery costs are kept to a minimum, although outlying areas without convenient pavements are sent by post. If you have not received your copy for any reason, kindly contact the Parish Office. New volunteers to help with delivery are always welcome. Kindly contact the Parish Clerk if you wish to assist with deliveries.

Speedwatch – Now the better weather is here (hopefully), there are more opportunities for Speedwatch Teams to be out and about with the Speedwatch Equipment. Although the registration numbers of speeding vehicles are taken, this initiative is as much about educating drivers to respect one another by not driving at excessive speeds as it is to send speeders warning letters or fines.

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** – The next visit of the Waste Freighter will be on Sunday, 11th July. 1000-1100 at Poyntell Pond, 1115-1200 at Church Green and 1215-1315 at Northdown.
- **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 07864 547453. 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. Monday 5th July 2010

Amenities Committee – 8 p.m. Monday 5th July 2010

Planning Committee – 7 p.m. Monday 19th July 2010

Full Council Meeting - 8 p.m. Monday 19th July 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).