

Village Update

SPRING 2009

www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk

STAPLEHURST VILLAGE WEBSITE RELAUNCH

By the time you read this, the new-style Parish Council Website should be up and running. As you can see from the screen print (shown to the right), it has a more modern and innovative style to reflect the technological progress that has been achieved since the first website was launched nearly ten years ago.

All the old favourite pages are still there, but with some new additions too. The cherished Forum has a new framework which will hopefully make the viewing and contribution of postings much easier and faster. Local Village Groups and businesses will now have direct access to their own areas so that the information shown can be updated more frequently and easily by themselves. The archive pages containing Parish Council Minutes, Financial Statements, Village Updates, Parish Council notes, etc., have been transferred to the new site so that an historical resource continues to build up for future generations in a digital format.

Even if you are not yet of the computer age, the website at www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk can be viewed from any computer around the globe, including those at KCC Libraries, so log on and see what's been happening here.



We look forward to receiving your feedback and suggestions for further improvements that you may wish to contribute to make the site better and more informative. Let us know what you wish to learn about this parish through the website.

Staplehurst

Parish Council



MEMORIAL SEATS

Two new and substantial wooden seats have recently been installed near to the High Street bus stops. These are dedicated in memory of four local people who each took an active part in village life.

The seat near to Cornforth Close has been funded by Peter Day in memory of his wife Sheila, known to all as "Teddy". Peter Day came to live in Staplehurst as a young boy in 1935 and joined the local Dramatic Society. Early in 1950 he saw Teddy at a Drama Club meeting at the old Village Hall and decided on the spot that he would like to marry her. They married in 1952 and Peter never regretted it. Mrs Day worked as a local nanny for many years. Teddy was the nickname used by her employer (who was also named Sheila) and this remained with her throughout life.

The seat near to Chestnut Avenue has been funded by the Parish Council in memory of three men who made significant contributions to the well-being of Staplehurst.

Roger Nicholls was Parish Clerk for ten years until 1996 having taken early retirement from the Civil Service.

He oversaw the establishment of the Parish Office and the first steps by the Parish Council towards the computer age. Roger was also Chairman of Staplehurst Footpath Group and Parish Tree Warden.

Allan Rimmer, a retired teacher, was Secretary to the Staplehurst Society for many years and helped to ensure historical material was gathered and archived. He was also Chairman of the Carnival and Fete Committee and brought together much talent for this as well as the Creative Staplehurst Exhibition. He had a cheerful smile, a keen sense of humour and strong powers of persuasion.

Trevor Martin brought up his family in Staplehurst with wife Elaine and was active in a number of village groups. His expertise in finance helped to bring Staplehurst Village Centre onto a stronger financial base during his time as Treasurer. Trevor was a Parish Councillor for 12 years until 2007 and many of these were as Chairman of the Amenities Committee. He gave sound financial advice to the Parish Council. In recent years he helped to cook Thursday lunches at McCabe Day Centre.

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 11TH MAY 2009 – 8 P.M. SOUTH HALL, STAPLEHURST VILLAGE CENTRE.

All parish electors are welcome to attend the Annual Parish Meeting and may raise and discuss issues that are of interest or concern to them. Although hosted by the Parish Council, this meeting is for electors. The Parish Council, County and Borough Councillors and community policing team will all give an account of their work on behalf of the parish over the past year.

Representatives of local voluntary groups have been invited to provide written reports of their activities, although some verbal reports will be heard at the meeting if time permits. The Minutes and Reports from the 2008 Annual Parish Meeting can be viewed from the Latest News Page at www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk

2009 PARISH COUNCIL MEETING DATES

Unless stated all meetings are held in the South Hall, Staplehurst Village Centre.

Planning Committee - 7pm &
Amenities Committee 8pm:

Monday 06 April

Tuesday 05 May

Monday 01 June

Monday 06 July

Monday 03 August

Monday 07 September

Monday 05 October

Monday 02 November

Monday 07 December

Planning Committee - 7pm &
Full Council 8pm:

Monday 20 April

Monday 18 May

Monday 15 June

Monday 20 July

Monday 17 August

Monday 21 September

Monday 19 October

Monday 16 November

Monday 21 December

PLAY SCHEME STAFF VACANCIES

Play Leader Staff (over 18) are required for summer play scheme in Staplehurst. 3-21 August weekday mornings. Subject to CRB disclosure. Candidates with an interest, qualifications or studying in a child care profession are particularly welcome to apply together with those who have skills in dance, sports and/or crafts or previous experience in the supervision and education of children aged 4-11. Contact assistantclerk@staplehurstvillage.org.uk or 01580 891761 for details.

MOTOCROSS RACING DAYS

The motocross racing days at Duckhurst Farm, Clapper Lane will be on 17 May, 21 June & 19 July between 10:00am & 5:00pm. Staplehurst Parish Council will liaise with the British Schoolboy Motocross Association and Maidstone Borough Council if any problems or complaints arise.

JUBILEE CHANGING ROOM PROJECT

Although the project to build the new changing room facility is currently eight and a half weeks behind schedule, it is hoped that much of this will be regained once the roof is completed and water-tight. The delays have been caused by extreme weather conditions including flooding and snow. The Contractors, Barwicks, hope to open up the extended car park area very soon, if not already. Despite the project being somewhat delayed, the Footballers are planning to have the opening ceremony of the new building on Sunday 17th May combined with their end of season Presentation Day. All are welcome to join this day of celebration. This project has been made possible by the Football Foundation Grant together with other partnership funding from KCC, MBC, Parish Council, Football Teams and Guides.



FootballFoundation
football's biggest supporter

WHAT KIND OF SPEEDER ARE YOU?

Do you know how to tell what the speed limit is for the roads you travel on? Do you make use of your speedometer to check what speed you are travelling at? What do you do if you notice you're travelling above the limit? Does it bother you when you know you are exceeding the speed limit? How much above the limit do you find acceptable?

The answers you give to these questions goes some way to identifying which category of speeder you fall within.

Research has determined that drivers fit into three broad categories of speeder.

Lapsers are those drivers that know what limit they are travelling in, or at least can make a good guess, and will always plan for the lowest possible limit. When a Lapsers spots that they have crept slightly above the limit, their first action is to reduce speed to the legal level. Lapsers will never travel at 40mph in a 30mph limit. It is highly unlikely that Lapsers will ever travel at 35mph in a 30mph limit. It is possible that Lapsers may find their speed has crept towards 32mph or 33mph but will immediately adjust their speed to a maximum of 30mph. Lapsers are 'the converted', when it comes to road safety campaigns ... they know the message, agree with it and stick to it.

Error makers are drivers that don't correctly judge the speed limit for where they are and so make an error of judgement as to the legal speed limit. Error makers often fail to appreciate the importance of speed limits or why their driving speed could be dangerous. This leads to them 'guessing high' what the limit is for the roads they are on. Error makers will frequently find that they travel at between 35mph and 40mph in a 30mph limit. Sometimes their lack of ability to consider their surroundings properly will lead to them travelling at 45mph in a 30mph limit. When they notice their speeding error, on the rare occasions that they seek to check their speedometer, Error Makers will justify their

driving speed with comments like "well it's only 5 or 10mph over the limit – what difference will that make?" All is not lost for this majority of drivers – generally they will listen to reason. If the message sounds sensible they will hear it and stick to it, but they will need constant reminding.

Violators are drivers that know the limit for where they are but choose to exceed it; speed limits are for others and their ability to drive far in excess of the limit merely proves to the violator that they are a 'good' driver. Violators won't just creep over the limit, but will often exceed the limit by 50% or more 45mph and above in a 30mph limit. The justification used by the violator normally revolves around "I've done it before and it was OK" and "I'll spot any problems and be able to deal with them". It always seems to be the other persons fault if something goes wrong ! Unfortunately the only way a violator will change their behaviour is following a very harsh experience – a severe crash involving them or someone they are close to, or indeed through vigorous enforcement high fines, more than 3 points per offence, driving bans, imprisonment. Violators are a small, hard core of selfish and often aggressive drivers – the ones you do not want to meet coming towards you.

So which kind of speeder are you?

Error makers make up the greatest proportion of drivers, so there is a good chance that you are an Error Maker, which is why campaigns on speed are typically targeted at these drivers – informing them of the importance of the message and how to adapt their driving. Lapsers are the 'converted', whilst Violators will only learn through a tough experience – unfortunately this experience often seriously affects others too.

*Steve Horton, Kent Highway Services,
Road Safety Education Team Leader*

LOCAL TRANSPORT COMMITTEE UPDATE

At the Local Transport Committee meeting in January we were pleased to welcome Malcolm Spalding, the Commercial Manager of Arriva Southern Counties. He gave an interesting and revealing talk on running buses in rural areas. It was very much a warts and all talk and was an eye-opener to hear stories from the operator's perspective. He told us of the time when they could not recruit enough drivers so had an agency recruit 12 from Poland. Although the agency assured them that all the drivers could speak English and all had UK standard Public Vehicle Licences when they arrived only one of them could speak English and most of them had to have extra training to bring them up to UK standards, as well as English lessons during their normal induction training period.

He gave us one piece of good news though and that

was that during the course of this year all buses on the number 5 route will be flat floor wheelchair accessible and that this is hoped to be completed in time for the new timetable to be able to state that all buses on this route are fully disabled access. Also all drivers will be given disabled awareness training. Although these buses will have previously been used in Gillingham they are only 4 years old and will be put on our route as and when each replacement reaches Gillingham. This is why you may have noticed some of them on the route already.

Since the meeting Mr Spalding has written to confirm that from 30 March, the No5 route from Maidstone will leave 5 minutes earlier. Passengers will now have 12 minutes (instead of 7) at Hawkhurst to transfer to the connecting service to Hastings.

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

Well here I sit writing for the next Update with snow on the ground and a blizzard outside! Its 18 years since I last failed to reach my place of employment due to the white stuff and for those of you who struggled into work; yes I am a wimp in snow!

However, I would present a case that anyone who is prepared to be a parish councillor is anything but a wimp. As long as you work on the premise of pleasing some of the people some of the time then you can regard yourself as successful.

The lack of general public participation at the monthly full council meetings continues. The councillors' well thought out discussion on the issues before them is therefore missed, and even when there is attendance it's usually because of a personal interest and as soon as that item has been discussed those parties all leave!

The reason for yet again raising attendance is that I am sorry to report Vice Chairman John Stewart and Cllr Don Wood have resigned as councillors.

Cllr Stewart was active in his support of the council obtaining Quality Council status and has taken the lead in the publishing of the Village Update. The success of this publication is down to his enthusiasm for the project and his ability to persuade people to contribute.

Cllr Wood has also been an active member of the council having been involved with the Jubilee Sports project, the Medical Centre and the Village Centre.

I am sure we would like to take the opportunity of thanking them for their service and wish them both well for the future.

The Council will be going through the formal and necessary process of co- option. If you think you have what it takes then come and SEE what is involved.

You will need to comply with the Standards Board for England's ten general principles of public life:- Selflessness, Honesty and Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Personal Judgement, Respect for others, Duty to uphold the law, Stewardship and Leadership.

Margaret Arger.

WEEKEND FREIGHTER SERVICE

Further dates in 2009 will soon be published on MBCs website at www.maidstone.gov.uk. Check out their Refuse and Recycling Information.

Sunday 15 March 1415-1515
Northdown (Jct with Marden Road)

Sunday 29 March 1630-1715
Church Green (opposite the Parish Room)

HEALTHCHECK UPDATE

Work on completing the worksheets required for the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) 'Healthcheck' process is nearing completion. This includes combining feedback from the on-line community survey with the data about Staplehurst sourced from other agencies and obtained from local observation and knowledge.

Participation of residents in the on-line survey has been excellent, with 247 responses at the time of writing, representing 104 different postcodes and approximately 10% of households. As well as answers to multiple choice questions, there have been nearly 900 free text responses to the main topics of the e-survey as well as comments and suggestions about other aspects of community life and local infrastructure, facilities and service.

The main purpose of the Healthcheck project is to identify projects which will deliver economic regeneration to Staplehurst. Bids for funding can then be submitted to SEEDA who may (or may not) award money on a match-funding basis to take selected projects forward. There are 140 towns and villages eligible to take part in the initiative so there is much competition for the limited funding available.

A number of possible projects are currently being discussed and further consultation is required with the project coordinator at Kent County Council. The Staplehurst Partnership group hopes to be able to give a report on the outcomes of this stage of the work at the Annual Parish Meeting on 11th May, 8pm at the South Hall, Staplehurst Village Centre.

Roy Laming.

RECYCLING - NEW BINS FOR STAPLEHURST

Staplehurst will be joining the improved Borough Recycling Scheme in either March or May. All recycling materials will go in your existing green bin. These need to be thrown in loose, not bagged up. No glass can be put here. Each household will be given a second "grey" bin for non-recyclable rubbish.



ANNUAL VILLAGE CLEAN UP

This is organised by the Staplehurst Society & runs during the week of 22 - 29 March 2009. Those who volunteered last year will be contacted shortly.

Parish Council Information

The Parish Office is in the Village Centre. It is open on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday mornings from 9 to 11 am. The phone number is 01580 891761. The email address is: staplehurst1@btconnect.com

Borough Councillor Lusty holds a Council Surgery at the Library on the last Saturday of each month, from 10am to

12pm. This is supported by a Parish Councillor and one of the community policing team; Community Warden Chris Lomax, PC Marc Pennicott or PCSO Pete Gardner. You are welcome to talk through any local problems or ask questions about local issues with any or all of these Councillors and officers.