

Village Update

SUMMER 2010

www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk

YOUR NEW CHAIRMAN

After 7 years as Chairman of Staplehurst Parish Council, on 17th May Councillor Margaret Arger stood down and I was elected as the new Chairman. We thank Councillor Arger for her Chairmanship; she worked tirelessly for Staplehurst. Councillors are delighted that she will continue in the crucial role of Chairman of the Planning Committee. Tom Burnham is our new Vice-Chairman. We also welcome John Kelly who was recently duly co-opted to the Parish Council. My own background is in economics and finance, which I have endeavoured to utilise for the Council's benefit. Although I only moved into the Parish three and a half years ago, I have been based in Kent for most of my life and am familiar with the issues particularly affecting our County. Staplehurst shares many similar issues with other rural Kent communities.

The Parish Council remains at the heart of this vibrant and diverse village. It has played a major role in developing important facilities such as the Skateboard Park and the Jubilee Field Sports Pavilion; it continues to be involved in their operation and maintenance. It has recently taken on responsibility for the Bell Lane public toilets. During the next year this Council will be reviewing and monitoring its objectives. My aim is for the Council to continue to represent the interests of the residents of the Parish of Staplehurst.



John Perry

THE PARADE

From 5th June 2010 Maidstone Borough Council will no longer maintain The Parade or have any interest in the area, which is privately owned. The shopkeepers have been informed. The Parish Council does not yet know who will keep the area tidy and free of litter. The consumption of alcohol and people causing a nuisance at The Parade remain under review by Kent Police and Trading Standards. Litter, particularly beer cans and glass from bottles, continues to be a problem generally in Staplehurst. This lady and gentleman, who we have often seen picking up litter, are to be thanked for their community spirit.



Mystery Litter Pickers

Staplehurst

Parish Council

STAPLEHURST HEALTHCHECK ~ A VITAL REPORT

This report is the result of a community exercise undertaken by a small group of people during the first decade of the 21st century for the community of Staplehurst. Its contents are aimed at authorities, organisations and individuals with a responsibility for, or interest in, improving the environment and wellbeing of those who live, work in or visit Staplehurst.

Staplehurst was in the advantageous position of having already undertaken three significant community consultation exercises

- Staplehurst Village Appraisal 1990-1993
- Staplehurst Community Millennium Appraisal 2001
- Village Design Statement 2005

In 2005 the Staplehurst Partnership was formed as a 'spin-off' from the Parish Council action-plan sub-group comprising of ten members representing the parish council, local businesses and residents. The Staplehurst Healthcheck aimed to gather information covering all aspects relating to the quality of life in Staplehurst. This report summarises the hundreds of hours of work (public meetings, worksheets, research, on-line survey etc) that has been undertaken in the ensuing period. It seeks to

- give an up-to-date picture of various aspects of community life
- document changes that are taking place and issues arising
- propose matters for further consideration

The thrust of this report has been to produce a

STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN FOR STAPLEHURST

A. The Built Environment (not in order of priority)

- bypass position statement
- community centre/sports hall feasibility study (Parish Council/Village Centre Management Trust collaboration)
- documenting cycle routes expansion and opportunities
- housing needs survey
- incorporating key aspects of the Village Design Statement into the strategy
- progressing Parade improvement proposals
- retail improvement opportunities study
- station area improvement opportunities study
- traffic calming and congestion relief strategy

B. Community Assets

- better promotion of eating and drinking establishments
- better promotion of public footpaths
- establishing an all inclusive village green/park
- establishing a community-fund linked to house development (enhanced Section 106)
- feasibility study regarding a circular parish cycle route (parish pedal)
- more detailed research on youth facilities and activities
- project to revitalise the village historic walking trail
- review of the future of the agricultural museum (privately owned)
- revised KCC 'Heart of Kent Tour' to include Staplehurst as a stopping point
- seeking opportunities to better support and promote local business
- village signposts for main public assets

This work is invaluable to the Parish Council. Many of the recommendations and outcomes of previous appraisals and design statement work have been acted upon, or continue to influence local and wider policy. The many achievements of Staplehurst in recent years include:

- Medical Centre
- Skate Park
- Jubilee Sports Field changing rooms
- Toilets at The Parade
- Neighbourhood Watch scheme
- Multiple CCTV installations
- Speed Watch scheme
- Speed Warning Systems and other traffic calming
- Village caretaker appointed and maintenance improved
- Partners and Communities Together (PACT) Scheme
- Regular crime reporting
- Monthly Parish Surgeries (borough, parish and police combined)
- Mobile Police Van visits
- Improved Community Policing
- Appointment of Transport Wardens
- Creative Arts Exhibitions
- Play Area equipment installed and refurbished
- Meeting Points for young people established
- Improved Recycling facilities and door-to-door collections
- Additional waste bins installed
- Access Group and improved access for the disabled
- Improvements to Library Disabled Access and car park
- Anti Dog-Fouling scheme
- Traffic Control at Cuckolds Corner
- Cycle path on Lime Trees estate
- Upgraded Nicholson Walk footpath
- Improved Christmas lighting scheme
- Expansion of Burial Grounds
- Production of a Village Design Statement
- Provision and expansion of the Parish Council Web site
- Production and circulation of regular 'Village Update' newsletter
- Cold Calling Control Zoning
- New Footbridge at the station

Next Steps

This report has been adopted by the Parish Council and will be integrated into their work. The full report, worksheets and appendices can be viewed online at the Parish Council Website. A hard copy of the report can be ordered and purchased from the Parish Office.

Any individual or local organisation interested in helping or leading any aspect in this strategic action plan will be most welcome.

Please contact the Parish Clerk.

We need you!

RURAL SETTLEMENT GROUP

Staplehurst may be faced with more housing developments in the near future. To ensure we are represented at all stages the Staplehurst Rural Settlement Group has been set up, consisting of interested residents and Parish Councillors. If we are to have any influence on the type of housing built here we

need to conduct a HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY. This will provide the Parish Council with the necessary information and evidence for any future suggestions we make. When this survey drops through your door later in the year, PLEASE play your part by completing it.

CARNIVAL AND FETE

This annual event will be on 26th June on Surrenden Field. If you wish to contact the Carnival Committee for any reason, please telephone Jenny Wilden on 01580 892764 or Elaine Downton on **01580 893586**.

STAPLE DRIVE PLAY AREA

It has been decided to award the contract to Playdale to refurbish the existing swings, provide new pieces of play equipment and install safety surfaces under all of these. Work should be completed by the end of July.

BELL LANE PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

The Parish Council took over the maintenance of these toilet facilities on 4th May 2010. A cleaning contractor has been employed. Regular inspections are being

made to try to prevent vandalism. If you wish to report any problems, in confidence, please telephone the Parish Office on **01580 891761**

QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE

2012 is the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty's accession. The Parish Council would like to form a group of parishioners to consider what the Parish should do to mark this special event. Although the Clerk has contacted all village voluntary groups, none

has yet responded. If you are interested in joining the group, or you would like to suggest ideas, please contact the Clerk, **01580 891761**, or Councillor Spearink, **01580 891015**, peter.spearink@btinternet.com

PLAYSCHEME SUMMER OF FUN 2010

Please see the enclosed flier for this year's morning activities for 4-8's and NEW AFTERNOON ACTIVITIES for 8-12's, run by PlayPlace in partnership with and sponsored by Staplehurst Parish Council. Booking

Forms and full details can be downloaded from www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk. Completed applications must be sent direct to PlayPlace who will make arrangements this year.

SCHOOLBOY SCRAMBLE CLUB MEETINGS 2010

Wet weather has meant two meetings at Duckhurst Farm, Clapper Lane, Staplehurst this year are revised. Those on May 23rd and June 20th are cancelled. There will be

meetings on July 18th and September 5th. Racing should be finished by 5.30pm. No other details have changed from the report in the Spring 2010 Village Update.

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING - 10TH MAY 2010

Angela Painter, Chief Executive of the Kenward Trust, a national registered Christian charity based in Yalding, spoke about the Trust's professional help for the rehabilitation of adults with alcohol and other drug problems. Councillor Margaret Arger, the outgoing Chairman, gave a summary of the Parish Council's work during the last year. County & Borough Councillor Hotson and Borough Councillor Lusty reported on their own work, touching on what might lie ahead for the county and MBC. PC Marc Pennicott described the policing in the Parish over the past twelve months and

said that the Police would soon be calling on residents to find out what their priorities and concerns are. Clare Trumper gave information about Staplehurst Library. A report on Staplehurst Scouts was given by their Chairman, Bill Best. Robin Kenworthy reported developments with the Kent Ambulance Service. Written reports had been received from local voluntary groups which are now on the Staplehurst website. There were several questions from parishioners. The evening ended with light refreshments and an opportunity to speak to Councillors.

REMAINING STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS IN 2010

Local electors and the press have a right to listen to Parish Council Meetings, but not to take part. At the beginning and after the closure of the Parish Council Meeting, the Chairman will invite members of the public to speak for a maximum of 3 minutes each relating to issues on the Agenda or about issues of

local concern. You are requested to state your name and address prior to speaking. The Parish Council as a planning consultee makes recommendations to Maidstone Borough Council, which makes the decision. All meetings are held in the South Hall, Village Centre.

Planning Committee – 19.00 (7pm)
Amenities Committee, 20.00 (8pm)

Monday 21 June
Monday 05 July
Monday 02 August
Monday 06 September
Monday 04 October
Monday 01 November
Monday 06 December

Planning Committee – 19.00 (7pm)
Full Council – 20.00 (8pm)

Monday 19 July
Monday 16 August
Monday 20 September
Monday 18 October
Monday 15 November
Monday 20 December

Parish Council Information

COUNCILLORS

John Perry (Chairman)
Tom Burnham (Vice Chairman)
Margaret Arger (Chairman of Planning)
Bill Best
Joan Buller
Paul Butcher
John Kelly
Paul Kelly
Angela Knowlden
Roger Munn
John Reardon
Matt Sankey
Peter Spearink

STOP PRESS

As at 14th June 2010 there are
2 vacancies to be filled.

CLERK

Mrs Sue Bassett

ASSISTANT to CLERK

Mrs Helen Warmington

Address:

The Parish Office
Village Centre, High Street
Staplehurst TN12 0BJ

Email: staplehurst1@btconnect.com

Tel/fax: 01580 891761

Opening hours: 9am to 1pm Mondays to Fridays,
except on Thursdays when it is by appointment.

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.