

VILLAGE GROUPS – ANNUAL REPORTS TO ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
23RD APRIL 2012



At the time of this report March 20th 2012 Staplehurst is showing a 1% reduction in crime. This has been achieved through the support that we receive from the community and the other agencies we work with. We have dealt with a number of issues throughout the year, which have included the following:

- Successful arrests and conviction of an eastern European couple who were stopped in Staplehurst following thefts of charity boxes across the rural area.
- Public house Licensing checks along with the drug dog team to arrest /deter drug use.
- Work with Sobell Lodge to tackle inconsiderate parking.
- Regular welfare visits to an elderly resident who was attacked following intruders entering her home.
- Bike security marking carried out with various groups in the village.
- Speed enforcement checks and speed monitoring checks throughout the village
- Talks throughout the year to various local groups. Beavers/Playgroups/school etc.
- There have been several convictions in the last year in relation to Burglaries carried out in the Parish and neighbouring parishes..
- Patrols of outlying areas to deter and stop vehicles known for scrap metal thefts. This has been backed up with pre-arranged Policing Operations County wide involving numerous authorities and scrap yard inspections.

We are continuing to work around the issues of young people drinking alcohol and causing a nuisance around the village. At this time calls to this type of issue are very low and hopefully we can maintain this.

Police surgeries have now been arranged for the forthcoming year at the library and you are all welcome to attend and raise any concerns you have. Details and dates can be found on the Parish website and on the library poster wall.

We would also like to positively comment on the recent purchase of 2 CCTV cameras for the village. We have found these very useful in preventing crime and anti-social behaviour and detecting crime and Anti-social behaviour. Also having these cameras enables us to have the area monitored whilst we attend any calls to these areas as both cameras link direct to the CCTV centre.

Thank you for your continued support in making Staplehurst safe.

Pcso Pete Gardner. Sgt Dave Liffen Team 5
Maidstone Neighbourhood Team

STAPLEHURST FREE CHURCH - This has been a most exciting and encouraging year for us as a church. A special "Ground-breaking" event was scheduled for March 5th 2011 attended by the then Mayor, Councillor Eric Hotson, our Maidstone and Weald MP, Helen Grant, our Parish Councillor Richard Lusty and a variety of other VIPs as well as members and friends of the Church. Over 150 people came from the village and further afield to witness this real milestone in the life of the Free Church as well as for the village itself.

We are so grateful to God for enabling us to come this far with the provision of finance in excess of £600,000 to date. For as a congregation it is thrilling to see a long awaited vision (first discussed by the church back in 2005) become a reality and to have so many in the community encouraging us along in this project as it has been taking shape.

From those early days in March we have seen the building slowly advancing with the roof being completed in January 2012. The first phase of the building, to complete a watertight shell, was passed earlier in the year and we were able to seamlessly pass on to phase two, which is to complete the inside downstairs for public use. We are hoping to move into the new church in July this year, with a public opening ceremony planned for September. We look forward to completing phase three, the upper mezzanine floor, as funds allow in the very near future.

We are thankful to the governors, Headmistress and staff at **Staplehurst Primary school** for their willingness in allowing us continued access to their hall for our morning services and a variety of other events which have included, a quiz night to raise funds for one of our young people spending six weeks in Tanzania with Cranbrook School, a special celebration weekend in September, a carol service and a Valentines Barn dance this spring.

We also are grateful to the **URC** for the use of their premises on Sunday evenings for our services, mid-week business meetings, our church youth club held in the URC schoolroom on Tuesday evenings led effectively by the Weald Youth for Christ worker, Dennis Coburn until he and his wife Sharron moved to Bristol in October where she has taken up an ordination course for the Anglican ministry.

The youth are now being led by themselves and other adult leaders from our congregation. Our **Toddlers club** are still a helpful resource to many parents, carers and children in the community as they meet every Thursday morning in the village hall but I know they are looking forward to re-opening in our own premises in September.

Working together with our fellow churches in the village we are delighted the **Debt Advice centre** based in the Village Centre continues to help a variety of families in this village and the locality. A new project between the churches has been a committee made up of members from four village church communities called "**Teamspirit**" who have been working together for 18 months preparing and planning for a series of events for our village with a sporting theme. In this year when we hold the Olympics in London we have invited a number of Christian sporting personalities to come and share how their Christian faith affects their everyday lives.

"Ps'arms Puppets" our church puppet ministry team continues to take assemblies in about 17 schools each term in the Maidstone area.

Being a church with a heart to serve our community we are glad to be involved in a variety of ways encouraging one another in the caring role that helps us all feel as though we belong. Respectfully submitted by Clive Jones March 2012.

STAPLEHURST HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY - The Society had a successful year with a range of interesting illustrated talks, musical entertainment and outings to a variety of gardens.

It was a sad year for the Society as several members died. Amongst those were former Chairman Gordon Temme, Treasurer Maurice Donnelly, and Publicity Secretary Peter Day, all were good servants of the Society and are greatly missed.

As is usual the weather affected our Spring and Autumn shows, nevertheless there were many entries and a high standard was maintained. The members' Rose show in June produced an array of blooms and perfumes. The above shows owe a great deal to the hard work of Show Secretary Anne Davies and her assistants. Don Chambers ran another successful plant sale in May, something that the Society relies upon for income.

The Staplehurst Carnival in August enabled us to have a stand showing some excellent plants. An added attraction was the very attractive home-made wooden wheelbarrow donated by Mr. Dave Newport, which when planted with flowers raised £108. This amount was divided between ourselves and the Leonard Cheshire Home.

In October Alan Mugford organised our annual quiz held in the Primary School hall. A large number of people had an enjoyable evening. As in previous years Chris Ralph and her helpers gave their time and advice to the School Gardening Club. Monthly trips were organised by Helen Bowers on weekday mornings to gardens in Kent and Sussex which gave members a chance to visit or revisit new or favourite places.

We are delighted and grateful that our sponsors Rumwood Nurseries of Langley kindly continue to support us. Despite rising costs our finances remain steady and we look forward to the coming year as a thriving and friendly society under the Chairmanship of Roy Jones.

Our Annual General Meeting takes place on the first Friday in December which is followed by cheese and wine and entertainment, and is always a good evening. Our other meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month in the Village Centre South Hall at 8pm and all are welcome.

SPEED WATCH - Over this last year our Staplehurst team members have settled into a pattern of getting out together for a morning's roadside observation once a month. In that way the twelve volunteers have worked well with sharing the load and extending the time. We are still observing anti-social behaviour on our roads by excessive speed within the built-up areas. Please help everyone by observing the speed limits.

With the changes to policing announced over the last months, Speed Watch has been in a state of flux too. However, the new scheme sees every vehicle recorded by any team in Kent being added to a single county-wide database. If recorded twice or more letters are sent and persistent offenders can be specifically targeted for police enforcement. As volunteer training and site assessments are now being actioned, new schemes are joining and so our efforts are getting the message through to motorists.

STAPLEHURST INTEREST GROUP has reached its tenth birthday this year; that's about 450 sessions. From the beginning the programme of activities has been chosen by the members. 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.)

So if there is anyone here who would like to join in some fun from 10 until noon each Thursday, come and join us in the Schoolroom of the United Reformed Church. And of course, if **YOU** have a desire to talk to our group about anything that interests you, you would be guaranteed a welcome from STAPLEHURST INTEREST GROUP.

FRIENDS OF STAPLEHURST HEALTH CENTRE - The Friends' remit is to support the Health Centre in its work to relieve sickness and preserve health among those living in Staplehurst, Frittenden and the surrounding areas, whether permanently or temporarily. We do this by providing assistance, facilities, equipment or support to the Health Centre staff; by providing health education with public talks and our newsletters. All residents or visitors to the Health Centre are welcome to become members and membership is free.

There have been a number of changes at the Health Centre in the past year; Doctor Kahn and Doctor Yau have joined the medical team and Doctor Channa's appointment has become permanent rather than maternity cover.

Mrs. Suzanne Douglas has become a trustee of the Friends in place of Mrs. Pam Herbert who died last year. The Friends have supported the start of the Breathe Easy Group for patients with asthma and allied respiratory conditions, organised by Karen, the lead practice nurse at the Health Centre.

In the past year, we have produced 4 newsletters and helped to distribute them with the Parish Council's Village Update. We have held information evenings on Drugs & Alcohol dependency with the Kenward Trust, CPR (cardio-pulmonary resuscitation), with Paul Brooker, Mental Health issues with Meryl Cheshier of Maidstone Mind, Lasting Powers of Attorney with Mary Shaw, and Osteoporosis with Gwen Worcester.

The Friends' purchases have included 2 Otoscopes (for looking in patients' ears), 2 books of reference on contraception for the use of the practice nurses, and an ear irrigation unit. Members of the Friends also helped out with the administration during the usual autumn flu jab marathon.

As usual our main source of funding came from the sale of tickets for the Christmas draw. We ran a stall at the Staplehurst Carnival with the Breathe Easy Group. We also benefitted from some donations.

The Friends has been established as a registered charity for 5 years and it continues to perform a valuable role in the provision of health information within the community. Further information can be obtained from the Secretary, Robin Oakley on 01580 891516. News from The United Reformed Church, Staplehurst.

The United Reformed Church in Staplehurst continues to maintain its reformed tradition and endeavours to live up to our mission statement: that *"This church exists to worship God and follow the example of Jesus."* We are always seeking new ways to reach out to the community in which we are placed. Unlike many churches in this land we are blessed with a wide age range within our fellowship from 1 to 91.

In addition to our regular Sunday services of worship and Junior Church we continue to run "Messy Church" on the first Saturday in the month during school term times. This is a different way of doing "church" and is designed to enable families to come together, play games and engage in craft activities and also experience simple worship. We finish with a meal together. We continue to run "Noah's Ark" which is a mother (& father) toddler group every Tuesday morning.

Last year the L'Arche Lambeth Community were unable to take part in their pilgrimage to Canterbury due to financial constraints but are hoping to have the pilgrimage in May this year and as in past years, use our premises and facilities overnight on the first stage of their walk to Canterbury.

Along with the other churches in the village we endeavour to work together when at all possible and with "Churches Together in Staplehurst" we meet regularly to plan occasions and projects that all churches can engage in. This year, being the year of the Olympics, the churches are joining together under the title "Team Spirit" and organising a number of different events throughout the year for the village community to get engaged with. More details can be found on the dedicated website: <http://www.teamspirit-staplehurst.org.uk>.

WEALD CLUB FOR THE DISABLED - The club meets every Friday between 10 o'clock and 2pm at the McCabe centre and new members are welcome. There are trips during the spring and summer months to various places. This year we are hoping to go to Hastings and Eastbourne as well as to a garden centre, Jempsons in Rye and a boat trip on the river Medway. During our Friday meetings there is a meal and bingo and every first Friday of the month Boccia is played. Boccia is similar to bowls but can be done when people are seated in a wheelchair. In the weeks before Christmas we have a Christmas Shopping trip to the Chequers Centre in Maidstone, we attend a local restaurant for Christmas lunch and there is also a Christmas Party at the centre on the last Friday before we finish for the year. A mini bus (adapted for wheelchairs) is available to pick people up if required. If you would like to come along please contact Maggie Weller on 01580 891870.

POPPY'S DAY NURSERY & BABY CARE UNIT - Poppy's Day Nursery established in 2008 continues to provide 'full day' care for 50 weeks of the year; open Monday to Friday from 07:30hrs to 18:30hrs. We currently have 75 children 'on role' caring for 32 children a day most of whom are from Staplehurst.

Our Headcorn Road site holds a 'Good' Ofsted rating for children aged 2yrs to 5yrs. Our Baby Care Unit opened in December 2010 for children aged 3months to 2yrs located at London House, High Street was inspected by Ofsted in July 2011 and awarded a 'Good' rating in early years provision in all areas and 'Outstanding' in the 'extent to which children make a positive contribution'. For more info see [http://www,Ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.Ofsted.gov.uk).

Maidstone Borough Council Environmental Health Officer awarded a five star excellent 'Scores On The Doors' rating during an inspection at both settings for kitchen hygiene.

We have 17 members of staff most live locally including one volunteer. We continue to provide opportunities for students from Angley school, Mid Kent College and West Kent College who come to us for experience within the nursery setting.

We access KCC courses to develop staff in all areas of nursery care; this has included leadership and management courses. This year staff have been accredited in 'baby signing' which teaches communication with babies before speech using simple gestures.

In June the children were visited by the Lazytown Sports Club for a fun and physical activity session involving dance moves and ball games to improve co-ordination. In July twelve of our children left for Primary School, six of whom had joined the nursery from inception. We held a princesses and pirates leavers' party, a sad but very proud day for parents and staff alike. During the last year we held events raising funds for local and national charities including Momentums Brain Injury Centre, Children in Need and Red Nose Day.

We maintain a partnership with pre-schools for children using both settings and have links with the Library and networking meetings with the Primary school. We supported the Village Fete again this year with our stall.

For more information on Nursery care contact Katherine Gedge.

Poppy's Day Nursery Tel: 01580 892600 Poppy's Baby Care Unit Tel: 01580 890480

Email: info@poppysdaynursery.com Website: <http://www.poppysdaynursery.com>