

VILLAGE GROUPS' REPORTS - STAPLEHURST ANNUAL PARISH MEETING  
11<sup>th</sup> MAY 2015

**FRIENDS OF STAPLEHURST HEALTH CENTRE**

This past year has been a successful one for the Friends, and also for the Health Centre as a whole. As the new contract for the provision of GP services has bedded in, both staff and patients have felt the benefit of a more secure, long term future. There are still concerns of course, but there always will be. That is certain with diminishing funding for the NHS and increasing demand as the patient population gets older. We can feel this in Staplehurst, most acutely in the hospital system – including Accident and Emergency services. We are lucky here in Staplehurst to have a modern building with plenty of room, and a forward looking organisation in Malling Health to look after us.

We have published four newsletters which are distributed with the Parish Council's village update.

We participated in National No Smoking Day, and as in former years, we publicised and helped to run the annual flu jab sessions, and encouraged those eligible to have the shingles jab too. Also as usual, we sold our Christmas raffle tickets at the flu jab sessions.

We assisted the Practice Manager with the production of a new, up to date Practice Information leaflet for new and other current patients.

We have held four information evenings, all of which were well attended:

- Dr Rumfeld gave an interesting talk on 'A day in the life of a GP', describing his typical work schedule. He also explained a number of issues concerning appointments and prescriptions.
- Barbara Hagen from Maidstone and Malling Carer's Project spoke about the support available for those caring for patients.
- Gary Vaughan, Business Development Manager at Benenden Hospital gave a presentation on Benenden Healthcare, the hospital and what they do. This included a brief history of the hospital, the contract with the NHS for bookable procedures and the 'choose and book' scheme they run with specialist consultants.
- Ian Ayers, Chief Executive of the NHS West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group spoke to us in October. He explained what the CCG does and how it

commissions GP and certain other services for the public. A lively question and answer session followed.

Robin Oakley

### **GYBBON AND BATHURST TRUST**

As a long serving charity in the village of Staplehurst set up many years ago to help young people as they advance themselves and serve others in the community and beyond, we have been delighted to make a number of grants to youngsters serving both in the UK and overseas. Such grants are normally around £250 and have totalled £1,250 this past year. The qualifications are that the young person must be a resident of Staplehurst and be desirous of serving others as they seek a grant to help them in the process of saving up money to fund their desired project. They need to contact the secretary in writing stating their name, address and age together with a brief description of the project they wish to embark upon. The trustees meet two or three times a year or as necessary when requests for grants are made.

Clive Jones, Secretary

### **POPPY'S DAY NURSERY & POPPY'S 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 34 children a day most of whom are from Staplehurst.

Our Headcorn Road site holds a '**Good**' Ofsted rating for children aged 2yrs to 5yrs following an Inspection on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2014.

Our Baby Care Unit for children aged 3months to 2yrs located in the High Street also holds a '**Good**' Ofsted rating in Early Year's 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>.

We have 17 members of staff most live locally including one volunteer. Two new members of staff trained last year under the "apprentice scheme in childcare" supported through "Parenta" have now both qualified and are employed at Poppy's.

We continue to provide opportunities for students from Angley School, Mid Kent College and West Kent College who come to us for childcare 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. All staff are trained in Paediatric First Aid.

Last July thirteen of our children left for Primary School. We held a princesses and pirates leavers' party, a very proud day for parents and staff alike. This year nineteen children will be leaving for Primary School.

We hold our Annual Nursery Birthday Party in August for families of the children, and will celebrate our seventh birthday this year.

During the last year we held events raising funds for the Wishing Well charity, Children in Need and Red Nose Day.

We continue to maintain a partnership with Pre-Schools, have links with the Library and the Primary school.

For more information on Nursery care contact Katherine Tunnicliffe.

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

Email: [info@poppysdaynursery.com](mailto:info@poppysdaynursery.com) Website: <http://www.poppysdaynursery.com>

### **SPEED WATCH**

We were delighted with the number of new volunteers that were trained at two sessions held in Staplehurst. We hope that more of them will be able to come out and join in the roadside observations in the lighter and warmer weather.

Our activity has been hampered by weather and other constraints, but the general reaction when we are in action is positive. Motorists do take notice and are reminded to slow down when travelling through our village. Each speeder has their details recorded and forwarded to the Kent Police database. If they are a second time offender within twelve months then a letter of advice is sent. If this is ignored and further recordings of this vehicle are made anywhere in Kent then stronger letters follow with a visit from a uniformed officer quite possible. For those vehicles exceeding the speed limit by 50% or more (45mph in the 30mph zone) a very strongly worded letter is sent straight away, followed with further action if necessary.

More activity by our team will make more visits from uniformed officers more likely. The more evidence we gather the safer our roads will be. Ask the Clerk how you can join in.

Joan and Malcolm Buller

### **STAPLEHURST BRIDGE CLUB**

The Staplehurst Bridge Club continues to meet on Friday evenings at 7pm but since early December we have a new venue.

We were advised in November that we could no longer use the dining room at Staplehurst Manor; fortunately Sobell Lodge behind the Village Centre in the middle of the village came to our rescue, and the residents and volunteers have invited us to use their upstairs room; our faces are now becoming well known to the residents on Friday evenings.

Because of the nature of our Club and the way in which our evenings are organised, we are an ideal Club for beginners and inexperienced players in addition to our well established members, and we have been able to attract several new members recently. It is to be hoped that our membership numbers will continue to increase, so that we can feel that the bridge club maintains its place in the life of the Village. For further details, please contact Liz Mitchell 01580 713856 or come along on a Friday evening at about 6.50 pm for a friendly game of bridge – you do not need to come with a partner as you can always be sure of a game.

Liz Mitchell

### **STAPLEHURST CALENDAR**

Proceeds from the sales of the 2015 Calendars, envelopes and donations totalled £1,521.00. At the Churches Together service in January, Friends of All Saints Church Staplehurst, United Reformed Church, and Staplehurst Free Church received a cheque for £507.00 each.

Thanks are due to so many people for their help each year in obtaining such good sales figures. As always I would like to thank our thirteen sponsors/advertisers for their continuing support, which covers the printing costs. Also a big 'thank you' to The Hop Press Printers of Marden, Staplehurst shops and

businesses who displayed and sold calendars and to Staplehurst residents who give their support by buying copies.

With the completion of the 11th annual issue the total raised for Staplehurst charities and organisations totals just under £16,000.00. Work has already begun on the 2016 Calendar, with drawings depicting farming in the Weald area. Our chosen groups for 2016 will be Staplehurst Scout Group and Staplehurst District Guides.

Ken Collins

### **STAPLEHURST FOOTPATH GROUP**

In May 2014 our annual Blossom Walk of five miles commenced from Linton Church, heading east through Boughton Monchelsea. Good views of the Weald were enjoyed from the Greensand Ridge. Our June walk of six miles started from Cranbrook town centre heading south through the Fright to Netter's Hall Farm, returning via Swattenden.

Our Longest Day Walk in June, commenced from Horsmonden village green. This evening walk terminated with a drink at the Gun & Spitroast. At the Staplehurst Carnival & Fete the group held a fundraising stall where we were able to promote our walking activities.

July saw the group undertake a five and a half mile walk commencing at West Malling. The circular route headed north to Addington church, returning past Offham church, St. Leonard's Tower and Manor Country Park, where the group enjoyed afternoon tea. In August the five mile walk commenced from Smarden village and headed out to Dering Wood and Maltman's Hill, returning via Wissenden and Romden.

A longer walk of six and a half miles was enjoyed in September, when the group walked from Benenden church, via the grounds of Benenden School into Hempstead Forest. The walk ended with a welcome drink at the local pub. The group travelled to Winchelsea for the October walk of five miles. The walk started from St. Thomas's church and headed west across fields to Wickham Manor. The route continued up past Hog Hill Mill, returning south to Pannel Farm Nature Reserve and along the Royal Military Canal.

November's walk was local, commencing from Staplehurst church. The route went out to Frittenden via Iden Manor Farm and Gould Farm, returning to All Saints along

the Ridge. Our Christmas Walk was also local, commencing at The Parade and heading out to Chickenden, returning to Staplehurst for mince pies and mulled wine.

The New Year commenced with a well-attended local walk of five miles to the southwest of Staplehurst, when fine weather enabled good views from The Ridge. Our February walk of five miles explored the footpaths to the north of Staplehurst. The walk headed north and west from Staplehurst Station before crossing the A229 and returning via Fisher's Farm.

Our March walk returned to Linton for a walk through the orchards along the Greensand Ridge. After a stop at Hunton church, we returned uphill to Linton. The April walk of five miles was through Scotney Castle Estate. The fine weather attracted our best attendance of the year!

Staplehurst Footpath Group was founded in 1976. Non- members are welcome to join our walks. Membership is just £1 per family per year, or you can purchase sets of our Local Walk Cards, obtainable from Staplehurst Library.

M. Gillam, Secretary

## **STAPLEHURST FREE CHURCH**

Well, another exciting year in the life of SFC as we seek to continue to serve our community as our own lives are transformed through our relationship with Jesus. We continue to grow in number and enjoy being part of our vibrant and fantastic village community. Here is a snapshot of what we have been up to over the last year:

Supporting those in need – At the forefront of what we do as followers of Jesus, is supporting those in need. We importantly maintain a balance between local, national and international needs. For example on the international front we sent over 100 shoeboxes filled with goodies at Christmas to disadvantaged children overseas 😊

Kingsquad – this has recently been launched and is designed for any children in school years 3 to 6. They enjoy drama, bible stories, craft and lots more. We meet every Tuesday from 4.15 to 5.15 so why not try it out! This club is supported by the Family Trust.

Toddlers Group – We have been delighted to see numbers continuing to increase and it is fantastic to see the young ones enjoying themselves while the parents catch up over tea and cake!

Sensational Kids club – This club is for primary aged children with special needs, their siblings and parents/carers. There are a variety of sensory toys, craft activities and space for the young ones to let off steam in the main hall with bikes, scooters and footballs. A great time is had by all!

Sing-a-long Club – We run this for adults with learning difficulties and their carers. After singing our hearts out in between bouts of laughter and banter, we rest up with tea and cakes before ending with an amusing game together that involves more singing! We greatly value the relationships we continue to build with our friends at the local homes.

Services at Sobel Lodge/Iden Manor/Abbotsleigh/Woodlands Villa – We visit weekly (offering varying types of support from painting rooms, cleaning out fish tanks to spiritual support and guidance). We also run monthly services where the residents help lead the services as we sing favourite hymns, share a short bible message and catch up together.

Cedars (Over 50s Group) – The varied programme includes interesting speakers, activities, afternoon tea, outings and a super-sized Christmas lunch! A great opportunity to make new friends.

Badminton Groups – We run several badminton groups of mixed ages and ability so all can join in regardless of experience. We also have spare rackets as well for those that want to give it a go!

Market Church – We continue to run this down at the Sunday market from Easter to October. Providing a chance to hand out free literature, catch up with people and pray with those requesting it. We also enjoy catching up with the local store holders and see the array of things they sell.

Happiness Course – This proved very popular, with some significant success stories, as we explored the science and research behind happiness. We look at a variety of topics linked to happiness including: causes of anxiety and alleviating them, as well as how we can be happier based on psychological research within the topic areas.

Christianity Explored Course – So what is it all about? Well we are currently working our way through some of the building blocks of the Christian faith with our current group in a relaxed and engaging way. Watch out for future courses ☺

Saturday Café – This continue to be a real hit in the village with lots of people making the most of the great environment, super food, and low prices. Pottery painting went down a storm!!

Community Events – We have enjoyed meeting new friends through the range of events we have put on over the past year including: An amazing illusionist, pottery painting, a barn dance, and even an Elvis impersonator who used to be a Vicar - a possible future for me after ministry (ha, ha, ha!) ☺

If you fancy popping along to see us on a Sunday morning at 10.30, or Sunday evening at 6.30, I very much look forward to meeting you and can assure you a very warm welcome.

See our website for more information ([www.staplehurstfreechurch.org.uk](http://www.staplehurstfreechurch.org.uk)) or if you prefer give me a call on 01580 893993.

Pastor Ryan Ahern

### **STAPLEHURST HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY**

The Society had another successful year with a wide variety of illustrated talks, summer garden party, a garden visit, shows, plant sale and a quiz in the School Hall.

We held our annual Spring, Autumn and Members' Rose Shows. The weather affects what can be shown and the participants usually think the show dates are a week too early or too late, but once the dates are booked they are adhered to. There were a good number of entries and our high standards were maintained. The members' rose show in June was a colourful event followed by home-made cakes. The success of the shows owes a great deal to Show Secretary Anne Davies and her assistants.

Ken Read again organised the plant sale which was well attended, which was pleasing as we rely on this event for part of our income. This year it will be held in the Village Centre North Hall on the 2nd of May from 9.00am to 12.00noon so please come along if you can.

In October Margaret Donnelly supported by other committee members organised our annual quiz in the Primary School Hall. This was an enjoyable evening and all are welcome to this year's quiz on the 10th of October.

Summer time saw the Society have an evening visit to Turners House Garden near Heathfield. Food, drink and a beautiful garden combined to give us a lovely evening. The following month the members spent an evening at our member Carolyn Twyman's garden where she and her husband provided the setting for another enjoyable time.

We are very pleased and grateful that Rumwood Nurseries of Langley kindly continue to support us.



Our monthly meetings are held on the third Tuesday in the Village Centre South Hall at 8.00pm, except for our Annual General Meeting which takes place on the first Friday in December at 7.45pm followed by refreshments and entertainment.

### **STAPLEHURST INTEREST GROUP**

Our members have enjoyed another varied diet of activities, speakers and outings throughout our thirteenth year. The emphasis, as always, has been on enjoyment and laughter.

We were pleased to take part in the Alternative Flower Festival in All Saints and received many plaudits. Much credit must go to Val who inspired many members to contribute and masterminded the overall effect that showed just how varied our programme is. We have been delighted to welcome new members who are already making much valued contributions. We plan our programme three times each year and are delighted to find new ideas and speakers, although many old favourites still make regular appearances! We are quite certain that these suggestions keep flowing because of the alternative threat of one of Malcolm's quizzes!

We always welcome members with free tea, coffee and biscuits and the whole Thursday morning is provided for a £1 donation. So come along and sample our activities. Or volunteer to be a speaker!

Joan and Malcolm Buller

### **STAPLEHURST SCOUT GROUP**

The Staplehurst Scout group continues to offer unique opportunities for boys and girls between the ages of 6 of 14. The scout group is made up of three sections, Beavers for 6-8 year olds, Cubs for 8-10<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> year olds and Scouts for 10<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> to 14 year olds. We have 75 children attending Scouts currently and 12 adult leaders, assistants and helpers.

Our Beaver colony is temporarily suspended as we look to find a new leader and additional helpers to restart this vital part of scouting activities. We have a large (and impatient) waiting list of children wanting to go to Beavers, so if anyone can help here please get in touch.

The past year has seen another full programme of events with Cubs and Scouts working towards a varied collection of badges ranging from the community badge

through to the swimming badge. There have been too many visits and activities to list here but some of the highlights included night hikes (in all weathers!), snowboarding, sailing, climbing, and outdoor cooking and of course map reading just in case Google Maps isn't working!

Another aspect of the group is to have themed evenings and these have been many and varied including artwork, American life, and computing. Challenges are another large part of our activities and these have included the global challenge, fitness challenge and the promise challenge. Amongst all this we have of course been camping in the great tradition of scouting.

Serving the community is also a large part of scouting and this year has seen a number of fund raising activities and other community projects. We have also supported local charities including over £450 raised for Sobell Lodge through our annual Christmas Post service.

Staplehurst Scouts is totally dependent upon the subscriptions raised from parents and its own fund raising initiatives. It is self-sufficient and not in receipt of any public funding or subsidies. All adult helpers are volunteers and give up of their time freely to help make scouting a fantastic experience for all the boys and girls who attend.

Currently we are desperately in need of new leaders and helpers so if you would like to get involved in any of our sections, even on a part-time basis, please get in touch by calling 893133 anytime.

William Best, Chairman

## **STAPLEHURST SOCIETY**

The Society AGM in May 2014 was a time of reflection and gave a mandate to the elected Committee to consider the future of the Society.

The Society's main function has been increasingly the custodianship of the Staplehurst Archive: its continuation is based on the interest and commitment to the history of Staplehurst maintaining and strengthening that role. The committee felt planning was no longer a primary concern with the Rural Settlement Group taking the lead with the Neighbourhood Plan. The Society has membership on the Rural Resettlement Group. The membership has been given notice of the proposal to amend the Society name to The Staplehurst Archive and History Society.

During the year we have had our usual speakers with varied attendance and successful visits to the Free Church, Finchcocks and Hush Heath. The Society will continue with these types of events/visits during 2015/16.

As always we are grateful to Norman Wallis and the Railway Exhibition which the Society will continue to support.

Our tea towels are stocked at Chasing Rainbows.

We are grateful to Sobell Lodge for allowing us to use their facilities for our monthly committee meeting.

The Society AGM will be Wednesday May 27, 2015 at the United Reformed Church at 7.30pm.

Margaret Arger, Chairman

### **STAPLEHURST VILLAGE CENTRE**

If you have booked either of our halls you will have met some of our friendly volunteer committee letting you in.

The Village Centre has had another busy year with regular bookings and new faces as well. There is something for everyone occurring at some point during the year, whether its keeping fit at the many different classes available, bringing your treasured tot to under Fives or getting all 'thespianesque' at Drama, to mention a few.

We have seen a number of locals celebrating special occasions as well as supporting local events; hopefully the cyclists were able to make good use of the 'facilities'!

Thank you to all our current regular hirers and future ones for all your support.

Adele Sharp, Secretary

### **WEALD CLUB FOR THE DISABLED**

Since our last report our activities have included a trip to Dobbies Garden Centre near Ashford where we enjoyed a pleasant lunch.

During the summer there was a mystery tour to Hastings and Bexhill. There was also a trip to Tankerton in September and lunch at The Royal before stopping at the Macknade Garden Centre in Faversham for tea on the way back to Staplehurst.

In November there was a Christmas shopping trip to Hempstead Valley and in December our Christmas dinner took place at The Plough in Langley.

Our first trip this year was to Tenterden Garden Centre.

There have also been our usual Friday meetings at the McCabe Centre in Staplehurst where our members are provided with a home cooked lunch and enjoy activities such as Boccia.

New members are always welcome. Membership is open to people with mild disability or wheelchair users. Transport can be arranged if required. Please contact either Mrs Diane Bone on 01622 851387 or Mrs Maggie Weller on 01580 891870 for further information.