

STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL NOTES (for October 2014)

Village Update – The autumn edition of the Village Update has been distributed by volunteers whose assistance is much appreciated. If you would like to help deliver any copies, please contact the Clerk with your details. Digital copies of past Updates are available at http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/village_update.aspx. The Parish Council would like to know your views about how you prefer to read the update, e.g. e-mail, on a website, reference copy at a convenient location, delivered hard copy. Please send your comments to the Parish Office. Contact details are at the end of these notes.

Litter-picking – These notes always contain advice about how to report litter problems (see MBC Cleansing and Collection Services below). The Parish Council is investigating how it might complement MBC's activity to help tackle litter in the parish's rural lanes. If you know of any persistent problem areas please send details of the location(s) to the Parish Office.

Vegetation – The wet and warm weather this summer has encouraged full and rapid growth of plants, hedges and trees. In some parts of the parish vegetation has grown so much that it is reducing the width of footpaths or reducing visibility on the highway. Property-owners are responsible for maintaining their hedges; failure to do so may generate anything from a polite neighbourly request to a report to Kent County Council (03000 41 81 81 or <http://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/report-a-problem>). KCC will give owners a deadline to remedy a situation or as a last resort carry out the work itself and send owners the bill. This is probably preaching to the converted, but to avoid such difficult situations and out of consideration for others please check your boundaries regularly, not just for vegetation but for any other overflow from your property such as loose gravel from paths and drives and rubbish that may have blown from bins.

Elections – In May next year parish council elections will be held. If you think you might be interested in finding out more about what the Parish Council does and perhaps in considering whether to stand for election, then please feel free to contact the Parish Office without commitment for an informal chat or simply to ask any specific questions. A good way to learn more is to exercise your right as a member of the public and come along to a council meeting and observe proceedings. Meetings are on the first and third Mondays of each month, normally starting at 7.00pm with the Planning Committee meeting followed by Full Council. Agendas are always published beforehand on the Village Centre noticeboard and on the village website at <http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/agendas.aspx>.

Flooding – To help it plan for the future the Environment Agency <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency> is still keen to hear about people's experiences of flooding last Christmas and New Year. If you would like a copy of its questionnaire please pick one up from the Parish

Office or contact the office by e-mail to have an electronic version sent to you. The Agency would also like to hear residents' views about the proposed designation of an area around the River Beult from Bethersden and Pluckley to Stilebridge as a specific flood warning area. Further information and a short questionnaire can be obtained by contacting the Parish Office.

Bell Lane Toilets – They are opened and cleaned during the day and locked for the night. To report any non-urgent issues, 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.

Surgeries at the Library – Meet your Parish Council representatives and Borough Councillor John Perry at their joint surgery at the library on Saturday 25th October between 10.00 am and 12.00 noon. Borough Councillor Paulina Watson will be holding a surgery in the library on Saturday 4th October between 9.30 am and 11.30 am. The next Police session at the library will be on Saturday 18th October between 10.00 am and 11.00 am.

Website – Visit www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk to see Parish Council minutes and publicity material and reports received. Local businesses and village groups may have their own entries on the Trade Directory and Village Life pages of this website free of charge; contact the Parish Office for details. The 'Latest News' and Forum pages provide local information and 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. Sign up to an e-group to receive direct emails of useful information about local issues e.g. weekly MBC plans list, Parish Council minutes & agendas, press releases. If residents have any queries regarding Parish Council or local authority issues, they are encouraged to contact the Parish Clerk for the facts.

KCC Telephone Numbers – Kent County Council uses a series of 03000 telephone contact numbers. It advises that calls to these numbers cost the same as local landline rates and should be included as 'free numbers' in most telephone providers' inclusive call packages.

Some commonly used numbers are as follows:

Highway Helpline	03000 41 81 81
Speed Awareness	03000 41 82 82
Concessionary Fares	03000 41 83 83
Kent Freedom Pass	03000 41 84 84
KCC Main Number	03000 41 41 41

MBC Cleansing and Collection Services – Call Maidstone Borough Contact Centre on 01622 602162 or go to www.maidstone.gov.uk for information about

refuse services provided by Maidstone Borough Council. Use the phone number or go on-line to <http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/residents/parking-and-streets/street-problems> to report 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 available to those who are unable to wheel or carry their refuse to the front boundary of their homes.

- **Rubbish & Recycling Collections** – Use green recycling bins to dispose of paper, cardboard, glass bottles and jars, food and drink cartons, plastic bottles and food trays and containers. Textiles and small electrical items may be left out separately for collection. There are no longer recycling facilities at Bell Lane. For further information visit the dedicated website at <http://www.recyclingtogether.co.uk/>.
- **Waste Freighter** – At the time of writing the date of the next visit of the waste freighter to Staplehurst is yet to be published. For further information check <http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/residents/binsandrecycling/saturday-freighter-service>. Garden waste/vegetation is not accepted for disposal by the waste freighter.
- **Garden Waste** – Two sizes of wheelie bin can be hired from Maidstone Borough Council (240L and 140L available for an annual hire charge of £32.50 and £29.25 respectively). Neighbours may wish to consider sharing a bin. Further information is available at <http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/residents/binsandrecycling/my-bins> or by telephoning 01622 602600. If your property is assessed as not having room for a bin you may be eligible to obtain white sacks on a subscription basis from MBC; telephone 01622 602600 for details.
- **Food waste** – Compostable bags for the kitchen caddies are available from the Henhurst Farm Shop, Pinnock Lane, TN12 0HD and Paxman Services (UK) Ltd at Unit 3 Larkstore Park, Lodge Road, TN12 0QY.
- **MBC Bulky Collection Service** – Phone MBC on 01622 602600 or go online to <http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/residents/binsandrecycling> to arrange a collection. For further information go to <http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/residents/binsandrecycling/other-types-of-collections>. Householders may also use the KCC Householder Waste Tip at Burial Ground Lane in Tovil; opening times are Monday to Saturday 8.00am to 4.30pm and on Sunday from 9.00am to 4.00pm. For further information go to http://kent.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/recycling_and_rubbish/waste_and_recycling_centres/maidstone.aspx.

REPORTING INCIDENTS TO THE POLICE - All non-emergency crime-incident reports should be telephoned to **101**. This non-emergency 24/7 national police telephone number will give you access to the local policing team

wherever you happen to be in the UK. Full details are available at <http://www.police.uk/101> If you prefer, you may talk anonymously to Crimestoppers on **0800 555 111**. Life-threatening incidents, crimes in progress or serious injury road traffic accidents that require urgent police attendance should be notified by dialling **999** in the usual way.

Local contacts are Community Warden Mira Martin: mob: 07811 271254 e-mail: mira.martin@kent.gov.uk and PCSO Pete Gardner Tel: 101 email: peter.gardner@kent.pnn.police.uk.

The mobile police contact point normally visits the Parade every fortnight, normally on Mondays between 1.45pm and 2.45pm. Times may be subject to change for operational reasons, so check local noticeboards or visit http://www.kent.police.uk/contact_us/pages/Maidstone_meetings.html for latest information and the actual dates.

Hire of North & South Hall, Staplehurst Village Centre - Please contact the Village Centre booking secretary on 07864 547453, e-mail info@staplehurstvc.org or visit <http://www.staplehurstvillagecentre.org.uk/> for further information. The Parish Office does not deal with Village Centre bookings.

Dog Mess & Disposal – Red dog waste bins are provided by Maidstone Borough Council at strategic points around the parish. If you witness owners failing to clean up or wish to report persistent incidents of mess, telephone MBC Environmental Services on 01622 602202 to give details, including information in confidence about perpetrators if known. Visits to problem areas can be timed to be most effective and a fine imposed when the offender is caught. To report a stray dog, telephone MBC's Dog Warden on 01622 602117.

Maidstone Borough Highway-related services - MBC is responsible for some highway services such as street sweeping, street nameplates, street naming and numbering, park and ride facilities. Telephone MBC Contact Centre on 01622 602162 to report such issues requiring attention. For all other Highways and Public Transport issues contact Kent Highways.

Kent Highways – Contact Kent Highways on 03000 41 81 81 any time 24 hours a day 7 days a week to report directly any local highways issues, such as defects to the roads, footways, signs, drainage and street furniture, etc. You can also report defects online at <http://www.kent.gov.uk/KCC.KHSFaultsGIS.Web.Sites.Public/>. You do not need to contact the Parish Office to report such defects and actual eye-witness reports are more valuable to Kent Highways. The online reporting site allows you to attach photographs to your report. Responsibility for motorways and trunk roads lies with the Highways Agency on 0300 123 5000 or e-mail ha_info@highways.gsi.gov.uk.

Kent Public Rights of Way – To report any issues with public rights of way call 03000 41 71 71 (lines open 8am - 8pm Monday - Friday). In an emergency outside of these hours telephone 0300 333 55 38. Faults may also be reported via email prow@kent.gov.uk or by visiting the KCC website http://www.kent.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/countryside_access.aspx or by writing to Public Rights of Way and Access Service, 8 Abbeywood Road, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent ME19 4YT.

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. Some zones are designated as **Cold Calling Control Zones** and are clearly indicated by signs.

Neighbourhood Watch operates a scheme called Nominated Neighbour, which asks a caller to go to a neighbour who will return with them, so you do not have to deal with the caller 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, telephone 101.

Age UK Maidstone: Maidstone Age UK provides information and advice to support older people, their relatives and carers. Visits can be arranged and telephone advice given – call Angela on 01622 753618. It also provides an advocacy service to become the voice of those unable to handle matters on their own – call Aileen on 01622 753618. There is a drop-in service on the first Tuesday of every month at the McCabe Centre from 10.00 am until 1.00 pm.

Brighter Futures – Voluntary Action Maidstone's Brighter Futures project is designed specifically for the over 65s and focuses on health and wellbeing. It organises activities such as exercise classes, day trips, shopping trips and a befriending service. To find out more about the activities in and around Staplehurst or to volunteer your services as a befriender, please telephone Juliette Page on 01622 762403 or e-mail juliette.page@vam-online.org.uk.

Maidstone Borough Council Planning Services – MBC offers a pre-application advice service for householders or anyone contemplating residential/commercial development. For further information visit <http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/residents/planning/planning-for-residents/pre-application-advice>, e-mail customerservices@maidstone.gov.uk or telephone 01622 602736.

Staplehurst Library – The library is open between 9.00am and 6.00pm from Tuesday to Friday and between 9.00am and 3.00pm on Saturday.

Stumped for an Answer? Why not ask a Kent Librarian? The 'Ask a Kent Librarian' service allows you to have your questions answered by a specialist team without visiting your local library. Telephone 01622 696438, email: AKL@kent.gov.uk or visit http://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure_and_culture/libraries/online_library_services/ask_a_kent_librarian.aspx for further information about the service and more ways to get in touch.

Planning Committee and Full Council Meetings in Staplehurst Village Centre, South Hall, from 7 p.m.

Monday 6th October 2014

Monday 20th October 2014

Please note that the start time of Full Council Meetings is variable and depends on the length of the Planning Committee meeting agenda. Please check with the Parish Office prior to the meeting for an estimated start time; alternatively, consult the agendas displayed on the village centre noticeboard or the village website: <http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/agendas.aspx>.

Mick Westwood, Parish Clerk

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

Telephone/Fax: (01580) 891761

Parish emergency only out of hours contact: 07539 692588

Website: www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk

E-mail: clerk@staplehurstvillage.org.uk

The Parish Office is open to the public 0900-1300 hrs.

Mondays to Fridays (except Thursdays by appointment).