

STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL NOTES (for May 2015)

Elections – 7th May is multiple-election day. Editorial deadlines mean that at the time of writing this article we do not know whether the number of candidates nominated for the parish council election will be more than fifteen, thereby generating a contested election. If such an election is held please do exercise your democratic right to vote in it. If one is not held please look out for details of members of the new council and whether there are any opportunities for co-option. Further information will be published at http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/parish_elections.aspx.

Annual Parish Meeting - The meeting will take place at 8.00pm on Monday 11th May in the South Hall, Staplehurst Village Centre. Hosted by the Parish Council, this is a public meeting for local electors to discuss issues affecting the parish. At the meeting there will be talks from visiting speakers and ward councillors, plus refreshments, hopefully making for an interesting evening.

Parish Council Annual Report – The Council's 2014-15 Report is due to be distributed in early June. Delivery is undertaken by volunteers whose assistance is much appreciated. If you would like to help and enjoy the opportunity of a gentle walk with a purpose, then please contact the Parish Office.

Staplehurst Summer Play Scheme – This summer the Parish Council once again intends to work with Play Place and in partnership with Maidstone Borough Council to provide a play scheme for children aged 4-11. The scheme is scheduled to run from 9.30 am to 12.30 pm on weekdays from Tuesday 4th August to Friday 21st August, with an initial open morning on Monday 3rd August. The venue will again be the Kathie Lamb Brownie and Guide Centre at the Jubilee Field on Headcorn Road. More details will be published over the coming weeks on village noticeboards and on the village website at <http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/playscheme.aspx>.

Voluntary Warden for Five Ash Lane Roadside Nature Reserve - Kent Wildlife Trust is seeking a volunteer warden to look after the roadside nature reserve on Five Ash Lane (between Pagehurst Road and Five Oak Lane) in Staplehurst.

The Kent and Medway Road Verge Project works to identify protect and manage road verges which contain threatened habitats or wildlife. The role of the volunteer warden is to be the eyes and ears of Kent Wildlife Trust, report back on any issues with the area and keep a brief log of interesting species on site. Training is available.

For further information please contact Zoe Honour at Kent Wildlife Trust on 01622 662012 or e-mail zoe.honour@kentwildlife.org.uk. Website: <http://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/volunteer>.

South East Water Metering Programme – A reminder that South East Water plans to install water meters for all its customers in Staplehurst in late spring this year. Further information can be found on the company's website www.southeastwater.co.uk or by telephoning the metering helpline 0333 000 0003.

Help Scheme to Connect to Mains Gas – SGN (formerly operating as Southern Gas Networks) is offering discounts to groups of people who wish to connect to mains gas and a support scheme known as 'Help to Heat' to assist vulnerable and disadvantaged residents to do so. For further information go to <https://www.sgn.co.uk/helptoheat/> or telephone SGN on 0800 912 1700.

Vegetation – In some parts of the parish plants, hedges and trees have reduced the width of footpaths and 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 - option 2 - 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.

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 – Borough Councillor John Perry's surgery will be on Saturday 30th May between 10.00am and 12.00 noon. The next PCSO surgery will be on Saturday 2nd May between 10.00 am and 11.00 am. The next Parish Council surgery will be on Saturday 30th May between 10.00am and 12.00 noon.

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 – Some useful Kent County Council numbers are as follows:

Highway Helpline	03000 41 81 81 (see options below)
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

Option 1 - Driver Education and Speed Awareness

Option 2 - Vegetation Enquiries

Option 3 - Potholes

Option 4 - Street lights enquiries and problems (most village lights are KCC-owned)

Option 5 - Drainage problems

Option 6 - Any other items not covered above

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 has not been published. For the latest information please check the Maidstone Borough Council website at <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. The site is closed Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day. 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 will be at the Parade on Monday 11th May and Monday 25th May 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.

Hire of North & South Hall, Staplehurst Village Centre - Please contact the Village Centre booking secretary on 07864 547453, e-mail book@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 issues requiring attention. For 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.

Power Cuts – For information about preparing for and dealing with power cuts go to <http://www.ukpowernetworks.co.uk/> or call 0800 31 63 105 (landline) or 0333 32 32 105 (from a mobile).

Fire Hydrants – To report any defects of a fire hydrant or its location sign contact the Fire Service on 01622 692121 Ext. 2391 or e-mail water.services@kent.fire-uk.org.

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.

Concessions to Library Users - For people with disabilities or mental health problems KCC offers an exempt card which allows concessionary use of library facilities. For full details go to <http://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/libraries/join-the-library> or ask at the library for further information.

Planning Committee and Full Council Meetings in South Hall, Staplehurst Village Centre from 7.00 p.m.

Tuesday 5th May 2015

Monday 18th May 2015 (Annual Meeting of the Parish Council)

(Please see the start of these notes for details of the Annual Parish Meeting on 11th May)

Please note that the start time of Full Council Meetings 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 or consult the agendas

displayed on the Village Centre noticeboard and the village website:
<http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/agendas.aspx>.

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The Parish Office is open to the public 0900-1300 hrs.
Mondays to Fridays (except Thursdays by appointment).