

STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL NOTES (for March 2011)

Council Website Revamp 2011 – Major changes will be taking place to the Parish Council website over the coming months to become more user-friendly. There will be changes to allow public access to the calendar, forum and photograph arrangements amongst other visual improvements. See details on the latest news page at http://staplehurstvillage.org.uk/latest_news.aspx

Silver Surfer? If you haven't grown up with computers or the internet, they can be quite overwhelming. Maidstone Older Persons Forum has arranged for a free computer training session at the Maidstone Gateway, King Street on Wednesday 2nd March 2011 at 11.30 for those who want to learn more. Contact 01622 677337 to reserve your place.

MBC Neighbourhood Forum in Staplehurst – Thursday 24th March at 7p.m. in the South Hall, Staplehurst Village Centre will be your opportunity to take part in discussions with Maidstone Borough Council about issues which have been highlighted by the parishes. MBC has often been accused of not listening to its parishes, but unless people from the parishes turn out and speak, is it any wonder that they can't (rather than won't) hear you? Parish Councillors will be at the meeting and local electors are welcome to join them and take part in the debates.

Parish Council Elections 2011 – All fifteen seats of Staplehurst Parish Council will be up for election in May 2011. If you would like to find out more about Staplehurst Parish Council, much information is displayed on its website at www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk Election 2011 page or contact the Parish Clerk for details. Local electors or members of the public are encouraged to attend and listen to any Parish Council meeting. Opportunities to speak are routinely given before and after all meetings.

An ELECTION INFORMATION EVENING was held on 28th February when Chairman John Perry and Borough Councillor Eric Hotson gave much useful information about being a Councillor. A speaker from Maidstone Borough Council Electoral Registration Office gave details of the nomination procedures and deadlines. Information packs from the event are available from the Parish Office and much information remains available on the website. In addition, any existing Councillor would be happy to answer any questions you may have about being a Parish Councillor.

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING – 11th April 2011 – 8 p.m. South Hall, Staplehurst Village Centre. Although hosted by the Parish Council, this is a meeting for the electors of the Parish. The Parish Council will report its activities alongside local residents and groups who have been invited and are encouraged to contribute written reports. If you have a specific subject that you wish to bring out for public discussion, this is the meeting at which you can raise it. Please contact the Parish Clerk before 31st March if you wish an item

added to the Agenda. All prospective candidates standing in the May Parish Elections will be invited to make themselves known to you at this meeting.

Bell Lane Toilets – Quotes are being considered by the Parish Council to tile the inside walls of the building to improve the ambience and cleansing of the facility. The toilets are being cleaned and opened daily from 7 a.m. until early evening, then locked at night. Staplehurst Parish Council wishes to do all it can to keep vandalism repair costs to a minimum and would appreciate it if all residents could report to the Parish Office any damage, misuse or potential vandalism problems. For non-urgent reports, 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.

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. A number of e-groups are available for anyone wishing to receive direct emails of useful information about local issues e.g., Weekly MBC Plans List, Parish Council Minutes & Agendas, Press Releases, etc. If local residents have any queries regarding Parish Council or local authority issues, they are encouraged to contact the Parish Clerk for the facts.

MBC Cleansing and Collection Services – Call Maidstone Borough Contact Centre on 01622 602162 for information about refuse services provided by Maidstone Borough Council. Alternatively much information is available on www.maidstone.gov.uk Use this number also to report any 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 also available to those who are unable to wheel or carry their refuse to the front boundary of their homes.

- **Waste Freighter** – The waste freighter should visit each area in the borough by weekly rotation. Details of the full service and schedule across the borough area are available on MBC’s website at http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/recycling_rubbish_and_waste/saturday_freighter_service_-_d.aspx The freighter will be visiting Staplehurst on 26th February and 7th May 2011 0745-0830 at Poyntell Road Pond, 0840-0925 at Church Green and 0935-1015 at Northdown.
- **Garden waste** – The new compostable WHITE MBC Garden Sacks are available from Henhurst Farm Shop, Spuds ‘n Buds or the Parish Office at £3.25 per roll of 5. If you use more than 10 rolls of garden sacks per year and you have room for an additional bin, it may be more cost-effective to hire a bin from MBC. Leave the white sacks beside your household waste bin on your collection day (or put vegetation in a blue-lidded wheelie bin hired from MBC specifically for garden waste).

- **MBC Bulky Collection Service** – Phone MBC on 01622 602162 to arrange a collection. Details of fees are shown on http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/recycling_rubbish_and_waste/household_waste_-_special_col.aspx Alternatively the KCC Householder Waste Tip at Tovil is available for householders to use free of charge. Full details at http://www.kent.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/recycling_and_rubbish/ways_to_recycle/waste_and_recycling_centres/maidstone_tovil.aspx

REPORT IT! PC Marc Pennicott on 07980 770575 with Community Warden, Chris Lomax on 07811 271254, PCSO Pete Gardner on 07772 226134 and Special Constable Ken Baker are the local visible policing presence in our Parish, but have emergency back up from the force as necessary. Telephone any of these officers if you witness anti-social behaviour that is not life-threatening. These are not 24/7 contact numbers so do leave a message and they will get back to you when next on duty. All crime-incident reports should be given to Maidstone Police Station on 01622 690690. If you prefer, calls to Crimestoppers are free and anonymous: 0800 555 111 but these may not be referred back directly to this parish. Life-threatening incidents, crimes in progress or serious injury Road Traffic Accident requiring urgent police attendance should be notified by dialling 999 in the usual way.

Hire of North & South Hall, Staplehurst Village Centre - To enquire about the availability of either hall, please contact the booking clerk on 07864 547453. The Parish Office does not deal with Village Centre bookings, although we do get many enquiries!

Dog Mess & disposal – Red dog waste bins are provided at strategic points around the parish. Thankfully only a small minority allow their dogs to defecate in public areas without clearing up the mess. However, if you witness such anti-social behaviour, telephone the Dog Warden on 01622 602117 in confidence and give details of the perpetrators. Visits to problem areas can be timed to be most effective and a fine imposed when the offender is caught.

Maidstone Borough Highway-related services - MBC remains responsible for some highway services such as Street sweeping, street nameplates, street naming and numbering, park and ride facilities, concessionary fares and public transport matters. MBC Contact Centre to report most issues requiring attention is 01622 602162. For all other Highways issues contact Kent Highways.

Kent Highways - Call 08458 247 800 any time 24 hours a day 7 days a week to report any local highways issues, such as defects to the roads, footways, signs, drainage and street furniture, etc. You can also report defects online too at <http://www.kent.gov.uk/KHSFaults/> You do not need to contact the Parish Office to report such defects. Responsibility for the motorways and trunk roads are managed by the Highways Agency on 08457 504030.

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. The local policing team in partnership with Trading Standards has introduced a **Cold Calling Control Zone** for Staplehurst. Information has been circulated and signs put up to educate residents and cold-callers about this initiative.

Neighbourhood Watch operates a scheme called Nominated Neighbour, which asks the caller to go to a neighbour who will return with them, so you do not have to deal with this 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, call Mid Kent Police on 01622 690690.

KCC Handyvan Services: The fitting of various security devices for householders is available through KCC in partnership with Help the Aged and Age concern. Please telephone 0845 026 1055 or Email: handyvan@helptheaged.org.uk for details. Website: www.helptheaged.org.uk

Parish Council Meetings held in South Hall at Staplehurst Village Centre:-

Planning Committee - 7 p.m. Monday 7th March 2011

Full Council Meeting – 8 p.m. Monday 7th March 2011

Planning Committee – 7 p.m. Monday 21st March 2011

Full Council Meeting - 8 p.m. Monday 21st March 2011

Please note that the start time of Full Council Meetings could be earlier, if the Planning Committee meeting Agenda is short. Please check with the Parish Office prior to the meeting you wish to attend or the website Calendar Page for up to date information.

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING – 8 p.m. Monday 11th April 2011

Mrs J S Bassett, Parish Clerk

Parish Office, Village Centre, Staplehurst, TN12 0BJ

Telephone/Fax: (01580) 891761

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).