

# Village Update

AUTUMN 2012

[www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk)

## CONCURRENT FUNCTIONS GRANT - PARISH SERVICES SCHEME

Up to now the parishes in the Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) area have received a grant to cover services undertaken by parishes which in the town/urban area would be carried out by MBC itself. It is recognised that during the last few years MBC has been operating under severe financial constraint and it has had little option but to review all its expenditure very closely. Therefore with this in mind MBC first proposed to phase out the current grant based system and replace it with a service based Parish Services Scheme.

The notice given by MBC to phase out the grant was initially far too short and we successfully managed to delay this until financial year 2013/14 and retain the same level of grant for 2012/13. In the meantime MBC continued to promote their Parish Services Scheme. Staplehurst has worked closely with the Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) and is part of the KALC Review Team. Unfortunately, in spite of discussions taking more than two years we have not reached agreement with MBC. In our view the proposed Parish Services Scheme is seriously flawed. KALC has put forward an alternative proposal which it considered met MBC's key objectives, but to date this has not been

accepted. MBC seem intent on negotiating with each individual parish and putting parishes in a position where they would have to compete for a share of the budget of the MBC department agreeing the service. In our view this would fundamentally alter the relationship between one tier of local government i.e. the parishes and another tier of local government i.e. MBC. We also consider that MBC's proposal is unnecessarily bureaucratic and time consuming.

The parishes believe that they are being treated unfairly by MBC which could leave parishes seriously underfunded for some of the services they provide. We are continuing to try to reach agreement with MBC. However, failure to do so could be serious for the parishes and lead either to services being discontinued or major increases in their precepts. As part of this process KALC is proposing that each of its member Parish Councils initiate a petition that will be collated and presented to MBC'S full Council by Maidstone KALC at the earliest opportunity; and if necessary this will be supported by a poll. It is our intention to enclose a copy of the petition notice with this edition of the Village Update; if this proves impractical we shall take steps to ensure all residents will have an opportunity to give their approval.

*John Perry - Chairman*

## STAPLEHURST HEALTH CENTRE

Since the Health Centre opened in 2008 the medical services have been provided by Malling Health on a 5 year Alternative Provider Medical Services (APMS) contract which comes to an end in April 2013. The Primary Care Trust (PCT) want to go out to tender to determine who will provide the service from 2013 onwards. Malling Health will be prepared to bid for the contract provided they consider the terms and conditions to be feasible. It is possible that another provider could win the tender and this would result in a new provider at the Health Centre although the

doctors, nurses and administrators would have their employment rights protected under TUPE. The Parish Council and the Patient Participation Group are seeking a meeting with the PCT and an opportunity, (possibly at a public meeting) for the patients to have their say in who should be running their health centre, in the same way as they did before Malling Health were awarded the contract.

It is important that the PCT realise that they have a duty to listen to the patients and provide them with the service that they need.

# Staplehurst

*Parish Council*

## STAPLEHURST ROCKS!

It didn't rain! This year's Up-Rockin' was a great success; the weather was good; the music supplied by NK Audio was rocking and a good time was had by all. Over 500 people attended with 100 cars accommodated in an overflow car park and a coach full of competitors was brought in by MBC. As well as the competitions on the ramps we had a wonderful selection of side stalls; a small boxing ring, poster art, and the Urban Blue bus. There were displays by the Free Church and home made cakes, fudge and fresh fruit stalls. The Football League provided a BBQ and the Guiders hot and cold drinks. Thanks to Stu of Love-n-skates for his expert judging. Our prize winners were, in the BMX division Joe Twaites and Colin Selwood; in the skateboarding Harley Goodhew and Adam Sims. The scooter category prizes went to Alfie and Zach Fellows. Much praise goes to Sarah Shearsmith from MBC and our own Elaine Downton who organised it



all; to Eric Hotson who helped with the financing in conjunction with local businesses. Many thanks too for the voluntary work done by all those on the day: litter picking and manning the car park. Everyone who attended the event commented on the excellent behaviour and camaraderie of the young people.

## BELL LANE TOILETS

The Parish Council is responsible for these toilets which are open 7.30am to 7.30pm every day and cleaned each morning. New hand dryers have just been installed and re-painting has taken place, colour co-ordinated with the new tiles. We are also very pleased with the standard of cleanliness in these facilities. Residents are requested to report any damage or other problems to the Parish Office or if urgent during out of office hours to 07539 692588.

## PLAYSCHEME

Play Place has once again provided an excellent Playscheme at the Primary School for 14 days of the summer holidays. Gail and her team are a credit to the company giving a safe and happy environment to our children. We thank MBC who gave us a grant again to support our scheme so together with PC funds and fees collected has made the scheme financially viable.

## PLANTERS

Following the success of our two planters in Bell Lane we decided to provide four more around the Parish. These concrete containers are unusual, but they are vandal-proof and reasonably priced! Last year one of our Councillors looked after the two planters, but as a volunteer he could not manage six! We now employ Growing Concern ( a local enterprise from the Maidstone Road giving supervised employment to people with learning difficulties) to plant up and tend all of our planters. This is a new partnership and we are proud to support this group.

## STAPLEHURST PHOTOGRAPH COMPETITION – 2012

The competition entitled 'Staplehurst Moments' seeks to capture moments and events which have taken place in Staplehurst throughout the year and will be judged on that criterion. The competition is running until 30-11-12. All rules and entry instructions can be found at <http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/uploads/staplehurst/documents/10/1062.pdf> With all the activities in the village over the last few months there must be many pictures that really sum up Staplehurst. Why not submit them? Prizes kindly donated by DK Holdings, Photomegorgeous, Staplehurst and Maidstone Photo Factory, Headcorn. GIVE IT A GO!!

### MAYOR'S VISIT

The Mayor of Maidstone, Councillor Rodd Nelson-Gracie, visited Staplehurst to open the new café at the Green World Garden Centre, Knoxbridge. He then went on to Iden Farm which makes Kentish Blue and Kentish Bluebell cheeses. The Mayor and Mayoress ended their tour with a private visit to Woodland House, the NHS Special Children's Unit.

### STOP PRESS... GREEN SACKS

MBC are discontinuing green sacks and residents will be offered a green wheelie bin instead for an annual fee (£27 for a 140 litre bin and £30 for a 240 litre bin).

### THE VILLAGE WEBSITE

Residents are reminded that the Parish Council maintain a website on behalf of the whole community including an area with free advertising for local groups - [http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/village\\_life.aspx](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/village_life.aspx) and for businesses - [http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/local\\_directory.aspx](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/local_directory.aspx)

## SINGING IN THE RAIN

Thanks to the great efforts of the Jubilee Committee during 18 months of planning and organising, the village enjoyed celebrations of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee which was the envy of many other villages. They organised necessary fund raising events, the visit by the French Market last year being the first. The Committee worked their socks off to get sponsors in order to meet basic costs, booking excellent professional bands, staging and expert sound and lighting technicians that did not come cheap. Health and Safety requirements and insurance policies added to the final costs. The standard of entertainment far surpassed everyone's expectations. The opening event was the planting of the commemorative tree in the school grounds by the Horticultural Society and primary school children. To entertain the village over a period of four days, in many different ways to suit the variety of people and ages, with free entry to everything is absolutely amazing. The Committee should feel proud of their achievements. The Parish Council met the cost of publishing the excellent commemorative booklet produced by Graham Sivyer. It was delivered to every household in Staplehurst - a super keepsake of the



memorable times we all had shared.

The weather on three of the four days was atrocious - cold with heavy rain. The low cloud prevented the fly-past of the Memorial Flight Lancaster bomber. Some of the kiddies' funfair had to be closed at times, but in true theatrical style, the show went on. With typical British spirit we wrapped up and danced under our umbrellas in our wellies and had a great time 'Singing in the Rain!' The fireworks finale that just kept on coming was simply the icing on a very big cake.

**A huge "Thank You!" from the Parish Council for all the hard work put in by the Jubilee Committee to give Staplehurst four fantastic days! The community spirit over those days was quite humbling. Well done STAPLEHURST!**



## SERGEANT R C FITZGERALD RAFVR

Some of you may already be aware that local military historian Ted Sergison has found out quite by chance that Sgt Fitzgerald's name is not on our WW2 memorial. The Sergeant lived and worked in Staplehurst for 4 years before enlisting and it was simply a tragic set of unfortunate circumstances that led to his name not being included when the memorial was first commissioned. As soon as the Parish Council heard of this and confirmed the facts it started to explore how we could rectify the situation. The decision has been made to completely replace the central panel of the memorial and have it re-

written by a professional sign writer to include the Sergeant's name in correct alphabetical order and this work is now in hand. It is hoped that a service can be held in due course to rededicate this memorial in his memory and we will let the community know when this has been arranged. Whilst investigating how best to correct the WW2 memorial it was noticed that there were several errors and omissions on the WW1 memorial. The Parish Council have arranged for these to be corrected at the same time as the work on the WW2 memorial is undertaken. The Council is also planning a project to mark the centenary of the start of the First World War and an article giving information about how you can get involved will be in the September issue of the Parish Magazine, on the council website and elsewhere.

# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

A lot has taken place since the last Update. Despite the vagaries of the British weather the Jubilee celebrations were a great success and I should like to place on record our thanks to the Jubilee Committee and all those involved in organising this event; without their efforts none of this would have been possible. We have also held a major event at our skate park. As many will know we planned to hold this UpRockin event last year, but the adverse weather conditions forced us to cancel it at the last minute. Nevertheless we started to plan for this year's event almost immediately. The weather was much kinder to us and the event which was run in conjunction with MBC was extremely successful. We are already starting to plan for next year. The skate park has proved to have been an important facility which has significantly benefited our community and we are now looking at the possibility of developing it further. Our thanks go to Elaine Downton, Cllr Paul Butcher and Sarah Shearsmith of MBC for the work they have put in to make this event possible. We have now obtained planning permission to install the Stryker security

camera at Jubilee Field. This was always the planned destination for the camera which is currently installed at Market Street. However, since the Market Street installation has proved to have been very successful we are currently looking into the possibility of acquiring a third camera, which although it would be based in Market Street, could be used elsewhere if needed.

We recognise that the maintenance and cleaning of the Parade continues to generate concern. MBC has completed the outstanding repairs and has now handed over responsibility for cleaning and maintenance to the owners. The Parade, even though it is privately owned, remains a public space and plays a key role in our community. Staplehurst Parish Council will continue to monitor the situation carefully and will use all reasonable endeavours to ensure the Parade is maintained and cleaned to a high standard.

Finally, we continue to work with the Maidstone Area of the Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) to try to resolve our differences with MBC regarding the Parish Services Scheme; and Staplehurst Parish Council is taking a lead role. There could be considerable financial implications for parishes and rural areas in general if these differences remain unresolved.

*John Perry*

## PARISH COUNCIL INFORMATION

Local electors and the press have a right to listen to Parish Council Meetings, but not to take part. At the beginning and after the closure of the Parish Council Meeting, the Chairman will invite members of the public to speak for a maximum of 3 minutes each relating to issues on the Agenda or about issues of local concern. You are requested to state your name and address prior to speaking. The Parish Council as a planning consultee makes recommendations to Maidstone Borough Council, which makes the decision. All meetings are held in the

South Hall, Village Centre. Planning Committee meetings begin at 7pm with Full Council following on at 8pm (or earlier if planning agenda is short). Contact the Clerk for details or check the website calendar page.

### Meetings in 2012 are:-

September	Monday 3rd	Monday 17th
October	Monday 1st	Monday 15th
November	Monday 5th	Monday 19th
December	Monday 3rd	Monday 17th

# Parish Council Information

## COUNCILLORS

John Perry

(Chairman)

Tom Burnham

(Joint Vice Chairman)

Paul Kelly

(Joint Vice Chairman)

Paul Butcher

(Chairman of Planning)

Margaret Ashby

Joan Buller

Anne Gosling

Simon Green

Sam Lain

Barrett Manning

John Reardon

Adele Sharp

Rory Silkin

Peter Spearink

vacancy

## CLERK

Mr Mick Westwood

## RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER

Mrs Sue Bassett

## ASSISTANT to CLERK

Mrs Deborah Jenkins

## Address:

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

Email: [clerk@staplehurstvillage.org.uk](mailto:clerk@staplehurstvillage.org.uk)

Tel: 01580 891761

## Opening hours:

9am to 1pm Mondays to Fridays,  
except on Thursdays when it is by  
appointment.

## COUNCIL SURGERIES AT THE LIBRARY

Two Parish Councillors will attend a surgery at the Library on the second Saturday of each month from 10am until noon.

Borough Councillor Lusty's surgery will continue on the last Saturday of each month.

PCSO Pete Gardner will be holding a surgery on  
29th September 10-12 noon  
27th October 10-12 noon  
1st December 11-12 noon

You are welcome to talk through any local problems or ask questions about local issues.