

Village Update

SPRING 2017

www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk

Staplehurst Neighbourhood Development Plan

(Neighbourhood Plan)

The **Neighbourhood Plan** finally went to Referendum on Thursday 3rd November 2016. The question posed was *'Do you want Maidstone Borough Council to use the neighbourhood plan for Staplehurst to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?'*

After 4 years of consultation with local residents and deliberations with Maidstone Borough Council, positive approval was given by residents through the following vote:-

- Votes cast: 1,586 (33.77% turnout)
- Yes: 1,468 (92.56%)
- No: 118 (7.44%)
- Rejected: 0

The Neighbourhood Plan went before Maidstone Borough Council on the 7th December 2016 where it was officially 'made'. The Neighbourhood Plan is now a material consideration in all planning applications and

part of the Local Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan can be viewed at www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk and follow the Neighbourhood Plan link on the front page.

The Parish Council wished to thank Richard Eastham, FERIA Urbanism and his team together with members of the Rural Settlement Group and NP Project Team who assisted with bringing the NP thus far. A special mention should be made of the Parish Clerk, Mick Westwood, who had worked beyond the normal role of Clerk to facilitate the path of the NP through all the difficult stages. He has effectively been the Project Manager and should be rightly acknowledged. This is an excellent result for the Village as it is the first time there has been a 'Plan' for Staplehurst.

In support of this document, the **Housing Survey 2016** has also been completed and can be found at www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk again following the link to Neighbourhood Plan.

Staplehurst

Parish Council

PLANNING NOTES

On 27 October last, MBC's Planning Committee considered three major planning applications for Headcorn Road – the Bovis and Redrow estates (167 and 185 dwellings respectively) on the north side and the Countryside Properties development of 110 houses on the south side. The unsatisfactory mitigation proposal for the crossroads was rejected, but the Bovis and Redrow applications were agreed, in spite of detailed objections raised at the meeting by Borough Councillor Louise Brice, Parish Councillors and local residents. Countryside had appealed to the Planning Inspector as MBC had not made a decision within the time limit, but the committee concluded that they would have rejected it if the appeal had not occurred.

Cllr Joan Buller presented the Parish Council case at the appeal hearing for the Great Pagehurst solar farm in November – the outcome is awaited. We have recently heard that there has been an appeal against MBC's refusal of permission for another solar farm at Pullen Farm, Frittenden.

An appeal by the applicant against MBC's refusal of permission for new houses south of The Gables in Marden Road was rejected.

Among the planning applications considered by the Parish Council planning committee was one for up to 126 dwellings on a site south of Marden Road. The committee recommended refusal. The committee also considered revised plans for the Railway Tavern in Station Road, which were still considered unsatisfactory.

COMMUNITY CLEAN-UP – SATURDAY 18TH MARCH

Staplehurst Parish Council is again organising a clean-up of the built-up area on Saturday 18th March and we would like to invite YOU to take part. MBC will loan protective equipment and litter pickers, remove the rubbish we collect, provide guidance on safety and give insurance cover. We will be based at the Youth Club (near Sobell Lodge) by kind permission of their committee, and we ask you to arrive at 10 am. When you have cleaned your allotted area, sacks need to be brought back to the Youth Club so don't overfill them! We aim to offer you refreshments after the work is completed. For insurance purposes we have to keep a list of helpers' names. Children and young people who take part must be accompanied by, and under the responsibility of, a parent or adult friend. Organised youth groups who wish to join in should contact the Parish Office in the first instance to discuss their plans. Last year we held two very successful Clean-Ups and there was excellent community spirit generated, even though we would rather not have to pick up other people's rubbish! If you are not able to take part please try to tidy your own boundaries to help make Staplehurst litter free! **We look forward to seeing you on the 18th March.**



WIMPEY FIELD

Whilst the field still awaits handover, which is imminent, work behind the scenes is progressing well. We had a walk over the site with the Tree Preservation officer from MBC who gave total support to our ideas for future management and early work on many of the trees. We now understand the position regarding all the TPO's. He will be pleased to visit again and give more advice should we need it. A committee member of the Kent Ornithological Society also gave valuable advice on planting for birds and is going to undertake a daily survey of the field in the New Year to identify those species which are already there. Medway Valley Countryside Partnership has had two more visits and is informing some of our thinking. They also support our plans 100%. Much research on planting in specific areas has been done. We understand the type of plants that are suitable for shaded areas ready for planting in the wooded areas when early clearing has brought more light into the shaded undergrowth.

We will shortly be recruiting working volunteers to help realise our three year plan. No skill or knowledge is needed and you will learn much from our expert contractors and advisors as well as helping to give birth to a project that should give pleasure to many generations to come. If you would like a guided tour and explanation of the plans please contact the Parish Clerk who will put you in touch with one of the group leaders.

SAINSBURY'S



Discussions between the Parish Council and Sainsbury's have been ongoing for some time now. Recently the Parish Council was pursuing a request for Sainsbury's to tidy up the appearance of the old Petrol Station. Sainsbury's had agreed to complete some work to improve the appearance by Christmas. The good news is that they have. The old pump canopy has been removed and a new hoarding has been erected to the road facing boundary. Whilst we would all prefer to have a working building we agree it's an improvement. Now for the Station Road site.

STAPLEHURST ROAD INFORMATION

We can all see the roads getting busier and seemingly more dangerous. We have all seen incidents of near misses or even collisions around the village. The Police do not record numbers of incidents unless serious injury occurs, meaning no one actually knows the full picture. This is where we need your help. The Parish Council would like to know if you see any vehicle related incidents. This includes collisions, near misses, speeding, dangerous parking or even abandoned cars. We aim to get a true picture of issues on our roads. If you see anything that you consider worth recording, please let us know via our new email address staplehurstroadinfo@gmail.com. Any information you can supply will be welcome. Locations, car types, number of people affected, pictures, anything. Once we start to build a picture we can start to specify the information needed. Whilst the email is the preferred method of contact we would welcomed written submissions posted into the Parish Office letterbox.

DOG BINS

Over the last three months Maidstone have withdrawn nine dog waste bins and replaced them with eight mixed use litter bins. They have also replaced a number of old (or missing) lamppost bins.

Whilst the dog waste bins are clearly labelled you can place bagged dog waste in any council waste bin plus your own general waste (black wheelie bin.) The council provided bins are larger and we hope they will be used rather than leaving the bags in hedges as we are currently finding.



CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

The Parish Council would like to thank the following local businesses for their kind contributions towards the cost of the new Christmas lights: Murcatto Wines; Radfords Estate Agents; Staplehurst Garage; W J Crouch Butchers. Please support our local businesses whenever you can.

VILLAGE CENTRE REDEVELOPMENT

The Village Centre Redevelopment Group held a Consultation Event on 21 January 2017. This was attended by over 150 residents and over 70 questionnaires were completed and collected at the event, with many more to be submitted.

There will be opportunity for residents to get involved with this consultation and more details on how to provide feedback will be posted on the Parish Council website very soon.

The Group will meet in March to discuss the results of the consultation and the way forward. But the Group and the Council would like to thank the Village Centre Trustees, residents and all other stakeholders for their input into the project so far, as well as special thanks to the WI for providing refreshments and to the architects for providing the concepts exhibited on a pro-bono basis.

If you would like further information, please contact Cllr. Sam Lain-Rose by emailing the Parish Clerk

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

New Councillors

I mentioned in the last Update the sad death of Cllr. Butcher. Just before Christmas Cllr. Paul Kelly resigned from the Council after many years in the saddle. He will be missed for his insight and humour and we all wish him well. As a result, two new Councillors have been appointed to fill the vacancies.

These are Gill Smith and Laurence Whittle and I welcome them warmly to the Council. They are already involved in many aspects of Staplehurst life and are getting stuck in at the coal face. Their appointment brings the total of new Councillors to three within the last twelve months. Read all about them on the Council's website.

Neighbourhood Plan

Yes, at last we have a fully functioning Neighbourhood Plan! Maidstone Borough Council ratified it on the 7th December. It is now part of the planning law that we, MBC and everyone else must obey when looking at any planning decisions. I believe it to be the strongest planning card that the Parish has ever been dealt. I know that some residents had thought the NP had been in place ages ago, or had died a death.

It has taken a long time, and much heartache and our thanks go to the Steering Group, the Rural Settlement Group and especially Chairman John Kelly. His dogged determination and huge expertise were invaluable in the long process from beginning to end.

And we mustn't forget several Councillors closely involved too.

Happy New Year.

Rory Silkin – January 2017

STOP PRESS

Play Scheme 2017 dates

Monday 31st July to Friday 18th August

Week one will offer 9am to 12noon sessions with 31st July being an open morning.

Weeks two and three will offer 9am until 3pm. (2 sessions with the option to stay the whole time).

Venue to be confirmed.

THE FUTURE OF STAPLEHURST'S CARNIVAL

Staplehurst Carnival has been a mainstay of our community since 1968. And now, in its 49th year, without your support it may come to an end.

Run by a group of volunteers known as the Carnival and Fete committee it has cemented itself as a main feature of our Village's summer calendar. Whether the roar of funfair rides or the pull of the games, music and stalls selling local produce, each year residents have descended upon Surrenden Field to socialise and make merry, and this is without doubt a defining feature of our community.

The Carnival is a legacy with two of the original members still part of the committee. They are keen to keep it going and to pass their knowledge onto new committee members so that this tradition is kept alive to benefit Staplehurst for generations to come.

All that is required is a few hours a month to help with the planning and logistics of organising the Carnival. If you would like to offer your support and keep this 49-year-old community tradition alive then please contact Bob Ham 01580 892742 or their Facebook page.

Any support is valued.

PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

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 MBC 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 7.30pm (if planning agenda is short). Contact the Clerk for details or check the website calendar page.

Forthcoming Meetings:-

Monday 6th March Monday 20th March
Monday 3rd April Tuesday 18th April
Tuesday 2nd May (*Planning Committee only*)
Monday 8th May (*Annual Parish Meeting*)
Monday 15th May (*Planning Committee and Annual Meeting of Parish Council*)

THANK YOU

At the end of February, we are saying thank you and good luck to Sue Bassett who retires from the Parish Office after twenty-five years' service to the Parish Council as Clerk and latterly as Responsible Finance Officer. Thank you, Sue, for all your hard work and the difference you have made to Staplehurst.

Parish Council Information

COUNCILLORS

Rory Silkin (*Chairman*)
Tom Burnham (*Vice-Chairman & Chairman of Planning*)
Patrick Riordan (*Vice-Chairman*)
Margaret Ashby
Joan Buller
Chris Claridge
Anne Gosling
Sam Lain-Rose
Barrett Manning
John Perry
John Reardon
Adele Sharp
Gillian Smith
Peter Spearink
Laurence Whittle

CLERK

Mr Mick Westwood

DEPUTY CLERK AND RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER

Mrs Deborah Jenkins

Address:

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

Email: clerk@staplehurstvillage.org.uk

Tel: 01580 891761

Opening hours:

9am to 1pm Mondays to Thursdays,
other times by appointment (closed Fridays).

SURGERIES AT THE LIBRARY

- Borough Councillor Perry's surgery is on the last Saturday of each month, from 10am until noon.
- The Parish Council holds a surgery every Saturday from 10am until 11am.
- PCSO Pete Gardner Saturdays 4th March, 29th April and 20th May at 10am to 11am.

You are welcome to talk through any local problems or ask questions about local issues. Annual Parish Meeting article in case of need and assuming the APM takes the same format as in recent years.