

Village Update

AUTUMN 2017

www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk

Summer Play Scheme

The Play Scheme ran for three weeks; the first being mornings only and the other two weeks with two sessions each day from 9am until 3pm. The school facilities were outstanding and we thank the Head Teacher for her support.

Councillors Joan Buller, Tom Burnham and Gill Smith visited. On each occasion they were impressed by the range of activities and staff supervision; the staff were helpful and hard-working. All the children were having a wonderful time

and fully engaged. There was a good mix of genders and ages. The weather was mainly dry so full use was made of the many outdoor facilities on the secure school site. For each session numbers were reasonable, but the first week was the least supported. Numbers in the afternoon were lower on some afternoons, but were mainly in the twenties or higher. Once the figures are received from the organising company, PlayPlace, the Parish Council will decide on the format for next year. Parental feedback is welcomed.

Community Clean-Up

Councillors Burnham and Buller again organised the second Clean-Up of the year. We give a huge thank you to the 30 residents who helped collect masses of litter from our village streets. We concentrated on the northern area as these roads were particularly bad. We would also like to thank a further 10 residents who worked on our rural lanes at their own risk as MBC will not insure people litter picking outside of the 30mph zone.

The Men's Shed team were in charge of refreshments this time. They did an excellent job and there was much banter too! We are very grateful to the Youth Club Management for allowing us to use their building and the site for storing the many bags of rubbish. We also would like to thank MBC for the loan of the necessary equipment and for their prompt collection of all the rubbish. Thank you too to Mick and Deborah in the Office who also work hard on this event.

We were pleased to have many family groups helping; our youngest volunteer was just 4 years old! We were also delighted to have our two Borough Councillors, Louise Brice and John Perry, helping and Parish Councillor Paddy Riordan who worked down at the Station area on his own bringing back six full sacks of rubbish in his van.



As usual there was an amazing community spirit and some very useful networking went on. We hope you can see a difference in the village. The challenge is to educate people not to drop their litter in the first place, especially people who throw it out of their vehicles as they drive through Staplehurst. Real success would be for Clean-Ups to be unnecessary.

We know many residents also litter pick on a regular basis in addition to our Clean-Ups. Thank you to them! See you next Spring when we will have to do this all over again.

Staplehurst

Parish Council

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

This is my first report as Chairman, and I'd like to thank my predecessor, Cllr Rory Silkin, for his contribution to the Parish Council over the last three years. Fortunately, we shall still have the benefit of his expert knowledge of legal matters and of his long experience of life in Staplehurst. I'd also like to thank Cllr Adele Sharp who has taken over as Chairman of the Parish Council's important Planning Committee, and Cllr Paddy Riordan, our tireless Vice-Chairman.

The role of Parish Councillor is an unpaid one, and we are fortunate in that all the members do more than just attend meetings twice a month – some of them very much more. Without their input, we should not be able to provide the level of services we offer. We also depend on our staff – Mick, our Parish Clerk, Deborah, the Deputy Clerk (who has particular responsibility for finance and planning matters) and Les, the Caretaker – who go that extra mile to help residents. I'd like to particularly thank Les, who has decided to retire shortly. He has worked hard to keep our local environment safe and tidy. We are recruiting a replacement for him, to continue his good work.

Some recent Parish Council projects are mentioned elsewhere in this Update, but I would like to highlight the all-weather path across the south end of Surrenden Field. This will be increasingly useful as autumn sets in, and it also addresses one of the objectives of our Neighbourhood Plan – “safe, comfortable and convenient walking routes”.

Our many voluntary organisations and groups contribute a lot to life in Staplehurst and without many people generously giving their time our quality of life would be much poorer. It's really unfair to single out just one group, but perhaps I could mention the folk who took responsibility for organising the new fireworks event at the Jubilee Field on Saturday 4th November. It should be a spectacular evening and I hope to see you there.

Cllr Tom Burnham

JUBILEE FIELD

The Parish Council has organised alterations to the existing car park area. We were experiencing safety issues in relation to vehicles having to park in front of the locked gates to the main car park and vehicles parking on the road. This is largely for Skate park users and other residents enjoying the facility. The 24 hour parking area has been a resounding success. It is fully monitored to avoid the area being misused. This was funded by money paid by the developer as a condition of building the homes at Parisfield Close. We hope to complete the area with Tarmac & white lines when further funding becomes available.



SPC/Jubilee Field Management Committee have also employed the help of The Community Payback team. Works carried out by the team are as follows.

- Clearing the car park area.
- Cutting back hedges and weeds in the car park area.
- Cleaning up litter and various builders' bags.
- Cutting back foliage adjacent to the far pitches to avoid losing footballs and children getting hurt by brambles.
- Installing a supporters' fence adjacent to the main pitch.
- Cutting back foliage and brambles adjacent to the main pitch.
- Edging the paths around the Pavilion and Kathy Lamb Centre.
- Weeding paths.
- Strimming and grass cutting.

The whole field is looking really tidy and well-kept and we are grateful for the work carried out by the team. They will also be assisting clean up after the forthcoming Fireworks event in November.

We would remind residents that this facility is primarily a sports field and to please put litter in the bins provided and to clear up after walking their dogs.

PLANNING

As ever, planning has been extremely busy with lots of people working behind the scenes to ensure parishioners' opinions are being represented.

On the 17th August MBC's Planning Committee considered the planning applications for The Three Sons, Park Wood Lane site. Borough Councillor Louise Brice, Borough Councillor John Perry and Parish Councillor Adele Sharp all spoke up recommending refusal. The committee concluded that in this instance the site had not fulfilled necessary agreed regulations and until they were met, the new application had to be refused.

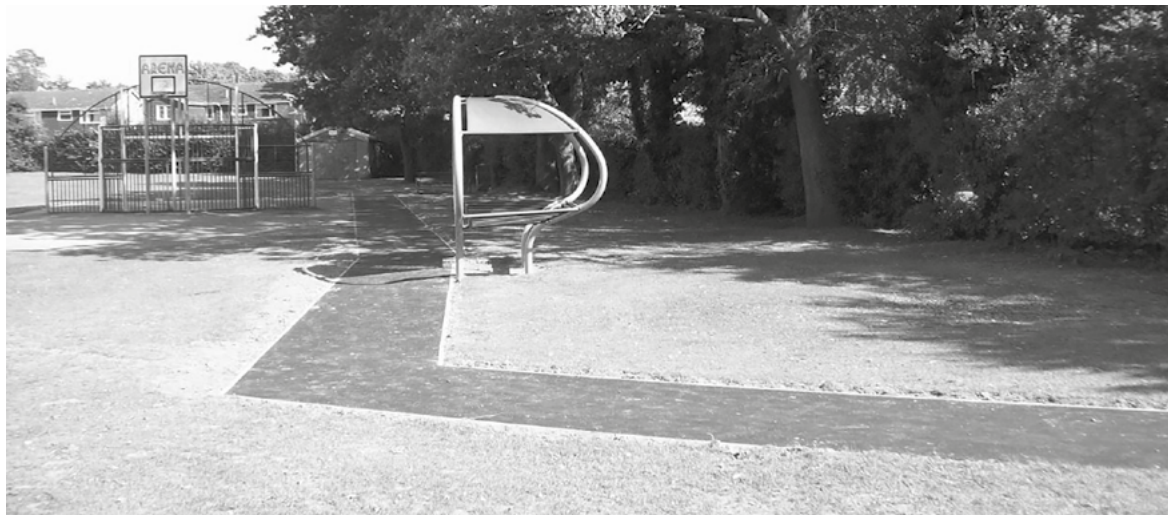
On the 28th September the George Street and Clapper Lane

planning application came before MBC's Planning Committee and Parish councillor Tom Burnham spoke, focussing on the drainage and access issues, as these were the main points raised by SPC in our submission to MBC. Cllr John Perry also spoke as a visiting member. The Planning Committee voted unanimously to refuse this application, against the officer's recommendation.

Another planning application MBC refused was the Land south of Marden Road. The site is in neither our Adopted Neighbourhood Plan nor in the Emerging Local Plan, which may all have been key to getting this result.

SURRENDEN FIELD

In the last update it was written that a project to install a path was about to commence. We are pleased to report that the path was completed early September. The path has received many positive comments, thank you. Further improvements will be considered in the coming months.



Hot Topics

Over the course of a year the Parish Council releases briefings as and when we can on a range of subjects. Time after time we are asked a question when the information is 'out there' but has been missed. For this reason we are introducing a 'Hot Topic' section. We will list what are perceived to be the most discussed subjects within the Parish and provide a short update and may include a location of more detailed information. This information will be updated monthly on our Website, Facebook Page and included in future publications where space allows.

Sainsbury's – Following extensive lobbying by Borough Cllr's Brice and Perry, and the Parish Council, the Head of Planning and Regeneration at MBC has met with Sainsbury's to understand their future plans for the area and commitment, investigating if any joint-investment could be undertaken to bring the site forward more quickly. Sainsbury's have reaffirmed their long-term commitment to the site, but we understand it is not in their financial planning for the next 12 months.

Planning Developments – The Redrow development at Fishers Farm is in the process of early construction. KCC

Highways are still looking into options to reduce congestion at the crossroads but have not yet offered any definite plans.

Parade – The private owner allowed the Parish Council to organise clearing the overgrown flower-beds. A contractor is due to clear the roots soon. NatWest unit is up for rental but we are aware NatWest hold the tenancy on the unit into 2018. The Parish Council wants to see the disabled toilets reopened. We are in discussion with MBC to understand costs.

Railway Tavern – The Parish Council was unsuccessful in nominating the Railway Tavern with MBC as an asset of community value in order to give the community an opportunity to preserve it as a public house.

Crime – There has been an increase in fly tipping and thefts of equestrian equipment over the last year. Police advise people not to publish Facebook pictures of themselves whilst on holiday. If you must please don't make them public. Please see the Parish Council website Latest News section for details of a new online reporting facility for crimes and incidents as well as non-injury road traffic collisions.

Marden Road Crossing - We understand that the location has been agreed with all concerned parties and the permanent (Zebra) crossing should be installed by the end of the year.

MEN'S SHED

The idea of our Staplehurst Men's Shed is primarily two fold. The first is a social place for men to gather on a weekly basis and have a bit of fun or chat over a cup of tea or coffee. The second is for the Men's Shed members to share their skills or ideas in small community, DIY or garden projects.

Want to know more or do you have a small DIY project that needs help?

Then contact Nigel on 07708 600 066 or via email on staplehurstshed@outlook.com.

Or just pop along as we meet every Thursday from 10 am at the Staplehurst Youth Club, on the High Street. So come along and join our welcoming group.

WIMPEY FIELD NATURE PARK

Work continues on the Wimpey Field Nature Park. The disabled path was officially opened by Helen Grant MP and the first three benches and two picnic tables are in place.

The paths are cut every two weeks and are looking very good. We had a wonderful time when Medway Valley Countryside Partnership put on a Bio Blitz day and some bug, beetle and butterfly safaris. Well over a hundred children and parents took part and all had a great time. Community Payback has a full schedule of work when they start again after leaf fall.

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

Over the last year a number of calls and emails have come into the Parish Office highlighting issues around the Village. A large number of these should be reported directly to KCC. Whilst the office staff will help where they can, please note the following info and report any issues directly to KCC. Feel free to forward any reference numbers to the Parish Office where Councillors will attempt to progress the issue with the relevant department.

Kent County Council Phone Numbers –

KCC Main Number 03000 41 41 41

Highways Helpline (1) 03000 41 81 81
(office hours - see options below)

Highways Helpline (2) 03000 41 91 91
(out-of-hours emergency)

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 - Items not covered above

Speed Awareness 03000 41 82 82

Concessionary Fares 03000 41 83 83

Young Person's Travel Pass 03000 41 84 84

Public Rights of Way 03000 41 71 71

Report a highways problem on-line at <http://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/report-a-problem>. For motorways and trunk roads contact the Highways Agency on 0300 123 5000 or e-mail ha_info@highways.gsi.gov.uk.

PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

Local electors and the press have a right to listen to 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:-

- 6th & 20th November
- 4th & 18th December (in North Hall)

VILLAGE PARADE

Volunteer Parish Councillors utilised the Payback team to grub out the planted areas at The Parade. This had much support from the local shops.

Local companies, Yew Tree Construction & Landscaping, Wealden Groundworks and Priory Landscaping donated their time and lorries to clear the foliage.

The Parade is privately owned and therefore the PC is restricted in what it is able to do; however, works are being carried out by volunteers and local shops to brighten up the centre of the village.

The next step is to use a machine to grub out the roots and then to create a grass area possibly with some flowers to make it look like a community garden. This will be done in the near future as the funding becomes available from local shops.

Parish Council Information

COUNCILLORS

Tom Burnham (Chairman)
Patrick Riordan (Vice-Chairman)
Margaret Ashby
Joan Buller
Chris Claridge
Anne Gosling
Sam Lain-Rose
Barrett Manning
John Perry
John Reardon
Adele Sharp
Rory Silkin
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 Saturday 4th November 10am until 11am.

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