

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

As highlighted previously, Staplehurst Parish Council takes a proactive approach to the provision of services with the aim of improving the quality of life in the Parish. The street cleaning service is now fully established, we have recently provided additional salt bins in anticipation of further severe weather this winter and we are taking steps to install more planters. One area that the Parish Council takes very seriously is the safety and security of residents which we believe is fundamental to the maintenance of a high quality of life. This is why the Parish Council has agreed to install two Stryker PoleCat cameras in the village. These represent the latest technology and are supported by the Police and Maidstone Borough Council with whom we are working very closely. The cameras are capable of being moved around, but will initially be installed at the Parade and Jubilee Field.

STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

Planning 7pm, full council 8pm (or earlier if planning agenda is short)

Remaining meetings in 2011 are:-

Monday 5th and Monday 19th December

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.

The Parish Council is currently preparing its budget for 2012/13 and the resultant Precept. One issue that has given us cause for concern is the level of grant that the Parish Council receives for concurrent functions. This grant covers the cost of services which in the town areas are provided by Maidstone Borough Council itself. MBC has proposed major changes to the system and Staplehurst Parish Council has played a major role in ensuring that equitable transitional arrangements are in place for 2012/13.

Sadly, I have to report that Councillor Jack Davidson has had to resign due to work commitments and I should like to take this opportunity to wish him all the very best for the future and thank him for the contributions he has made. We are currently seeking a successor through the co-option process. The Parish Council welcomes any feedback from residents on any issues of concern.

John Perry

Meetings in 2012 are:-

January	Tuesday 3rd	Monday 16th
February	Monday 6th	Monday 20th
March	Monday 5th	Monday 19th
April	Monday 2nd	Monday 16th
ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 23rd April 8pm		
April	Monday 30th	
May	Monday 14th	Monday 28th
June	Monday 18th	
July	Monday 2nd	Monday 16th
August	Monday 6th	Monday 20th
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
Simon Green
John Kelly
Sam Lain
Barrett Manning
John Reardon
Adele Sharp
Rory Silkin
Peter Spearink
vacancy

CLERK

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

Tel: 01580 891761

Opening hours:

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

COUNCIL SURGERIES AT THE LIBRARY

Borough Councillor Lusty holds a Council Surgery at the Library on the last Saturday of each month from 10am to noon. You are welcome to talk through any local problems or ask questions about local issues with any or all of these Councillors and officers.

Village Update

WINTER 2011

www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk

TWO SUPERMARKET PROPOSALS FOR STAPLEHURST

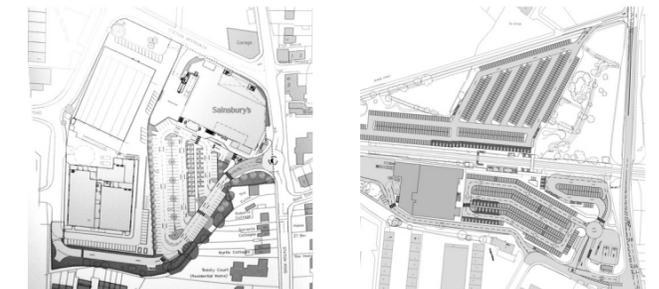
Both Sainsbury and Tesco have announced plans to build a new supermarket here in recent weeks.

DK Holdings and Sainsbury's Supermarkets Ltd have proposed a mixed-use scheme on land near Staplehurst station, now used by DK Holdings and GMS Flooring. It would provide a new 28,000 sq ft factory for DK Holdings and a new Sainsbury's store to serve the local community, with approximately 19,000 sq ft of sales floor space. Access to the proposed supermarket would be by a new roundabout in Station Road.

The Tesco scheme on Station Approach would provide a store about the size of the Tesco in Tenterden, focused on providing food for the main weekly shopping trip and a petrol station. In addition, there would be improvements in access to the station, in conjunction with Network Rail and Southeastern Railway, including a new secure car park and new bus stopping facilities.

Both proposals have been exhibited to local residents who were invited to comment.

Staplehurst Parish Council will not be able to make any official comment or recommendation on these proposals until planning applications have been lodged with Maidstone Borough Council and a response has been considered at a Parish Council planning meeting.



CORE STRATEGY

The Core Strategy provides the overall framework to guide development. Public consultation between Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) and Staplehurst took place on the 14th September 2011. The meeting was attended by a majority of members of the Parish Council and the Rural Settlement Group (RSG) with some local residents.

The Parish Council has since formally responded to the consultation – see http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/rural_settlement_group.aspx. It is our perception that the current draft shows a bias towards the Town Centre to the detriment of Rural Areas. MBC plan to run a post-consultation conference in the forthcoming months and a further formal consultation process in February 2012.

It is imperative that Staplehurst as a Rural Service Centre clearly states its position. The RSG continue to keep a watching brief on all developments paying particular attention to the proposed National Planning Policy Framework and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations, which seek to encompass a community's 'right to build'. In the meantime the RSG continue to work on the draft Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan which eventually will be subject to a Local Referendum.

Residents who are interested in the future of Staplehurst can see ongoing developments at http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/rural_settlement_group.aspx.

Staplehurst

Parish Council

PHOTOGRAPH OF THE YEAR COMPETITION 2011

The Competition is well under way and residents are reminded that the deadline for submission is the 1st December 2011. The competition is open to everyone of all ages and the photograph must have been taken within the Parish of Staplehurst between the 1st December 2010 and the 1st December 2011. Entrants may submit up to 5 digital images and must be willing to have their image displayed on the Website. We continue to see excellent photographs being placed on Facebook and other media platforms, but it would be great to see these photographs on the Village Website. Photographs

submitted will hopefully form part of any Staplehurst Website Calendar in 2012. The winner will be presented with a new Cannon 1100D digital SLR camera or price equivalent model or cash vouchers up to £300, together with a Certificate.

A cautionary note; if there are insufficient entries to warrant a meaningful competition this year, then the Parish Council hold the right to the defer the deadline to Easter 2012, when residents will have the benefit of another two seasons. For competition details and rules – see http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/image_gallery

QUEEN'S JUBILEE 2012

We hope that everyone enjoyed the French Market, the first of many events planned to raise funds for the Queen's Jubilee next year. The committee has been working hard to come up with ideas that will raise enough money to enable everyone in the village free admission to our Jubilee celebrations, young and old alike. We have also been busy checking out all sorts of entertainment for the actual celebration weekend which promises to be a musical extravaganza, all the fun of the fair, with plenty to eat and drink too. Don't forget to check out the website to see the update of events that will be happening.

THANK YOU

The Parish Council would like to thank all those parishioners who help us in so many ways. Residents help on the Rural Settlement Group, Speed Watch Team, Staplehurst Emergency Help Team, voluntary litter-picking, tree wardening as well as the collating and distribution of this Update. (One lady delivers over 300.) Staplehurst is rightly proud of its community spirit.

STAPLEHURST'S TREES

Les Reeve, the Parish Caretaker, has volunteered to be our new tree warden with Councillor Joan Buller liaising with him. The Parish Council entered the Kent Men of the Trees competition and was Highly Commended. The judge's report was thorough and very useful. There are many good quality trees in the Parish, but some need attention. Many of our horse chestnuts are affected by the Chestnut Leaf Miner, the grubs and eggs of which over-winter in the leaf debris. The burning of these leaves will slow down this rampant disease.

BUS SHELTERS

Two more bus shelters in the High Street at Cornforth Close and outside Vine House have been upgraded by having sides fitted. The Parish Council has received many thanks from parishioners who can now shelter from the wind!



DOG OWNERS

The Parish Caretaker has reported that too many people are not clearing up after their dogs. The worst area is the Surrenden Playing Field, but the pavements throughout the village are a problem, especially on the Headcorn Road towards Poyntell Road and in Bathurst Road. Dog owners – please be responsible, carry your little plastic bags and clean up after your dog!

WEBSITE CALENDAR

Don't forget that all organisations can advertise their meetings and events on the calendar on our website, as well as using the diary kept in the Library. Get advertising!

COMMUNITY SHELTER EXERCISE

Although the date had previously been agreed with the Staplehurst Emergency Help Team, few of us knew anything of the scenario that KCC Emergency Planning Team had put together to test our abilities to respond to a local emergency situation. "Exercise Parish Pump" began with a telephone call to the Parish Council/SEHT emergency mobile at 9 a.m. on Saturday 8th October. Outline details of the scenario were relayed down our telephone tree for help to set up a Community Shelter at the Youth Club as soon as possible. Within 10 minutes the first members arrived. KCC Officers briefed volunteers to play the part of "evacuees" to make the exercise more realistic. We immediately set about organising the Youth Club into a centre where people with varying needs could be cared for in the initial aftermath of an evacuation.

We had been told that an traffic accident on the railway bridge had resulted in a fatality, with a van on fire and potential for explosion of gas cylinders on board. The major emergency authorities were dealing with the crash scene, road closure and evacuating people within a 200 metre exclusion zone. Our part was to deal with the displaced people who couldn't carry out their normal lives. Some needed medical attention by the British Red Cross first-aiders who had been called in, but others just needed a place of safety to take stock of what had happened to them and to receive help to make

alternative arrangements for the next 24 hours until access to their homes, railway and road could be restored. The SEHT members set about their given tasks with enthusiasm.

Throughout the morning KCC staff gave us "updates" of how the emergency situation was unfolding and what we should expect next. At the end of the morning we then had a debrief and reviewed our performance. The feedback from KCC was very positive and the evacuee volunteers also said how well they had been cared for. The SEHT members learned many useful things which would assist us to react even more efficiently should a real emergency situation require local assistance in future.

As winter will soon be upon us, SEHT is now thinking about how it may be able to help elderly or vulnerable people if we have long periods of snow or icy conditions. Several volunteers have already signed up with offers of help to do shopping, drive their 4 x 4 or provide warm shelter to neighbours in the event of power cuts. If you would like to become an SEHT member or volunteer to help in an emergency, please do not hesitate to give your details to the Parish Office. Such information will be stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act and only used in the event of a real emergency, where you could be called upon to help someone in a very positive way, when they need it most.

SALT BINS

After consultation with residents, the Parish Council purchased eight salt bins which were positioned and filled by volunteers. The bins have been placed in the community for anyone to use at their own discretion (as the Parish Council cannot advise or instruct anyone to spread the salt). Please let the Parish Office know the location of any salt bin that needs refilling.



DEVELOPMENTS AT SURRENDEN FIELD

The Parish Council has set up a small working group to consider how Surrenden Field might develop over the coming years. The idea is not to introduce drastic changes – it will remain a public open space in the heart of a built-up area – but to see how its use by all sections of the community could be enhanced. The first stage, already agreed in principle, is to address the drainage problem at the south end (towards the school fence). This would be followed by laying some all-weather paths, to replace the Matta rubber paths installed a few years ago, which have sunk into the heavy clay soil. The pace of work after this will depend on finance, but we think it will be useful to have a plan that we can work towards. If there are any amenities you would like to see at Surrenden Field please let the Parish Office know and the group will consider them.

SECURITY

The whole community has been shocked to hear about the brutal attack of an elderly resident by three intruders. We wish Jean a speedy recovery. If you have any information about this please pass it on. There is help available for older residents to make their property more secure. Residents need to lock all doors and windows securely and stay vigilant. Please keep a friendly eye on your neighbours.

Please note: for all non-urgent calls to the Police (that do not need 999), just dial 101.