

Village Update

SPRING 2012

www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk

STAPLEHURST COMMUNITY CLEAN-UP - SATURDAY 24 MARCH 2012

In spite of the sterling efforts of the village caretaker and a number of public-spirited individuals, litter on the streets of Staplehurst is something we are all too aware of. Staplehurst Parish Council is therefore holding a volunteer clean-up in the built-up part of the village on the morning of Saturday 24th March and we would like to invite YOU to take part. Maidstone Borough Council is supporting the effort by loaning protective equipment and litter pickers, removing the rubbish we collect and providing guidance on safety. The event will be covered by the MBC's insurance. We will be based at the Youth Club (near Sobell Lodge), by kind permission of their committee, and we ask all our volunteers to meet us there ready to begin work at 10 am. (If you prefer to start from your own home, this can be arranged.) 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 and it would save time if these were sent to the Parish Office in advance. However, you will be able to register on the day. 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. Even if you are not able to take part in this event please try to tidy your own boundaries to help make Staplehurst litter free!

We look forward to seeing you on the 24th March.



ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 23RD APRIL 2012 - NORTH HALL, STAPLEHURST VILLAGE CENTRE - 8 P.M.

This meeting is for Parish electors, hosted by the Parish Council. Activity reports by the Council and local groups will be published; then filed with the minutes for historical interest. Verbal reports and questions can be taken at the meeting if time permits. Contact the Clerk with reports and specific issues for debate by 30/03/12. Additionally, Charlotte Osborne CEO of Voluntary Action Maidstone will speak about the work of this active charity. County & Borough Councillor Eric Hotson and Borough Councillor Richard Lusty will also speak on their work for this parish during the past year. This will be an interesting evening with refreshments included. All are welcome.

UPROCKIN

Skateboards to the ready! Up Rockin' is returning to Staplehurst on 23rd June. Maidstone Borough Council is sponsoring the event and will be bussing in competitors from Maidstone. Donations to costs have been made by MBC, Golding Homes, Homeleigh, Highgrove Garden Centre and the Fish Farm. We aim to have up to 1500 people on site so local volunteers are needed to help with the car park marshalling and registration. Those wishing to take part can complete the entry forms on site from 12noon. If you can spare an hour or more to help please call Paul Butcher on 07860818992.

Staplehurst

Parish Council

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

A lot has happened since the last Village Update. I shall concentrate on four important items. Firstly, Sue Bassett, our Parish Clerk of 16 years, has expressed a desire to reduce her hours. Sue has made a major contribution to the work of the Parish Council and to the wellbeing of our community. However, I am delighted to say that we are not totally losing her as she will be taking up a new position as the Responsible Finance Officer. This is an official position which is responsible for the accounts and finances of the Council. In the meantime we shall be taking steps to recruit a new Clerk.

Secondly, you may have noticed two new security cameras in the village. One has been installed in the Parade and the other is currently in Market Street although it is our intention that the latter will be moved to Jubilee Field once the necessary planning permission has been obtained. These Stryker Polecat cameras are wholly owned by the Parish Council and are state of the art. They are linked to the Maidstone CCTV Monitoring Centre and as well as live pictures the images are recorded on to a hard-drive which has storage for up to one month. We have liaised closely with the Police and Maidstone Borough Council in selecting these cameras and their installation and I should like to take this opportunity to thank them both for the valuable advice and assistance they have given to us. These cameras have been partly funded through a grant from Kent County Council for which we are extremely grateful. We believe these cameras will help to ensure that our community remains safe and secure.

Thirdly, we continue to play a major role in supporting the parishes' position concerning the grant for concurrent functions. This grant is currently given by Maidstone Borough Council for services provided by the parishes which in the urban areas would be provided by Maidstone Borough Council itself. Maidstone Borough Council wish to move away from a grant based scheme which we are not against in principle. However, the current arrangement is both simple to operate and is easily understood and

we would not want to lose these advantages. We have successfully ensured that there will be no reduction in the grant for 2012/13. Nevertheless we recognise that Maidstone Borough Council is under severe financial constraint and that future arrangements will have to take this into account. It is our intention to continue to contribute to the ongoing discussions with Maidstone Borough Council.

Finally, the Council has recommended that the Precept for 2012/13, based on a Band D property, will increase from £35.13 per annum to £40.40 per annum. The increase not only takes into account the extra services provided such as the reopening of the public toilets and the street cleaning, but also the need to strengthen the Council's general reserve. I hasten to add that the Council's policy is not to hold high levels of general reserve. Nevertheless accounting prudence and audit requirements require us to meet certain levels. In reality this increase amounts to less than 10 pence per week. We continue to put a lot of effort into ensuring that our internal controls and our accounts are sound and these are regularly reviewed.

We are delighted to welcome Anne Gosling as the newly co-opted councillor and we look forward to working with her.

John Perry

Garden Waste Sacks

The Parish Office will no longer be selling the MBC garden waste sacks, but Chasing Rainbows has agreed to be a replacement sales outlet. The sacks are also still available from Spuds 'n Buds, Henhurst Farm Shop in Pinnock Lane and from Paxman Services at Unit 3 Lodge Road.

Christmas Lights

We hope you all enjoyed the Christmas Lights display. The Parish Council would like to thank the following local businesses who gave donations towards the running costs: Homeleigh Timber, Radfords, Doves, Peter Jones Opticians and Murcatto Wines.

New Planters

Owing to the success of the two planters in Bell Lane we are consulting with Kent Highways as we intend to install three more in the same style on grass areas by the A229. The sites chosen are near the Pinnock Lane bus stop, opposite Cornforth Close and near the traffic lights. Staplehurst in Bloom!

Planning Applications

All current planning applications can be viewed online at the MBC website and any views or comments can be emailed to the Planning Officer or you can write directly to MBC Planning Department. Staplehurst Parish Council would be interested to receive a copy. Plans for any application in Staplehurst are available to view at the Parish Office during office hours.



STAPLEHURST PHOTOGRAPH OF THE YEAR 2011 COMPETITION

The Photograph of the Year Competition received a magnificent entry of 60 photographs showing various aspects of life within Staplehurst. They were judged by Frank Page and Brian Woods from the Staplehurst Photographic Society. The top 10 photographs were selected and displayed at the Council Meeting on the 12th December 2011.

On the night the judges announced the top 3:-

1. 'All Saints in the Mist' by Tor Millard.
2. 'Bread and Milk' by Sarah Dawson.
3. 'High Street West' by Martin Knibbs.

Tor had only recently taken up photography and had taken the winning photograph as part of her course portfolio. Tor received a superb prize of £360 photography vouchers, whilst Sarah and Martin received an annual membership to the Staplehurst Photographic Society. Many thanks go to Bill Best who kindly donated the winning prize. All of the photographs can be seen at http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/image_gallery in the folder entitled 2011 - Views of Staplehurst. As the competition proved to be so successful the Publicity and Website Group intend to run a similar competition in 2012.



Left to right: Bill Best, Brian Woods, Sarah Dawson (2nd Prize), Cllr John Perry, Tor Millard (1st Prize), Mayor Cllr Brian Mortimer, Martin Knibbs (3rd Prize), Cllr John Kelly

If you have any enquiries please contact John Kelly on 07771 545095 or email councillor.johnkelly@gmail.com.

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL CORE STRATEGY

The Core Strategy planning document sets the general direction of development in the borough from now until 2026. It deals with homes, jobs, shopping, leisure, environment, transport issues and provides the overall framework to guide development. Following the consultation process, MBC received 2,780 separate comments and are currently analysing these. MBC plan to hold a post-consultation conference on the 29th February 2012 and a Staplehurst delegate will be sent. Meanwhile the local Rural Settlement Group continues to monitor the situation whilst working on the draft Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan which eventually will be subject to a Local Referendum. See developments at http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/rural_settlement_group.aspx

QUEEN'S JUBILEE 2012

The committee continues to work apace to raise funds for the Queen's Jubilee this year. After the porcelain evening with John Sandon there will be a Right Royal Quiz Night on 3rd March 2012 with Regal questions at the North Hall of the Village Centre. The actual Jubilee weekend promises to be a musical extravaganza with all the fun of the fair and a continental market. Get your costumes ready for a children's royal dress-up competition too. Don't forget to keep an eye on the Staplehurst PC website for further updates.

D.K. HOLDINGS AND SAINSBURY'S PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The planning applications were considered by Staplehurst Parish Council on the 12th December 2011. The PC unanimously agreed to recommend approval of both applications to MBC, subject to conditions. See the applications at:

<http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/swiftlg/apas/run/wphappcrit.eria.display> by inserting the reference numbers - Sainsbury's (11/1944) - D.K.Holdings (11/1943). Any views or comments should be emailed to Chris Hawkins, Principal Planning Officer at ChrisHawkins@maidstone.gov.uk or write directly to him at the Planning Department. The Sainsbury's application is now being considered by MBC and will be determined in due course. Sainsbury's has also purchased the former petrol filling station in the High Street and propose to redevelop the site with a new modern filling station to serve the surrounding area. The relevant Sainsbury's website is <http://www.sainsburys-staplehurst.co.uk>

TESCO SUPERMARKET

Tesco have also announced that they will be applying for planning permission for a supermarket and if this is the case the PC intend to hold another public meeting. Tesco's dedicated website is at <http://www.tescostaplehurst.co.uk>

STAPLEHURST EMERGENCY HELP TEAM



Since the successful Community Shelter/Rest Centre exercise that the Emergency Help Team reported on in the winter Update it has continued to welcome new members to the team. There is now a dedicated mobile phone which will be on and in the care of one of the members on a rota basis. It would be this mobile that starts the telephone tree alert in the case of an emergency. Hi Viz jackets will be purchased very soon on which it is hoped to have the logo printed.

Several of the SEHT members are going to undertake a First Aid course run by the Red Cross who are taking an active interest in the group because it is the first of its kind in the county to be accredited by KCC. Several more parishes are in the process of emulating its success and the Kent Association of Local Councils is to run a course on Emergency Planning for Parishes using SEHT as the example to follow. Some of the members will be participating in these courses by passing on some of their experiences.

In April there will be a joint fact finding visit with members of the Parish Council to Maidstone Fire Station to see some of the latest equipment, but also to find out how the new 'cluster' system works in rural areas. Your PC is forging close links with Kent Fire and Rescue Service in the same way that it does with the police.

There will be a meeting for all SEHT volunteers on Monday 12th March at 8pm in the South Hall of the Village Centre. All residents are welcome to come along and find out about the SEHT.

STAPLEHURST 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 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:-

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
Anne Gosling
Simon Green
John Kelly
Sam Lain
Barrett Manning
John Reardon
Adele Sharp
Rory Silkin
Peter Spearink

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

There will be a new surgery at the Library where two Parish Councillors will be attending on the second Saturday of each month from 10am until noon beginning on the 10th March. Borough Councillor Lusty's surgery will continue on the last Saturday of each month. PCSO Pete Gardner will be holding surgeries on February 25th, March 31st and April 28th from 10am until 12 and again on May 12th from 12 until 1pm.

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

