

## **STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL NOTES (for December 2008)**

**JUBILEE SPORTS CHANGING FACILITY** – The first month of construction has been quite eventful but not without some difficulties which have been overcome by the contractors, Barwicks. As I write this, the rain is falling heavily and construction is 5 days behind schedule because of the weather. It is hoped, however, to get back on plan, make up time and have the roof on the new building before the Christmas break. Although the car park is very muddy at present, work will continue on the new extension as soon as the weather permits and enable this to be opened for general use. Meanwhile the forbearance of everyone using the Guide Centre, Sports field and skatepark is needed and much appreciated during these works. This project has been made possible through partnership funding amongst the Football Clubs, Guides contribution towards the car park, Parish, Borough and County grants together with 74% of project costs from the Football Foundation.

**Christmas Lights 2008** – By the time you read this, the 25 Christmas motifs should be shining brightly from High Street lamp columns and three in Station Road. The Christmas Trees above shop canopies at The Parade are also planned to be put up by a contractor this year because of the risk of accident to volunteers was considered too great. Although no extension of the display has been achieved this year, it is planned to see on three motifs if LED lamps will give as good a display as ordinary lamps. LEDs are much more expensive to buy but much cheaper to run. The variable factor being how long the LEDs will last. In its own small way, the Parish Council does try to consider the environment both in terms of energy consumption and enjoyment of the display.

**Parish Street Lights** – This Council is responsible for 27 of the street lights in Staplehurst and in the last two financial years the maintenance costs have averaged £600 per year. For the first seven months of this financial year, however, maintenance costs have totalled £1,728.55. This huge increase is largely due to two boys with catapults who are too young to prosecute, but were arrested for damaging all the Parish Street lights in Headcorn Road and breaking windows at Magnetic Shields. It is hoped that the Youth Offending Panel will encourage these young vandals to mend their ways, whilst the Parish and local business have to pay the cost of mending the damage they caused.

**Report it!** PC Marc Pennicott with Community Warden, Chris Lomax, PCSO Pete Gardner and Special Constable Ken Baker are the local visible policing presence in our Parish, but have emergency back up from the force as necessary. If you witness anti-social behaviour contact the Parish Warden, Chris Lomax on 07811 271254, PCSO Pete Gardner on 07772 226134 or PC Marc Pennicott on 07980 770575. However, these are not 24/7 contact numbers so do leave a message and they will get back to you when next on duty. All urgent calls for assistance should be directed to 999 with crime-incident reporting to Maidstone Police Station on 01622 690055.

Unless reports of anti-social incidents with descriptions of the offenders are made, then the desecration of our public areas or property will continue with impunity. Report incident details on 01622 690055 and provide the PACT panel with the opportunity to think up ways of dealing with it! If you prefer, calls to Crimestoppers are free and anonymous: 0800 555 111 but these may not be referred back directly to this parish. Life-threatening incidents, crimes in progress or serious injury Road Traffic Accident requiring urgent police attendance should be notified by dialling 999 in the usual way.

**Hire of North & South Hall, Staplehurst Village Centre** - To enquire about the availability of either hall, please contact the booking clerk on 01580 893280. The Parish Office does not deal with Village Centre bookings, although we do get many enquiries!

**REPORTING AND INFORMATION ONLINE** - The internet is a very useful tool to find out local information and also to feedback faults for repair. The Parish Council has had a website for many years as well as a Village Forum for anyone to contribute their views or find local information. On the Maidstone Borough Council Website, planning applications can be viewed online and any problems or defects in the parish can be reported at [www.maidstone.gov.uk](http://www.maidstone.gov.uk). Kent County Council website also encourages the reporting of highway items requiring attention or repair on [www.kent.gov.uk/highways](http://www.kent.gov.uk/highways). You can even comment on services or answer surveys via these websites too.

**Kent Highways** - Call 08458 247 800 any time 24 hours a day 7 days a week to report any local highways issues, such as defects to the roads, footways, signs, drainage and street furniture, etc. You can also report defects online too at [www.kent.gov.uk/highways](http://www.kent.gov.uk/highways). You do not need to contact the Parish Office to report such defects. Responsibility for the motorways and trunk roads are managed by the Highways Agency on 08457 504030. See the Latest News Page on the website forum at [www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk) for details of Kent Highways footway repair proposals for Staplehurst.

**Maidstone Borough Highway-related services** - MBC remains responsible for some highway services such as Street sweeping, street nameplates, street naming and numbering, park and ride facilities, concessionary fares and public transport matters. MBC Contact Centre to report most issues requiring attention is 01622 602162.

**Dog Mess & disposal** - Thankfully only a small minority allow their dogs to defecate in public areas without clearing up the mess. If you witness such anti-social behaviour, telephone 01622 602117 in confidence and give the Dog Warden details of the perpetrators. Visits to problem areas can be timed to be most effective and fines imposed when the offenders are caught.

RED DOG WASTE BINS are for the disposal of dog waste only and emptied by a specialist contractor with protective equipment for this messy job. The red

Scoopit Bags appear no longer to be provided by Maidstone Borough Council but it is hoped that dog owners will continue to pick up their dog's mess and dispose of it properly. Hanging it on the fence adjacent to footpath KM303 just south of Jubilee Sports Field is not a proper disposal area! If there is no red dog waste bin available within your walking route, kindly take your dog's waste home with you.

**Bogus Caller Advice:** This time of year always shows an increase in bogus callers and Rogue Traders, the most popular one is a water board official. If the caller does not have an appointment, then ask them to wait while you check their identity, if you do need to have a closer look at it, do not be afraid to close the door and make them wait. Checking identity can sometimes be difficult and confusing to do. If so, ask them to come back at another time when you can have someone with you. If the caller is genuine they will understand and not mind returning.

Neighbourhood Watch operates a scheme called Nominated Neighbour, which asks the caller to go to a neighbour who will return with them, so you do not have to deal with this alone. If you wish to learn any more about this, contact the Neighbourhood Watch Office on 01622 604395. Never give any personal details to a stranger. Remember it is your home and you should not be afraid to ask them to leave. If you are at all concerned about a caller, call Mid Kent Police on 01622 690055.

**Handyvan & Homesafe Services:** These services are financially supported by KCC and provide security services to households across Kent. Services are generally provided free of charge, although in some cases a small charge will be made. The Handyvan Service is delivered in partnership with Help the Aged and is primarily aimed at the over 60's, on low incomes and where no charges are made for labour or materials. The Homesafe service offer free security fitting for victims of burglary or household crime. The range of products include: Security Locks; Carbon Monoxide Detectors and Smoke Alarms. To arrange an appointment with our local fitter or for more information, please telephone 01255 473999 or email [handvan@hta.org.uk](mailto:handvan@hta.org.uk). Web [www.helptheaged.org.uk](http://www.helptheaged.org.uk).

**Rubbish Dumping Tip-Off Line - 01622 602162** - Use this number to report any undesirable activities such as fly-tipping, dumped cars, littering etc. and help to keep this borough and parish as clean and tidy as possible. The same number can also be used to request a "pull-out" (or rear of property) collection service for those who are unable to wheel or carry their refuse to the front boundary of their homes. Further information is available from MBC website [www.maidstone.gov.uk](http://www.maidstone.gov.uk) .

**Garden waste & Newspaper recycling** - MBC Green Garden Sacks are available from Spuds 'n Buds, Henhurst Farm Shop or the Parish Office at £2.25 per roll of 5. Garden waste will only be collected if in the MBC printed green sacks and left beside your wheeled bin (or put in a blue-lidded wheelie bin hired

from MBC specifically for garden waste). Further information on garden waste disposal and recycling is available on [www.digitalmaidstone.co.uk](http://www.digitalmaidstone.co.uk) .

Most residents will by now have received a letter from Maidstone Borough Council to explain about the changes in the kerbside recycling service in two phases in March and May next year. From January 2009, full information will be made available on the MBC website with a search facility using address or postcode to ensure you get the correct information.

**MBC Bulky Collection Service** - Residents with large items of household waste to dispose of, should telephone the MBC Cleansing Hotline 01622 602162 to arrange a collection. A small charge is now made for this service. Alternatively the Tovil tip and waste freighter are available for householder's use. Please note that due to new legislation TVs and monitors will now be collected separately from any other items of waste. You will be required to provide your name and address at disposal.

**MBC Waste Freighter** – This service for householders' non-recyclable waste will visit Staplehurst on the following dates:- **Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> December 1630 – 1715 at Church Green, Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2009 1230-1330 at Poyntell Pond.**

**Parish Information and E-groups** – Copies of the Minutes of Parish Council Meetings are available at Full Council Meetings, at the Library and on [www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk) . The Clerk maintains a number of e-groups for those who wish to register their internet address to receive useful information about local issues e.g., Weekly MBC Plans List, Parish Council Minutes & Agendas, Press Releases, Playscheme Information, etc. If local residents have any queries regarding Parish Council or local authority issues, they are encouraged to write to or contact the Parish Clerk for the facts.

Parish Council Meetings held in South Hall at Staplehurst Village Centre:-

**Planning Committee** - 7 p.m. Monday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2008

**Amenities Committee** – 8 p.m. Monday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2008

**Finance Committee** – 7 p.m. Monday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2008 (Parish Office)

**Planning Committee** – 7 p.m. Monday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2008

**Full Council Meeting** - 8 p.m. Monday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2008

Mrs J S Bassett, Parish Clerk

Parish Office, Village Centre, Staplehurst.

Telephone/Fax: (01580) 891761.

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

E-mail: [staplehurst1@btconnect.com](mailto:staplehurst1@btconnect.com)

The Parish Office is open to the public 9-11 a.m.

Mondays to Fridays (except Thursdays).