

STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL NOTES (for January 2008)

HAPPY NEW YEAR to all parishioners. At the Council Christmas Social, special appreciation was given to many volunteers who helped this community throughout 2007. Without these willing volunteers for Speedwatch, delivering Village Updates, running village groups and special events and of course the Councillors themselves, all giving tirelessly of their free time; this village would not be such a vibrant and pleasant place in which to live. Well done all and keep it up in 2008! New volunteers are always welcome – just let us know if you have some free time to give.

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS – These have been much admired during the past month and will be dismantled on Twelfth Night. Local businesses have been generous in their support of this festive display and contributions were received from; Pierson Stewart & Partners, Lambert & Foster, The Kings Head, The Bell Inn, Peter Jones Opticians, Radford Estate Agents, Geoffrey Marchant & Co., JMH Flooring, Doves Funerals, Spuds & Buds.

REPORTING 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. Kent County Council website also encourages the reporting of highway items requiring attention or repair on 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 Responsibility for the motorways and trunk roads are managed by the Highways Agency on 08457 504030.

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

Report it! PC Marc Pennicott with Community Warden, Chris Lomax and Special Constable Ken Baker have now been joined by PCSO Pete Gardner. These officers 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.

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 Wardens 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. **Scoopit Bags** - special red plastic bags are available free from the Parish Office or from the Town Hall in Maidstone. Please consider those who empty ordinary litter bins and remember that LITTER BINS ARE NOT FOR DOG WASTE!

Bogus Caller Initiative: Unless vigilant, elderly residents can easily become victims of doorstep traders. Bogus Caller Initiative information packs, with stickers to remind residents of good practice when dealing with doorstep callers, are available from the Parish Office or Rural Warden, Chris Lomax at Staplehurst Library. If you are unsure about anybody - don't let them in! If they are legitimate they will write you a letter or show you some identification to check out. If you think a bogus caller has called at your door, report such incidents to the police immediately on 01622 690055 and give a good description of the person and/or vehicle.

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 .

Garden waste, Newspaper & Glass recycling - MBC Green Garden Sacks are available from Spuds 'n Buds or the Parish Office at £1.95 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). Residents may have noticed a change in the green garden refuse sacks. The bags are now made to conform to Health and Safety guidelines for the disposal of garden waste. Therefore they are now

smaller in size and transparent (to ensure they have not been contaminated with anything other than garden vegetation). Further information on garden waste is available from Maidstone Borough Councils website. www.digitalmaidstone.co.uk .

For residents who have coloured boxes, NEWSPAPERS in the BLACK BOX & GLASS in the YELLOW BOX for collection as advised by Maidstone Borough Council. Please check with MBC the collection dates for your road by telephoning: 01622 602162 or on the website at: www.maidstone.gov.uk You should also be able to order recycling boxes on application to MBC.

Bulky Collection Service and Waste Freighter - 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. The next visits of the Waste Freighter had not been advised in time for this publication but please check MBC website for details in due course.

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 . 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, 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 7th and 21st January 2008

Amenities Committee – 8 p.m. Monday 7th January 2008

Finance Committee – 14th January 2008

Full Council Meeting - 8 p.m. on Monday 21st January 2008

Mrs J S Bassett, Parish Clerk
Parish Office, Village Centre, Staplehurst.
Telephone/Fax: (01580) 891761.
Website: www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk and
E-mail: staplehurst1@btconnect.com
The Parish Office is open to the public 9-11 a.m.
Mondays to Fridays (except Thursdays).