

STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL NOTES (for October 2007)

PACT – Partners And Communities Together will next meet on Tuesday 2nd October at 8 p.m. in the South Hall, Staplehurst Village Centre. As described in the recently delivered autumn edition of the Village Update, you are welcome to become involved, help identify issues of concern and influence outcomes.

SKATEPARK PHASE 2 – Finished at last, the official opening ceremony will take place on Saturday 6th October at 2.30 p.m. All skaters, supporters and any interested parties are welcome to attend at Jubilee Playing field.

PARADE TOILETS – Unfortunately these public conveniences will be closed during most of October for refurbishment. Alternative public conveniences are available at Bell Lane Car Park so please do not pester the Library staff if you get caught short. Extensive alterations and improvements are being made in an attempt to deter vandalism and discourage youths from hanging around there in future. It is hoped this important element of infrastructure will re-open for use by Monday 29th October.

STAPLEHURST HEALTHCHECK – Continuing the work that began as Staplehurst Partnership, the Healthcheck work is progressing towards a public information evening on Tuesday 30th October at Staplehurst Village Centre at 8 p.m.

VILLAGE CENTRE LOAN REPAID – The Parish Council agreed in September to make funds available to Staplehurst Village Centre Trust in order to discharge fully the remainder of the loan that helped to purchase the Village Centre. Contrary to popular belief it is very unlikely that the Parish Council precept will noticeably reduce in future as the final payment represented 0.2% of the overall Council Tax.

Much of the funding to repay the loan came from Maidstone Borough Council Concurrent Functions grant which is drawn from all properties in the Borough area. Staplehurst Parish Council is now working and spending in a wider number of areas to support projects in this parish which have and will more than replace the village centre loan.

A much more vexing concern this Parish faces is the proposed withdrawal of the Concurrent Functions grant. Working on current figures and if this were agreed, Band D properties would have an additional £12.47 added to the Parish Council precept in addition to the £28.88 already paid, just to maintain existing services in this parish. This would be without any prospect of a reduction in the MBC element of the Council Tax of £1,349.78 to compensate.

REPORTING ONLINE - The internet is a very useful tool to find 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 local information. On the Maidstone Borough Council Website, planning applications can now 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 01622 604392 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 it 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 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 - 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.

Dog Mess Disposal - RED DOG WASTE BINS are for the disposal of dog waste only. Emptied by a specialist contractor with protective equipment for this messy job, please consider those who empty ordinary litter bins and remember

that LITTER BINS ARE NOT FOR DOG WASTE! **Scoopit Bags** - special red plastic bags are available free from the Parish Office or from the Town Hall in Maidstone.

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 will be on **Sunday 14th October 1400-1500 at Northdown and Sunday 28th October 1630-1715 at Church Green.**

Parish Information – 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 1st and 15th October 2007

Amenities Committee – 8 p.m. Monday 1st October 2007

Full Council Meeting - 8 p.m. on Monday 15th October 2007

Mrs J S Bassett, Parish Clerk
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E-mail: staplehurst1@btconnect.com
The Parish Office is open to the public 9-11 a.m.
Mondays to Fridays (except Thursdays).