

STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL NOTES (for January 2007)

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS – It is hoped you enjoyed the Christmas lights display, which was generously supported by donations from the following businesses; Lambert & Foster, Pierson Stewart & Partners, WJ Crouch Butcher, JMH Flooring, Peter Jones Optician, Geoffrey Marchant Accountants, The Bell Hotel, Radford Estate Agents, Coachmans Cottage Hairdressers, Spuds & Buds and Doves Funerals. It is hoped to extend the display further next year.

SPEEDWATCH TRAINING – There is now a band of 21 fully trained Speedwatch volunteers who organise themselves into teams to go out with increasing frequency. The equipment is also being hired out to neighbouring parishes. Any drivers who choose to ignore the lawful speed limit will have their car registration numbers noted and details of persistent offenders will be passed to the Police for action in due course. You have been warned! Watch Your Speed as Speedwatch Volunteers are too!

More Speedwatch Training events will be arranged soon, so please contact the Parish Office to put your name down if you would like to join the Speedwatch initiative and receive training in the use of the equipment.

PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS – May 2007 is the month when a new Staplehurst Parish Council will be elected. It is expected that most of the existing Councillors will re-stand for election but it is clear that some new candidates will need to come forward as well. A provisional date of Monday 26th February is being worked towards for an information session for any elector who wishes to find out more (without obligation) about what being a parish councillor could entail. This session could also be used as a “get to know your Councillor” event so you can be sure your votes are well placed when at the ballot booth in May. In the meantime, local electors are encouraged to attend parish council meetings to listen to the issues that currently face the Parish Council.

REPORTING ONLINE - The internet is a very useful tool to find local information and also to feedback information to “the authorities”. The Parish Council has had a website for many years and has the Village Forum where anyone can contribute their views or information. Planning Applications can now be viewed online at www.maidstone.gov.uk and anyone can report any problems or defects in the locality (including highways issues). You can even comment on services or answer surveys via the website too.

Kentcarshare – this free, simple, secure, internet-based service enables people to register their car journeys on-line and find others to share the costs. Car sharing can be used to get to work on a daily basis, going to the shops once a week or even for social events that happen just once in a while. A pilot scheme has been running for 1 year and has over 1,700 registered users across Kent. There is every chance of finding a potential car sharer close to

your home or place of work. New users are automatically entered into a prize draw to win one year of free car tax. Contact www.kent.gov.uk/carshare for full details.

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, remain the local visible policing presence in our Parish, with emergency back up from the force as necessary. If you witness anti-social behaviour contact the Parish Warden, Chris Lomax on 07811 271254 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 been issued with coloured boxes, NEWSPAPERS in the BLACK BOX & GLASS in the YELLOW BOX is collected on a regular basis. Please check with Maidstone Borough Council for collection dates in your road by telephoning: 01622 602162 or website at: www.maidstone.gov.uk

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. The next visits of the Waste Freighter will be on **Sunday 7th January 1630-1715 at Church Green, Saturday 27th January 1200-1315 at Poyntell Road and Saturday 10th February 1300-1515 at Northdown.**

Parish Information – Copies of the Minutes of Parish Council Meetings are available at Full Council Meetings, at the Library and on the staplehurstvillage.org.uk Website. 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 and Parish Council Minutes & Agendas. 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 5th February 2007

Amenities Committee - 8 p.m. on Monday 5th February 2007

Planning Committee - 7 p.m. on Monday 19th February 2007

Full Council Meeting - 8 p.m. on Monday 19th February 2007

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).