

STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL NOTES (for February 2006)

2007 Parish Council Election - Although we have only just begun a new year, preparations for the following year need to be considered. The present Council has fifteen months remaining of its four year term that will end in May 2007. Although a majority of existing Councillors will be standing for re-election, there may be one or two vacancies to fill. In order to maintain our Quality Parish status an election must be held - this means that 16 or more candidates will need to stand for the 15 places.

Have you ever wondered what being a Councillor involves? Now (and during the coming year) is the time to find out! The simplest way is to observe the present Council during its meetings. Members of the public are always welcome to attend and listen. You could also monitor the work that is being done by reading the Minutes either in the Library or on the Website at www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk Discussions with existing Councillors give you an insight into the work they do and what is involved. The Clerk will soon be preparing some written information, so if you would like a copy, please give your contact details to the Parish Office.

Surrenden Playing Field - Some of the planned works to manage the hedges and trees in and around Surrenden Playing field will take place very soon, with the remainder scheduled for later in the year. Consent for tree works in the Conservation Area is being sought and as soon as this is approved, the work will begin. A Landscape Management Plan was drawn up and approved by the Council and a copy is available for inspection at the Parish Office.

Playscheme 2006 - We are hopeful that most of the staff who ran such a successful playscheme last year will be returning again this summer. However, some new members of staff may be needed, so if you would like to find out more, particularly if you need some training, please get in touch very soon.

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. Responsibility for the motorways and trunk roads are managed by the Highways Agency on 08457 50 40 30.

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

Neighbourhood Policing Unit - PC Marc Pennicott with Community Warden, Chris Lomax and Special Constable Ken Baker, are the local visible policing presence in our Parish, with emergency back up from the force as necessary. For non-urgent issues, contact the Parish Warden, Chris Lomax on 07811 271254 or PC Marc Pennicott on 07980 770575. However, these are not 24/7 contact numbers being the personal mobile numbers of Chris and Marc who are entitled to time off as they work a variety of shift patterns. If you don't get an immediate response, do leave a message and they will get back to you when next on duty. The Neighbourhood Policing Unit is able to assist with basic quality of life issues and nuisance behaviour, however, all

urgent calls for assistance should be directed to 999 with all incident reporting to 01622 690690 or to Maidstone Police Station on 01622 690055.

Report it! Unless reports of anti-social incidents with descriptions of the offenders are made, then the police might be forgiven for thinking that no problems occur here. Do not condone the behaviour of a small number of bullies who desecrate our public areas or property with impunity. Report it on 01622 690690! If a greater number of good parishioners made reports of any anti-social incidents they witness then such annoying incidents could be dealt with quickly and positively.

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.

Crime Awareness and Reporting: Rural Warden, Chris Lomax, will be happy to discuss and advise on any community concerns that you have or speak to a group that you belong to. Telephone him on: 07811 271254. Telephone Kent Police on 01622 690055 for suspicious incidents and community issues requiring police attendance or 01622 690690 to report a crime that occurred more than 20 minutes previously. If you prefer, calls to Crimestoppers are free and anonymous: 0800 555 111. 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.

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 £1.70 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). 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

Garden Waste - When using the garden waste sacks, please do not put the following items in the sacks:- turf, soil, stones, animal waste or bedding, large branches, logs, tree stumps or kitchen scraps. The bags should not be unreasonably heavy or overloaded as collection crews have to lift them to shoulder height for emptying.

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 Tovel tip and waste freighter are available for householder's use. The next visits of the Waste Freighter have yet to be advised but the new calendar of visits should be posted on the MBC website very soon or telephone 01622 602162 for details.

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 6th February 2006

Amenities Committee - 8 p.m. on Monday 6th February 2006

Planning Committee - 7 p.m. on Monday 20th February 2006

Full Council Meeting - 8 p.m. on Monday 20th February 2006

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).