

STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL NOTES (for May 2005)

Martyrs' Memorial - No official acknowledgement of the memorial's centenary took place after much consideration of all the issues involved. The Fellowship of Churches had been planning an ecumenical centenary service but reluctantly withdrew their support after the Protestant Alliance had suggested that Catholics should be excluded from this. The Parish Councils of Staplehurst and Frittenden agreed only to support the cleaning of the memorial and tidying up of the immediate surroundings. This was kindly carried out by volunteers headed up by Ron Hegarty who have made the memorial clean again.

Kent Highways - As from 1st April 2005 Kent Highways resumed the direct responsibility for local highways that had been operated through agreement with the Boroughs in previous years. There is now a new Kent Highway Services telephone number to enable the direct reporting of defects to the highways network, footways, signs, drainage and street furniture, etc. Call 08458 247 800 any time 24 hours a day 7 days a week to report any local highways issues. Responsibility for the motorways and trunk roads are managed by the Highways Agency on 08457 50 40 30.

Maidstone Borough Highway-related services - MBC will continue to provide some highway related services such as Street sweeping, street nameplates, street naming and numbering, park and ride facilities, concessionary fares and public transport matters. Department telephone numbers were provided on the back page of the latest issue of the borough update but the MBC main switchboard operators are very helpful on 01622 602000 if you are unsure who to speak to about any query.

Central Railway - The Local Authorities Central Railway Consortium has reported that the threat of the Central Railway proposals has now receded to a very low level. The government minister had clearly stated that the scheme did not have government support. Full details of the background and original proposals can be found on websites at www.digitalmaidstone.co.uk and www.central-railway.co.uk

Annual Parish Meeting - Please note and attend the Annual Parish Meeting on 9th May 2005 at 8pm in the South Hall, Staplehurst Village Centre. This is the annual meeting of local electors who may raise any parish issue for discussion. Please contact the Parish Clerk if you wish any specific item added to the Agenda, but issues can be raised from the floor. Although hosted and chaired by the Parish Council, the Annual Parish Meeting is for the electorate to report or raise parish issues as they see fit. Local Village Groups have received an invitation to present a summary of their annual reports and the Parish Council will be doing likewise. Officers of Kent County Constabulary and Kent Rural Warden Scheme have been invited to speak on policing issues at the start of the Annual Parish Meeting.

Summer Playscheme - Thank you to all potential staff members who came forward. Administration work is being done to ensure Playscheme becomes a reality for three weeks in the summer holidays from 25th July to 12th August at Staplehurst Primary School. Parents or guardians of 5-11 year olds please note the dates on your calendar now and await further details. If you wish to register your interest in receiving the

details via email as soon as they are published, please send your email address to staplehurst1@btconnect.com Paper copies of the booking and registration forms will also be available through the Library and Primary School as well as at the Parish Office.

Problem Young People - Staplehurst is very fortunate in that the vast majority of young people living in this parish are well behaved and a credit to their families, carers, schools and friends. Unfortunately, a few seem to think it funny or clever to light bangers, wreck litter bins, drink alcohol whilst under age then smash the glass bottles within the children's play area, litter public areas with take away food wrappers or damage other people's property. Such anti-social behaviour is annoying to the majority of residents and costs us all in our Council Tax to clear up and also by increased insurance premiums.

Unless the Parish Warden, Chris Lomax on 07811 271254 or the Community Police on 01622 690690 receive reports of anti-social incidents with descriptions of the offenders, then they 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 them! If a greater number of good parishioners made reports of the incidents they witness then the small number of problem youngsters could be dealt with much more quickly and positively through Acceptable Behaviour Contracts.

Dog Mess - The above paragraphs about anti-social behaviour could equally apply to some dog owners, but this time the MBC Civic Wardens can help to police the problem. Again it is thankfully only a small minority that allows their dogs to defecate in public areas without clearing up the mess, but if no-one is prepared to report them, then how can the problem be effectively dealt with? Telephone 01622 602117 in confidence and give the Wardens details so that visits to problem areas can be timed to be most effective.

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.

Doorstep Awareness - 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 Tovil tip and waste freighter are available for householder’s use. The next visits of the Waste Freighter will be on **Saturday 7th May 1300-1515 at Northdown, junction with Marden Road and Saturday 21st May 1130-123 at Church Green**

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, Parish Council Minutes & Agendas, Neighbourhood Watch Reports. 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 on TUESDAY 3rd May 2005

Amenities Committee - 8 p.m. on TUESDAY 3rd May 2005

Annual Parish Meeting - 8 p.m. on Monday 9th May 2005

Planning Committee - 7 p.m. on Monday 16th May 2005

Full Council Annual Meeting - 8 p.m. on Monday 16th May 2005

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).