

STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL NOTES (for April 2005)

Parish Warden - At the end of March, Parish Warden Chris Jones moved on after receiving promotion to area manager. He was thanked for his work in the parish by the Parish Council, which now welcomes Chris Lomax in his place. It is hoped that an equally good working relationship will be established with our new Parish Warden as soon as possible. Hopefully he will be available to attend the Police and Council Surgery at the Library that was postponed from Easter Saturday to 2nd April. Visit them between 10 a.m. and Noon to discuss local issues of concern.

Staplehurst Village Centre - Following the AGM in February a new management committee is now in place to ensure the Village Centre is run efficiently and economically. Every resident should appreciate the many hours that volunteers have given to ensure that the Village Centre has been run so well. Although one shouldn't single out individuals for fear of overlooking others of equal merit or embarrassing those concerned, but in particular Marie Palmer, Trevor Martin and Dave Cracknell deserve public acknowledgement for their dedication to and voluntary work for the Village Centre over a great number of years. Let's hope the new committee will be equally dedicated on behalf of the village.

Martyrs' Memorial Centenary - As readers of the Kent Messenger will be aware, strong views were expressed by the Protestant Alliance regarding who could not be involved with the proposed centenary celebrations. This was at odds with the more ecumenical viewpoint taken by the Fellowship of Churches that has now reconsidered the issue. The Parish Council has agreed only to treat the memorial as an historical relic in need of some refurbishment and left the differences of opinion regarding religious standpoints to be sorted out by the churches themselves. Whether or not any centenary celebration will occur in April or early May is currently unclear.

Annual Parish Meeting - This is advance notice of the Annual Parish Meeting on 9th May 2005 to be held 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 will 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 have been invited to speak on policing issues.

Summer Playscheme - Thank you to all potential staff members who came forward. Playscheme is now very likely to take place 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 the Parish Office your email address. 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 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. Several cars have also been scratched by passers by. 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.

Why then do the majority of good citizens not report what they see and get the authorities to deal with these young people causing problems to us? 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. Why do we not report and effectively condone the small number of bullies who desecrate our public areas or property with impunity? 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.

South East Plan - The South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA) is preparing the first South East Plan, which will guide development to 2026. Public consultation on the draft Plan by questionnaire is continuing until 15th April. The South East Plan is the new way of planning for the future of this region and sets the framework within which councils prepare local plans. The South East Plan will set out how the growing demands for homes, jobs and transport should be met. It also focuses on water, energy, waste, education, health and climate change issues. It aims to improve our towns and cities and protect the countryside by improving essential services (roads, hospitals, schools and community facilities) as well as seeking to safeguard heritage, valued landscapes and natural environment. Now is the time to make your views known on SEERA's plans! More information is available on: www.southeast-ra.gov.uk/southeastplan or telephone their 24-hour information line on: 01483 555 208.

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 think a bogus caller has called at your door, report it 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.

Street light outages & Highway repairs – Please report to Kent Highways any street lights that are not working or highway defects such as potholes, blocked gullies, missing street nameplates or road signs. You must give an accurate location of the defect or streetlamp column number. Details can be sent direct to Kent Highways via the internet by visiting: www.kent.gov.uk/highways and filling in a form online or through MBC online route www.maidstone.gov.uk Alternatively RoadWatch cards are available from the Library or Parish Office for freeposting or telephone (at a local call rate) the Highways Helpline on 0845 303 2500.

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 £1.55 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.

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 **Sunday 3rd April 1615-1715 at Church Green, Saturday 23rd April 1200-1315 at Poyntell Road Pond and Saturday 7th May 1300-1515 at Northdown, junction with Marden Road.**

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.

Annual Parish Meeting - 9th May 2005 - This is advance notice of the forthcoming Annual Parish Meeting to be held in the South Hall, Village Centre on Monday 9th May at 8pm. Local groups are invited to submit a short annual report in writing or verbally and parishioners can raise issues for consideration by the Parish Council.

Parish Council Meetings held in South Hall at Staplehurst Village Centre:-

Planning Committee - 7 p.m on Monday 4th April 2005
Amenities Committee - 8 p.m. on Monday 4th April 2005
Planning Committee - 7 p.m. on Monday 18th April 2005
Full Council - 8 p.m. on Monday 18th April 2005
Annual Parish Meeting - 8 p.m. on Monday 9th 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).