

STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL NOTES (for March 2005)

Parish Spring Clean Up Week - New (and existing volunteers) are very much needed to ensure the parish is completely covered with cleanliness during the Parish Spring Clean Up Week commencing Easter Weekend 26th March to 3rd April. Volunteer your services and you will be allocated an area to litter pick, given instructions of where to take the litter you collect and protective gloves, high visibility vest, black sacks and a pick up stick are available for your use. Please contact the Parish Office on 891761 to volunteer your assistance.

Staplehurst Village Centre - At the time of writing the AGM was due to be held on Monday 28th February when most of the previous committee and trustees were standing down. Hopefully sufficient new volunteers came forward to help ensure the Village Centre will continue to run economically and well in the future.

The Parish Council much appreciates 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 - Tuesday 26 April 2005 will be the actual centenary date of this memorial although plans for the Centenary Celebrations through the Fellowship of Churches are being made for Sunday 1st May 2005. Working parties to clean and tidy up the memorial will take place over the weekends of 2/3 and 9/10 April so please contact Ron Hegarty on 892060 if you are able to help. The owner of the large tree beside the memorial has now agreed to have lower branches pruned with a general tidying up of dead branches and crown reduction of the tree.

Summer Playscheme - Assistant Parish Clerk, Sue Lynch, is in charge of organising the Summer Playscheme this year. Whilst we have a nucleus of staff, one or two more staff members will be welcome to join the team to ensure Staplehurst re-establishes its own Playscheme for 2005. Staff members are paid a competitive hourly rate and will be provided with training opportunities if required - and if you apply soon enough! Please contact the Parish Office on 891761 to register your interest.

MBC - Review of access to Borough Council services - Borough Councillors want to hear your views as part of a review of the work that MBC does to make their services accessible for borough residents. Do you have difficulty accessing services provided by Maidstone Borough Council? What more could the Council do to make it easier for you to use our services? If you have views you would like to share, please contact Kate Martyn, Scrutiny Manager at MBC Tel: 01622 602620 E-mail: katemartyn@maidstone.gov.uk or write to the Recreation and Community Services Committee at: Scrutiny Section, Maidstone Borough Council, London House, 5-11 London Road, Maidstone. ME16 8HR

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 Jones 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.

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 now taking place 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 Jones 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 Jones, 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.

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.

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 for collection 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 **Saturday 5th March 0900-1000 at Poyntell Pond and Sunday 20th March 1400-1500 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 Council direct for the facts.

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

Planning Committee - 7 p.m on Monday 7th March 2005

Amenities Committee - 8 p.m. on Monday 7th March 2005

Planning Committee - 7 p.m. on Monday 21st March 2005

Full Council - 8 p.m. Monday 21st March 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).