

STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL NOTES (for April 2009)

COUNCILLOR VACANCIES – An excellent response was received to enable the co-options to fill the two vacancies on the Parish Council. Selections from amongst prospective co-optees were due to take place on 16th March and by now they should be taking a full and active part in Council business. Hopefully those who were not selected this time will put themselves forward if any further vacancies arise during the next two years. In addition, an equally keen response from local residents will be needed for the May 2011 election, when the whole of the current Parish Council will stand down and offer themselves for re-election alongside any new candidates. Now is the time to be taking an interest in Parish Council issues so that you can get to know who you might be voting for in the future. Local Electors are entitled to attend all publicly advertised meetings on first and third Mondays.

JUBILEE SPORTS CHANGING FACILITY – The roof was due to be completed mid March so progress should become more rapid. The eight week delays caused by bad weather will hopefully now be made up. The builders expect to be off site by the end of this month and officially handing over the building for use by the footballers. Plans for an official opening during the Presentation Day on Sunday 17th May 2009 are taking shape. This project has been made possible through partnership funding amongst the Football Clubs, Guides contribution towards the car park, Parish, Borough and County grants together with 74% of project costs from the Football Foundation.

ALLOTMENTS (or lack of them) have been concerning the Parish Council since those at Bell Lane were closed in October 2007. After having worked through several courses of action and ended up where we began, the Parish Council is now calling on all would be allotment holders to add their weight and ideas to resolve this project. If you have any interest in becoming an allotment holder, please attend the public meeting on Thursday 30th April, 7.30 p.m. in the South Hall, Staplehurst Village Centre and contribute your ideas. If you are unable to attend the meeting, communicate your ideas and suggestions to the Parish Office in person, in writing, by telephone or Email (contacts at end of these notes). Public consultation followed by active support is a key to get projects moving forward.

RUBBISH COLLECTION REORGANISATION - Staplehurst is likely to be joining the improved Borough Recycling Scheme in the next month or so. All recycling materials (except glass) will go in your existing green bin. These need to be thrown in loose, not bagged up. Each household will be given a second grey bin for non-recyclable rubbish and glass, which can be extracted during processing. MBC will be advertising the new collection arrangements widely.

Report it! PC Marc Pennicott with Community Warden, Chris Lomax, PCSO Pete Gardner and Special Constable Ken Baker are the local visible policing presence in our Parish, but have emergency back up from the force as necessary. If you witness anti-social behaviour contact the Parish Warden,

Chris Lomax on 07811 271254, PCSO Pete Gardner on 07772 226134 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 incident details 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 these 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.

Hire of North & South Hall, Staplehurst Village Centre - To enquire about the availability of either hall, please contact the booking clerk on 01580 893280. The Parish Office does not deal with Village Centre bookings, although we do get many enquiries!

REPORTING AND INFORMATION ONLINE - The internet is a very useful tool to find out local information and also to feedback faults for repair. The Parish Council has had a website for many years as well as a Village Forum for anyone to contribute their views or find local information. On the Maidstone Borough Council Website, planning applications can be viewed online and any problems or defects in the parish can be reported at www.maidstone.gov.uk. Kent County Council website also encourages the reporting of highway items requiring attention or repair on www.kent.gov.uk/highways. You can even comment on services or answer surveys via these websites too.

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 You do not need to contact the Parish Office to report such defects. Responsibility for the motorways and trunk roads are managed by the Highways Agency on 08457 504030. See the Latest News Page on the website forum at www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk for details of Kent Highways footway repair proposals for Staplehurst.

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.

Dog Mess & disposal – Thankfully only a small minority allow their dogs to defecate in public areas without clearing up the mess. However, there has been a continuing problem in the High Street where the mess has not been

picked up at all. If you witness such anti-social behaviour, telephone 01622 602117 in confidence and give the Dog Warden details of the perpetrators. Visits to problem area can be timed to be most effective and fines imposed when the offender is caught.

RED DOG WASTE BINS are for the disposal of dog waste only and emptied by a specialist contractor with protective equipment for this messy job. The red Scoopit Bags appear no longer to be provided by Maidstone Borough Council but it is hoped that dog owners will continue to pick up their dog's mess and dispose of it properly. Many people use nappy sacks which can be purchased cheaply or recycle old supermarket carrier bags. If there is no red dog waste bin available within your walking route, kindly take your dog's waste home with you.

Bogus Caller Advice: If any caller does not have an appointment, then ask them to wait while you check their identity. Do not be afraid to close the door and make them wait. Checking identity can sometimes be difficult and confusing to do. If so, ask them to come back at another time when you can have someone with you. If the caller is genuine they will understand and not mind returning.

Neighbourhood Watch operates a scheme called Nominated Neighbour, which asks the caller to go to a neighbour who will return with them, so you do not have to deal with this alone. If you wish to learn any more about this, contact the Neighbourhood Watch Office on 01622 604395. Never give any personal details to a stranger. Remember it is your home and you should not be afraid to ask them to leave. If you are at all concerned about a caller, call Mid Kent Police on 01622 690055.

Handyvan & Homesafe Services: These services are financially supported by KCC and provide security services to households across Kent. Services are generally provided free of charge, although in some cases a small charge will be made. The Handyvan Service is delivered in partnership with Help the Aged and is primarily aimed at the over 60's, on low incomes and where no charges are made for labour or materials. The Homesafe service offer free security fitting for victims of burglary or household crime. The range of products include: Security Locks; Carbon Monoxide Detectors and Smoke Alarms. To arrange an appointment with our local fitter or for more information, please telephone 01255 473999 or email handvan@hta.org.uk. Web www.helptheaged.org.uk.

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 recycling - MBC Green Garden Sacks are available from Spuds 'n Buds, Henhurst Farm Shop or the Parish Office at £2.25 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). Further information on garden waste disposal and recycling is available on www.maidstone.gov.uk .

MBC Bulky Collection Service - 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. Please note that due to new legislation TVs and monitors will now be collected separately from any other items of waste. You will be required to provide your name and address at disposal.

MBC Waste Freighter – Dates for the next visits by the Waste Freighter to collect non-recyclable waste are awaited but will be listed on www.maidstone.gov.uk . Kindly check MBC website at Staplehurst Library if you do not have your own computer access.

Parish Information and E-groups – Copies of the Minutes of Parish Council Meetings are available at Full Council Meetings, at the Library and on www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk . 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, Press Releases, Playscheme Information, etc. 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 April 2009

Amenities Committee – 8 p.m. Monday 6th April 2009

Planning Committee – 7 p.m. Monday 20th April 2009

Full Council Meeting - 8 p.m. Monday 20th April 2009

Mrs J S Bassett, Parish Clerk
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E-mail: staplehurst1@btconnect.com
The Parish Office is open to the public 9-11 a.m.
Mondays to Fridays (except Thursdays).