

Village Update

SUMMER 2009

www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk

OPENING CEREMONY "WITH A DIFFERENCE"

Following the £390,000 award from the Football Foundation, the UK's largest sports charity, work began in October 2008 to build the new sports pavilion and create improved facilities at Jubilee Sports Field in Headcorn Road, Staplehurst. Despite the contractor's best efforts, construction works were thwarted by very bad weather throughout the winter and the expected 20 week construction period gradually extended to 30. Through no fault of the contractors, the building could not be completed and handed over prior to the opening ceremony which took place on Sunday 17th May 2009. The building was so very nearly complete, but again wet weather prevented the building drying out sufficiently to allow final installation works to take place.

Nonetheless, due to the enthusiastic support of the footballers and the years it had taken to reach this point anyway, the 'Opening Ceremony with a Difference' went ahead. Her Worship the Mayor of Maidstone, Councillor Denise Joy, officially opened the building with Mr. Paul Dolan of the Kent County Football Association who said, "I know first-hand the hard work that has gone on behind the scenes by the Football Clubs and the Parish Council to make this dream a reality. I warmly congratulate everyone involved in the project which will considerably benefit football in Staplehurst for many years to come."

This new sports pavilion and improved facilities at Jubilee Sports Ground is the culmination of many years' work by Staplehurst Parish Council in partnership with Staplehurst Monarchs and Staplehurst & Monarchs United Football Clubs. In addition to the Football Foundation providing major funding support, Kent County Council, Maidstone Borough Council, Staplehurst Parish Council, the Football Clubs and Staplehurst Guide Centre all contributed partnership funding to reach the £500,000



project cost.

The Football Foundation remains dedicated to revitalising the grass roots of the game, constructing modern football facilities, developing football as a force for social cohesion and as a vehicle for education in communities throughout the country. Funded by the Premier League, The Football Association, Sport England and the Government, the Football Foundation is the nation's largest sports' charity with a £45m budget going straight into the heart of football.

Staplehurst Monarchs Club Development Officer, Nigel Dawson, stated: "This is a major milestone for our village football clubs, but more importantly secures the future development of football in Staplehurst. The new facilities will allow our senior teams to return to the village and provide sports education for local boys and girls. This project will firmly place Staplehurst football back on the map where the true winners will be the local community. Staplehurst Monarchs and Staplehurst & Monarchs United can now follow their grass roots development plan aimed to stem the decline in 11v11 football".

Staplehurst

Parish Council

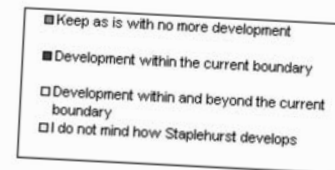
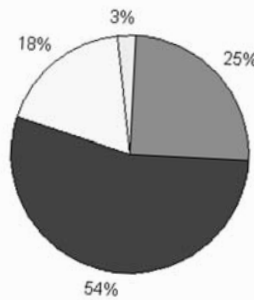


HEALTHCHECK UPDATE

The Staplehurst Partnership, a group made up of local residents and representatives of the Parish Council and Staplehurst Society, has completed the first phase of the work required for the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) 'Market Towns' initiative. Staplehurst has been included in this initiative because it is considered by SEEDA to be one of many communities which might benefit from funding that would stimulate the local economy if some specific projects can be identified. This article updates you on the work to date and outlines how you can get involved in the next stage of the project.

To be involved in the SEEDA initiative, each local community has to undertake a 'healthcheck' using a nationally recognised model for community analysis. This gives the 'evidence of need' and an audit trail for any subsequent fund bids. The work done for Staplehurst to date has included desktop research and community consultation to complete a number of worksheets. These give a snapshot of strengths and weaknesses, threats and opportunities related to local heritage and culture, transport, business and the local economy and social aspects of community life. Whilst considering future projects that might be viable for a funding bid, this has been an opportunity to reflect upon many things that have previously been achieved. In particular, as a result of consultation during and recommendations from the Village Appraisals in 1993 and 2000 and other initiatives, improvements in recent times include...

Q2. How would you like to see Staplehurst develop?

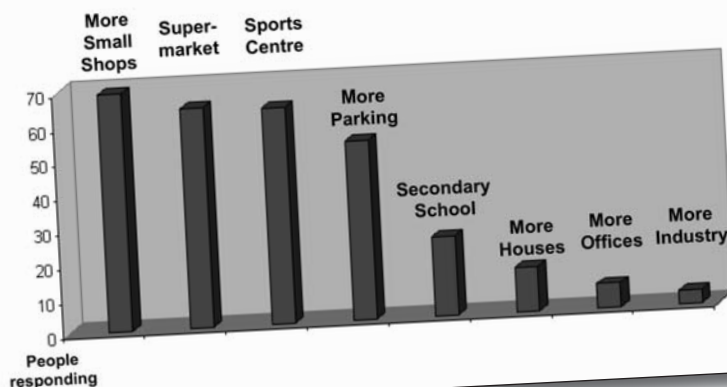


26 people who said "Keep as is" changed their minds when prompted.

After adjustment, 86% would like to see further development

- New Medical Centre
- New Skate Park
- New Toilets at the Parade
- Neighbourhood Watch Scheme
- CCTV at key locations
- SpeedWatch Scheme
- New Speed Warning Systems
- PACT Scheme
- Improved Community Policing
- Anti-Dog Fouling Scheme
- Traffic Control at Cuckolds Corner
- Expanded Recycling Schemes
- Improved access for disabled
- Improvements at Surrenden Field
- Cycle path at Lime Trees
- Upgraded Nicholson Walk
- Improved Christmas lighting
- Expanded Burial Grounds
- Village Design Statement
- Parish Council Web Site & Forum
- Village Update newsletter
- Quality Parish Council status
- New Station Footbridge

Q4. What would you like to see provided?



Some of these have been as a result of the direct work or lobbying of the Parish Council, some have been as a result of the ongoing programmes of the local health authority, police, borough and county councils and other agencies. Others have been as a result of action and hard work by individual residents, showing that 'people power' does work!

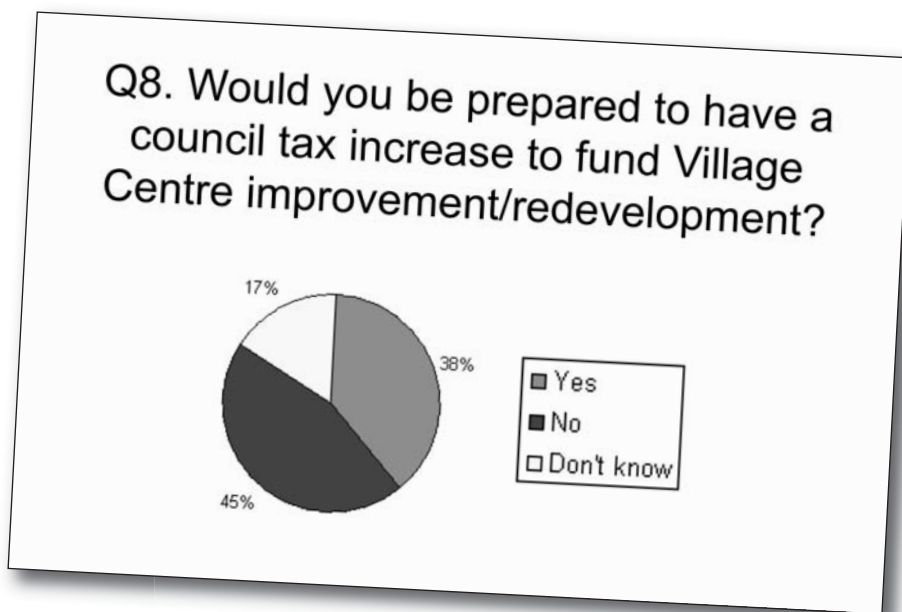
As part of the community-consultation

element of the Healthcheck, an on-line survey has also been running for the last year which has elicited a significant amount of feedback. There has been excellent response to this with more than 250 people taking part who live in over 100 postcodes in and around the parish. In particular 85% of respondents would like to see more development to improve various aspects of infrastructure, services and facilities which are generally perceived to be inadequate in relation to Staplehurst's population. There are, for example, numerous expressions of interest in more shops, a supermarket, more parking, landscape improvements and more traffic and speed reduction measures, although inevitably there are diverse opinions on certain topic areas. Many of these issues are beyond the type of community-led project that SEEDA is seeking. The information collected to date though will certainly be invaluable to the various local councils and agencies that have responsibilities in the area.

Four projects which could be taken further have been identified and the Partnership is now asking you to get involved. More help is needed to work the initial ideas into viable projects for which funding bids can be made. We would be particularly interested to hearing from you if you have expertise or an interest in any of these potential schemes (a) Staplehurst as a Destination - a project that makes more of and better promotes local heritage and the environment, both for local residents and those passing through. This includes development of a circular 8-mile leisure cycle route and reviving the historic walking trail around the village. (b) Village Centre (the old school) - working with the Management Trust to investigate how the existing building/site could be better configured, extended or redeveloped, for example, by bidding for funds to undertake a feasibility study. (c) Business Development - better promoting local

businesses and employment, including a one-stop web site for companies and employment opportunities, establishing a business association and business champion to ensure local businesses have a voice in the community. (d) Activities for Young People - including more sports provision, establishing a youth forum/youth parish council and building an on-line directory of all local clubs and activities.

This is an opportunity for you to make a direct contribution to the future development of Staplehurst so please get in touch. The current Partnership team is few in number and has only limited capacity. Without more involvement from residents and others in the community then the money that is available will simply be claimed by other areas who have taken their own projects to the bid stage. To let us know you want to be involved send an email to info@staplehurstpartnership.com or contact the Parish Council Clerk who will pass your contact details on to the Partnership team. We look forward to hearing from you!



PLAYSCHEME 2009

Preparations are well in hand for another three weeks of Playscheme fun. Sixty places will be available daily for 4 -11 year olds from 3rd to 21st August (Mon-Fri). We have an experienced team of staff who will ensure that Playscheme meets all the required standards set by Ofsted. As in previous years we will be welcoming a variety of visitors including; The Fire Brigade, The Police, Staplehurst Monarchs and Mickey the Magician.

There will be a variety of activities throughout the

3 weeks to include; sport/games and craft sessions, utilising all the skills our experienced staff will bring. All Playscheme information will shortly be available to download from the Parish Council Website at www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk or in person form the Parish office.

Bookings will open for Playscheme week commencing 22nd June and close on Friday 24th July 2009. Please send your completed form(s) to the Parish Office.

ACCESS PROGRESS AT STAPLEHURST STATION

Users of the station will have seen that work is now going forward after the stoppage over the winter. During April, great crested newts were successfully moved away from the construction site behind the Ashford (down) platform. This has enabled some high voltage cables to be moved, and in mid-May work was starting on the foundations for the tower.

The steel tower behind the London (up) platform has now been clad in brickwork matching the ticket office. The bridge span has already been fabricated off-site, and once both towers are complete it will be craned into position. Then the various equipment will be installed, including an extensive CCTV system. It is expected that the bridge will be ready for opening in the autumn.

The new footbridge is being fully funded by the Department for Transport under the 'Railways for All' programme, which aims to provide level access to all platforms at Network Rail stations. As well as people with mobility-related disabilities, it will also benefit passengers with heavy luggage or pushchairs, besides relieving congestion on the existing footbridge in the

evening rush hour.

Of course simply giving access to the platforms should not be the end of the process. One of the ticket windows at Staplehurst station already has a lower counter height, and there is an induction loop system for hearing aids. Southeastern will be providing the Customer Help Points already installed at suburban stations around London at Staplehurst in the near future, so that passengers will be able to contact a central control room when there are no staff on duty at the station.

In February, Southeastern was awarded a £7200 grant by the Department for Transport under the Small Schemes programme to cover 50% of the cost of forming an accessible toilet. This is to be done during 2009-2010. The next step would be to provide power-operated doors for the station building. Staff and residents at Sobell Lodge have been asked to give their views on the most suitable way of arranging them. Southeastern could then apply for another Small Schemes grant towards new doors in the 2010-2011 programme.

COUNCILLOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Full Council

Margaret Arger (Chairman), John Perry (Vice-Chairman), Bill Best, Joan Buller, Tom Burnham, Paul Butcher, Barry Franks, Jenny Fairfax, Paul Kelly, Angela Knowlden, Roger Munn, John Reardon Matt Sankey, Peter Spearink.

Members of Planning Committee

Councillors: Arger, Perry, Green, Spearink, Buller, Burnham, Fairfax, Sankey.

Members of Amenities Committee

Councillors: Arger, Perry, Knowlden, Best, Butcher, Franks, Kelly, Munn, Sankey, Reardon.

Members of Finance Committee

Councillors: Arger, Perry, Green, Knowlden, Best, Kelly, Reardon.

Members of Website & Publicity Committee

Councillors: Best, Buller, Burnham, Perry, Reardon & David Henley of ZuLogic



Parish Council Information

The Parish Office is in the Village Centre. It is open on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday mornings from 9 to 11 am. The phone number is 01580 891761. The email address is: staplehurst1@btconnect.com

Borough Councillor Lusty holds a Council Surgery at the Library on the last Saturday of each month, from 10am to

12pm. This is supported by a Parish Councillor and one of the community policing team; Community Warden Chris Lomax, PC Marc Pennicott or PCSO Pete Gardner. You are welcome to talk through any local problems or ask questions about local issues with any or all of these Councillors and officers.