

Village Update

AUTUMN 2008

PLAYSCHEME 2008

This year's playscheme has been very popular with most days fully booked. A wide variety of activities were set up by the team of 8 staff headed up by our experienced Play Manager Jensie Shepherd and Assistant Manager Amy Scammell. Sixty places were available per day for 15 days of fun and activities for rising 5's to 11 year olds during August. Playschemers were treated to visits by Firemen, the Police, St. John's Ambulance, Guide Dogs for the blind, Reptiles and MBC Play Van as well as enjoying activities such as painting, junk modelling, collage, playdough and making lots of interesting items. Playscheme was rounded off with a Party Day and professional entertainer. Staff at Playscheme worked really hard to ensure all playschemers had an enjoyable and safe environment in which to play and socialise.



STAPLEHURST IS A QUALITY COUNCIL

The Rural White Paper, published in 2000, confirmed the Government's support for parish and town councils and underlined their important role as the first tier of government closest to local people, in giving local leadership and being at the heart of local communities. Consequently, the Quality Parish and Town Council Scheme was launched in 2003 with the aim of providing a benchmark minimum standard for parish and town councils across the country. Quality Parish or Town Councils are expected to:

- be representative of and actively involve all parts of their community
- be effectively and properly managed, with members and officers upholding a high standard of conduct
- work closely with voluntary and community sector groups, and articulate the community's needs and wishes through effective communications, which might include the production of parish plans or other similar

documents and

- work in partnership with other local authorities and agencies and, depending on their size, be able to deliver local services which give the best deal for the local community

This council will need to apply for reaccreditation in 2009 and this will involve proving we continue to meet the original "Tests" which gave increased confidence that this Quality Council is representative, competent, well managed, and thus capable of taking on and sustaining an enhanced role.

We will have to demonstrate with a new "Test" that we work proactively to support local democracy and citizenship involving hard to reach groups within our community.

The web site and the Forum appear well used, but what ideas and suggestions do you have as to how this council can better inform and involve you? Please, let us know!

Staplehurst

Parish Council



Many people complain about “the police” not taking action on issues that they think are most important to them. For over a year now, the PACT meetings have been listening and focussing on ways to deal with any such issues that Partners And Communities Together have identified for action.

The problem is that very few people have been attending PACT meetings to steer action towards their perceived policing priorities. General complaints on the forum are monitored by the Parish Council and local police, but there is nothing better to push forward an issue than the person who is most affected by it. The current priority areas for

action in this area are Nuisance Youths – Anti-social behaviour in the Parade area, parking in and around the village and Youth engagement.

If you have any subjects that you think require more attention and focus to sort them out, then please come along to the next PACT meeting and discuss the issue with local police, business people, residents and Councillors in an informal and comfortable setting.

Monday 13th October at 7.30 p.m. in the South Hall, Village Centre or contact PC Marc Pennicott or PCSO Pete Gardner on 01622 604392.

A NEW GROUP FOR THE LESS THAN ABLE BODIED

Last month a few of us with an interest in the issues concerning disabled and less mobile members of our community met to discuss forming an action group. It was decided that such a group was needed so as to co-ordinate the various concerns of people with different types and levels of disability or mobility problems and those problems simply associated with getting older. Speaking with one voice and with a mandate from members was thought to be the way ahead. It is a sad fact that the Disability Discrimination Act is widely ignored or paid only lip service, to the detriment of those it was designed to help. For instance it is no good having access ramps to a shop if the aisles are blocked so that wheelchairs cannot get around. Also what good would a new footbridge lift at the station be to someone in a chair that cannot cross the main road because the lights are not green for long enough? Have you tried to get on a bus if you cannot get out of your chair? We felt that a group whose sole aim was to lobby for such problems to be overcome was needed.

To this end you are all invited to a public meeting to be held on 2nd October in the South Hall of the Village Centre at 8.00p.m. to find out more and to tell us what YOU see as the main problems in Staplehurst. We will need a name and Access for All and Access Group have been suggested, tell us what you prefer. The group will hope to meet at Sobell Lodge every month for coffee and where anyone with access issues or any similar problems can come and talk and hopefully get help and advice. Please come even if you yourself are not affected but know someone who is. We hope to have the support of the Staplehurst Society who recognise that there are important issues to discuss, The Friends of the Health Centre, Sobell Lodge together with the three main churches. Your Parish Council has already expressed its support and has asked any new group to compile an audit or survey of exactly what needs to be done within our community to help our disabled or elderly to enjoy the same facilities as the rest of us, as is their right.

Remember this is not just about disabled, but anyone who has problems with mobility. Even getting your children across roads without the aid of crossings is an issue that

should be addressed.

We look forward to seeing you and hearing your views.

New buses for route No 5?

After discussions with Arriva we have been told that special wheelchair/buggy friendly buses will be available next year, so we will continue to push for them to be put on route 5. We have asked the Hawkhurst Transport Forum, to which your Parish Council belongs, to add their weight to this aim. These buses have a single level floor and can be lowered to pavement level giving not just wheel bound users complete access, but also those who find climbing aboard the present buses a struggle.

New timing for the crossroad lights?

After constructive talks with a senior engineer it has been suggested that a system where the ‘green man’ is controlled by a sensor rather than a timer would solve our problems at the crossroads. At present not enough time is allowed for wheelchair or ‘walking buses’ to cross before the lights change to red. This system uses a sensor to tell if someone is still on the road crossing and then leaves the ‘green man’ on until it is clear. The obvious advantage of this is that it will not interfere with the flow of traffic when not being used as most people can cross in the normal time allowed and this extra facility will only work on demand.

Your Parish Council Amenities Committee has decided to back this endeavour and we look forward to some progress to report in the near future.

07/08 END OF YEAR ACCOUNTS

Keen-eyed parishioners amongst you will have noticed a couple of typographical mistakes on Pages 6 & 7 of the Annual Report 2008. I apologise for these errors which occurred due to bringing forward last year’s template and not clearing down unwanted entries.

The total income on Page 6 should show £135,456.45 and the Skaters’ Deposit of £4,516.87 on Page 7 should not have appeared at all, as this money was spent at completion of Phase 2 of the skatepark project. Accurate details are now showing on the website but you may wish to amend your printed copy.

STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL

SUMMER FETE QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

BILL PIPER (Chairman of Staplehurst Society) and ROBIN OAKLEY (former Chariman of the Parish Council) were the joint winners of this quiz with 13 correct replies each. There were eight entries.

1. Barn Meadow

- a) Was so named after an area of land that was ideal habitat for *Albus titus* (the barn owl)?
- b) *Was named after a field where the farm barn was situated?*
- c) Was named after a field where an ancient meeting place was found?

2. Oliver Road

- a) Was so named after a visit by Charles Dickens do the village after the famous train crash?
- b) Was named after a grove of olive trees that were experimentally grown by a local farmer along the Marden Road?
- c) *Was so named after an old school master?*

3. Poyntell Road

- a) *Was so named after a 17th Centaury priest?*
- b) Was named after a medieval archer?
- c) Was named after a famous navigator?

4. Alen Close

- a) Named after a famous locksmith?
- b) Named after a notorious Celtic jester?
- c) *Named after a religious martyr?*

5. Brooks Close

- a) Was named after a local grocer
- b) *Was named after a long standing civil servant*
- c) Was named after a local cinematographer

6. Thorn Lane

- a) Named so because the lane was surrounded by hawthorn?
- b) Was a place where people gathered to 'cletter' the thorn?
- c) *Because it was a by-way to the next parish?*

7. Harp Farm Road Is now known as:

- a) Thorn Lane?
- b) West End Lane?
- c) *Five Ash Lane?*

8. The Bower (incorporating Bower Walk)

- a) *In 1812 it was a superior seminary for young ladies?*
- b) Was built by Andrew Peter Bower in 1752?
- c) Was a school for archery?

9. Couchman Green Lane also known as Sweetlands Lane

- a) Was named after a local confectioner?
- b) Was a place where sugar beet was first grown?
- c) *Was named after a Mr Sweetings?*

10. Hurst Close

- a) *Was named after a geological formation?*
- b) Was named after a sporting hero?
- c) Was named after a hillock?

11. Kirkman Court

- a) Was named after a Scottish church member?
- b) *Was named after a medical practitioner?*
- c) Was named after a famous star-treckian?

12. Scar Lane

- a) Named after an infamous rouge gangster?
- b) *Named after a long lost footpath?*
- c) Named after a stretch of land scraped by glacial loes?

13. Reeves Close

- a) Named after a Commonwealth crooner?
- b) Named after local millers?
- c) *Named after a lady educationer?*

14. Tomlin Close

- a) *Named after the resident of 'Tillia cordata'?*
- b) Named after the local rat catcher?
- c) Was the site for the first cattery?

15. Watkins Close

- a) *Named after someone who had an interest in the Corner Farm?*
- b) Named after the local bobby?
- c) Named after a river system?

16. Weld Close

- a) *Named after Dyers Green Weed?*
- b) *Named after the name for Weald?*
- c) Named after a local car mechanic?

17. Maxted Close

- a) Named after a manufacturer of fire-lighters?
- b) *Named after an old fashioned B & Q owner?*
- c) Named after the purveyor of wood splinters?

18. Weavers Close

- a) Was named after a sparrow-like bird?
- b) *Named after a local sheep market?*
- c) Named after local cloth manufacturers?

19. Marl Field

- a) *Named after an old Tithe Map recording?*
- b) Named after the fertility of the soil?
- c) Named after a field plough pattern?

20. Clapper Lane

- a) Was a place where brethren congregated to applaud?
- b) Was a place of confinement?
- c) *Was an area that had primitive flood defences?*

SPEED WATCH

It is now about two years since the Parish Council bought the Speed Watch equipment and the first volunteers were trained by Kent Police to use it beside the roads of this parish. We have seen good reactions from the majority of the passing motorists who appreciate how speed can be a problem in Staplehurst. However, there are still some who believe that the speed limits do not apply to them.

There are now sixteen parishes in the Maidstone area with teams and more joining in the near future. The organisational side has been improved and a real difference has been seen throughout the Borough. Very few warning letters have had to be sent out, but when

SECURITY EVENT

Did you get there? Staplehurst Neighbourhood Watch were supported by the Parish Council and Kent Police in staging an information exhibition in the North Hall of the Village Centre.

Commercial companies displayed their products, police marked bicycles, recruiting to the Neighbourhood Watch scheme was successful along with Speed Watch, in addition to numerous leaflets demonstrating how we can all improve our safety and security awareness. Cam-Tech,

ALLOTMENTS

It will soon be a year since the eight allotment holders were locked out of the Bell Lane allotments. The land owned by Maidstone Housing Trust may soon be sold off or developed for housing, but may be too expensive for the Parish Council to purchase. During the past year strenuous efforts have been made to find suitable alternative sites for allotments, but without success to date.

The little-used and dilapidated play area off Staple Drive was suggested by the Parish Council as a potential allotment site, but MBC (the owners) did not agree. The land has a covenant on it "not to build or suffer to be built any structure, except children's play equipment, on the land and not to use the land for any purpose other than a public open space."

Following a very graphic posting on the website forum at www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk early in July a chain of forum postings followed with various views being expressed both for and against allotments at Staple Drive. Further

they are the motorist involved is made aware that their details are also known to the local police team who may well be watching their driving habits carefully. A recent development has been the issuing of strong letters for one-off acts of anti-social driving. One such was sent to a resident whose car was driven along the Headcorn Road at 47mph.

Does it make a difference? Well one driver who passed the Marden Road site at 38mph in July came through again just 45 minutes later at 31mph. He realised his error and was improving his regard for other road users. That's real success! "But why aren't you out here when they're all speeding through?" We are all volunteers and give our time to make a difference. We hope that everyone will help by slowing for Staplehurst If we are all under the limit then so will those following have to be!

a company based in Staplehurst, showed how their cameras are used in international sports' stadiums to monitor crowd behaviour with high-definition pictures. Poyntell Ltd, our Staplehurst locksmiths, showed a vast array of locks and secure devices and had excellent advice for home owners.

Be-Sure and Amiga came further to offer burglar alarm systems. Do you keep your medicines in just one place? Are your number plates theft-proof? Have you DNA marked your valuables? We were all given food for thought in addition to the excellent refreshments offered by the Women's Institute. Most visitors left with free gifts and much valuable advice.

discussions with MBC are taking place to consider the best way forward.

Public consultation will be key to reaching a workable solution for the needs of local residents. If you wish to contribute to this debate please send your comments or replies to the Parish Office, to any or all of the following questions:-

Whether or not the restrictive covenant on the land to keep Staple Drive Play Area as a public open space could be lifted, how would you like to see the land used in future?

1. No change.
2. Staple Drive Play Area upgraded to modern standards. (This might require an increase in Council Tax/Parish Precept and/or a local group of residents applying for grant funding from sources such as GroundWork UK at <http://www.groundwork.org.uk/>).
3. New Play area established elsewhere. If so, where?
4. Staple Drive Play Area developed into allotments.
5. Purchase other land for allotments (please make site suggestions).

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.