

Village Update

AUTUMN 2007

PLAYSCHEME 2007

Up to 150 4-11 year olds had an exciting time at Playscheme this year under the experienced leadership of Jensie Shepherd and her team of talented play helpers. Many interesting activities were offered such as arts and crafts, junk modelling, sports, dance, drama and kung fu. The emphasis was always on play, allowing children to make their own free choice of activities.

Specialist visitors were invited to Playscheme and were enthusiastically welcomed by the children. The Recycling Workshop was thoroughly enjoyed with children making face masks and planting flower seeds in recycled compost and pots. The Play Van team motivated even the least sporty child into action and the visits from the Fire Brigade and Police were much enjoyed. Staplehurst Monarchs brought plenty of training footballs for team games and ball skills. Perhaps a future football talent has already been spotted amongst the playschemers!

Other visitors included St. John's Ambulance where personal safety issues were discussed and great fun with bandages was had. A visit by a Guide Dog and blind owner was very rewarding and helped the children to appreciate that disabilities can be overcome with the right help. The representative of Mid Kent Water had the children enthralled as he showed them how dirty water was made clean enough for him to drink! The last day of Playscheme rounded off with dancing, party games and whacky races plus a visit from Professor Reg E Mental to entertain them before Playscheme closed for another year.



A big thank you is due to the dedicated staff who kept the lively children safe and motivated throughout Playscheme. Hopefully clearing up the "mess" won't put them off returning next year! Playscheme is financed by booking fees, tuck shop sales, Maidstone Borough Council grant and Staplehurst Parish Council funding.

CAR PARKING

Kent Police has received a number of complaints relating to unacceptable parking in Staplehurst. Please note that if you park your vehicle in the following manner then you could be subject to a fine.

1. Causing an unnecessary obstruction (contrary to Regulation 103 of the Road Vehicles Regulations 1986). This will include parking on the footpath/verge without leaving sufficient space to allow pedestrians to pass or parking in the road without leaving enough room for vehicles to pass.

2. Driving otherwise than on a road (contrary to Section 34 of the Road Traffic Act 1988). It is an offence to drive on a footpath or land not forming part of the road. The only exception is when driving across the footpath/land to reach private land i.e., a driveway.

If you are responsible for either of the above then it is advisable that you stop this practice at once. Parking on a grass verge causes damage to it and may lead to criminal proceedings being taken against those responsible. If you wish to speak to PC Marc Pennicott about this or any other Police matter then please call him on: 01622 604392 or 07980 770575.

Staplehurst

Parish Council



PACT

PARTNERS AND COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

What is PACT?

PACT stands for Partners and Communities Together. It is about everyone getting together to identify local concerns and gives you the opportunity to influence the way your community is managed.

Who is involved?

Everyone is welcome to attend the PACT workshops and walkabouts and a panel has been set up which includes, Kent Police, Staplehurst Parish Council, Maidstone Borough Council and Kent County Council.

What's already happened?

A public meeting was held on 27th November 2006 and at the conclusion of the meeting the Panel agreed objectives for the next six months.

How have we done?

On 24th May 2007 the Panel met to review the objectives we had set and to set objectives for the next six months. The following are the results of that meeting.

Anti social behaviour – Bower Walk

In the six months prior to PACT being set up Kent Police had received five calls regarding anti-social behaviour and one report of criminal damage. In the six months since PACT has been set up Kent Police received two calls regarding anti-social behaviour and no reports of criminal damage. The MBC/Police camera was installed following the PACT meeting and remained in place until the beginning of 2007. It had to be removed due to requirements elsewhere and following consultation with residents it has now been put back. The bin has been removed and the Police and the KCC Warden continue to patrol the area.

Anti social behaviour – Surrenden Road Park

In the six months prior to PACT being set up Kent Police had received twenty-four calls regarding anti-social behaviour and seven reports of criminal damage. In the six months since PACT has been set up Kent Police received ten calls regarding anti-social behaviour and five reports of criminal damage. Although the criminal damage reports have only slightly reduced, three of these were committed on the same evening and two people have been charged in relation to these. The Parish Council are still considering whether to replace the bin with a new one and the CCTV system has been reviewed and recommendations made. The site review has yet to take place but is planned for the near future. The Police and KCC Warden continue to patrol the Park and on 20th April 2007 the Police

carried out an operation to clamp down on under-age drinking. This proved very successful with a large quantity of alcohol seized and a number of parents spoken to about their children.

Youth Engagement

As agreed the Panel met with a number of young people on 31st January 2007. This provided us with a good opportunity to discuss the problems raised at the public meeting and to have a greater understanding of young peoples' perceptions. The Youth Forum is progressing well and the "Beat Project" have attended the Youth Club and met with young people to take this forward. The "Beat Project" are a voluntary group who use various methods to assist in setting up Youth Forums and will be returning to Staplehurst in the near future to progress the Youth Forum.

Dog fouling/litter

KCC Warden Chris Lomax has liaised with Maidstone Borough Council who have in turn been patrolling the affected areas. As yet no one has been prosecuted and no further complaints have been received. Free "Doggy bags" have been made available at the library, which is assisting in reducing the amount of dog mess being left on paths and other open spaces.

Speeding

Speedwatch continues to be successful and now has 23 people trained in use of the equipment. The team have deployed seventeen times and so far they have recorded 148 vehicles speeding. Kent Police have continued with their enforcement campaign and since November 2006 they have prosecuted 36 people and advised a further 56.

Improved community safety communication

This newsletter is the way that we intend to publicise what work we have been doing and hopefully it gives you an insight into what we are trying to achieve in Staplehurst.

What's next?

The Panel feel that as successful as PACT has already been we really need more people to assist us. We need members of the community who want to make a difference and can give up a small amount of their time to sit on the Panel. This will ensure that the community is fully represented and you can influence any issues that exist. If you want to join the Panel please contact the Parish Clerk on 01580 891761 or staplehurst1@btconnect.com.

The next meeting will be held on October 2nd in the South Hall of the Village Centre at 8pm.

STREET NAMES

At this year's carnival and fete, the Parish Council held a quiz to see who knew the meanings behind the streets, roads and lanes around the village. The quiz was very popular and I have had several requests for more street name histories to be identified. The following are just a handful of local roads with their historical identities explained.

Corner Farm Road

This road takes its name from the dairy farm which existed there, owned for many years by Mr Watkins. A 16th Century timber framed house stood to the south end of the estate; this house was of historical architectural significance and was subsequently taken down and rebuilt in Swanley. The whole area was acquired by the developers Tickner and Emmerton and the estate was built in the early 1960s.

Crowther Close

Crowther Close is named after Joseph Crowther. He was the Rector of All Saints church from 1684 to 1719. His son Robert lived at The Bower. When this house was split into two dwellings in the 1950s the rear half was called 'Crowthers'. Crowther Close was built in 1977/78 on land which was part of the garden of Surrenden Manor (I remember playing on Surrenden field and teasing the geese which used to roam this area of the Manor garden acting as rather noisy guard geese).

Fir Tree Close

The close was built on the site of The Firs, a house, after the Second World War by Maidstone District Council. The Firs had been demolished by a doodlebug

in 1944. The name Fir Trees continues the association with the trees which originally adorned the site. The two remaining fir trees are protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs).

George Street

The George family lived at the Grange, a house found at the entrance to George Street from the eastern end. This house was formally known as Moat Farm. Before the 1840s the lane was not as straight as it is today, as after the 1840 when the railway was built, the road was realigned so that residents did not have to access the main road via the level crossing, thus making the access safer for all residents of this rural lane.

Knowles Walk

This road is named after Miss Kate Christing Knowles who lived at Spilshill Court. She died at the age of 75 in 1965. Her great talent was the organisation and arrangement of pageants. These pageants involved the whole community. By involving all the local villagers within the pageants she managed to get the whole village to take part in amateur dramatics. During the Second World War she expended her time sending parcels to prisoners of war. For this she was awarded an OBE.

Set within the Spilshill chancel at the Parish church, a memorial plaque dedicated to Miss Knowles can be seen. It is inscribed with the words:

" In sure and certain hope "

Cllr. Wendy Green

BURIAL GROUND EXTENSION

By the time this edition of the Village up-date has been delivered, the burial ground extension will have been mowed and tidied up. The hedge which was planted at the end of last year has established itself and is doing very well with thanks to the ideal weather conditions which were experienced during the early part of the summer. However, there has been a negative element to the progress of the burial ground and that is the theft of the pedestrian

gate. This gate was stolen by some inconsiderate individuals who have obviously no respect for other peoples' property or for the sanctity of the consecrated burial ground. The gate was wrenched from its hinges and removed. What is our society coming to when somebody would steal a gate which forms part of a grave yard? The mind boggles!

Cllr. Wendy Green

MANAGEMENT OF STAPLEHURST HEALTH CENTRE TO GO OUT TO TENDER

The people of Staplehurst are to be given the chance to help decide who will manage their health centre in the future, thanks to West Kent Primary Care Trust.

The PCT is to begin a tender process for the health centre at the start of September and as part of the process the local population are invited to attend a public meeting on 5 December at the village hall in Staplehurst.

Bill Millar, West Kent PCT's Assistant Director of Primary and Community Services Contracting, said: "We are very keen to listen to the views of the people of Staplehurst.

As part of the initial consultation, some very strong opinions were made, which helped us shape the tender document.

Over the next three months, we will be putting prospective

bidders under further scrutiny before asking the final short-listed bidders to present their ideas at a public meeting in the village at the start of December.

The PCT views the meeting as an important part of the decision-making process and I am sure the local residents will welcome the opportunity to have their say, We are expecting a good turnout from local people so to help us manage capacity we would encourage anyone wishing to attend to contact us to ensure their place."

If you would like to attend please email civic.engagement@westkentpct.nhs.uk or call Liz Rose on 01732 375288.

The final decision will be made In late January 2008.

STAPLEHURST ARTS FESTIVAL

17th and 18th November 2007 - 11am-4pm Staplehurst Village Centre. FREE ENTRY!

There will be a celebration of creativity, Art displays and musical performances in the North Hall. Workshops, refreshments and digital work will be in the South Hall.

John Sandon, International Director of Ceramics at Bonhams Auctioneers of the Antiques Road Show will be hosting an afternoon of Antique Porcelain and Glass discussing the items brought in by the audience and give a valuation of one porcelain or glass object each.

Ticket in advance only, £5.00 per person.

A mural will be constructed between 12-1pm on Sat, made up of panels painted by the people of Staplehurst. **The Rt. Hon. Miss Ann Widdecome MP** is entering into the spirit of the event by painting a panel for the mural to promote creativity regardless of skill. The act of creativity in whatever form it takes is what counts.

Staplehurst Dramatic Society will be encouraging participation with their acting technique workshop for all ages. Sat 2-4.

Music will be performed hourly and will include **Bennett and Bowman**, professional musicians, Staplehurst Primary, Quartet, Kent Music School, Martin Friend, pianist, Glyn and Ruth Roberts.

A variety of Art will be exhibited including work by miniaturists, lace makers, painters of various mediums, photographers, sculptors and film makers. Organisations exhibiting include Mote Lodge, Blantyre House, Staplehurst Primary and Psarms Puppets.

Published authors **Ian McDonald**, Ellen Dunn and Isabelle Bass will be exhibiting in the literacy corner and Ian will run a children's creative writing workshop.

A **raffle** will be held. Prizes include, **Tea for two at the House of Commons.**

If anyone would like to take part, requires tickets or has any queries please contact.

Mrs Joanne Weaver 01580 893 829

www.staplehurstartsfestival.com

SPEEDWATCH

The purpose of Speedwatch is to lower the speed of traffic through Staplehurst. The presence of highly-visible yellow coats certainly does that. About 20% of the vehicles recorded as speeding have been lorries, vans or pick-ups. 15% of the total has been blue cars; closely followed by black, silver and white; and all more than red cars at 10%. Our equipment is hired to other Parish Councils and we already have partnerships with Headcorn and Loose. Volunteers work in groups of three or more. We set up the equipment at specific locations that the police have agreed. Then we record the number plate, make, colour, with the time and speed of vehicles that are offending. This information is put on a database and checked against previous records. Any vehicle appearing more than twice will be reported to the police and they will send a letter. The police may take action based on our findings to mount their own speed traps. There is room for more volunteers so please contact the Parish Office by email at staplehurst1@btconnect.com or phone 01580 891761 if you would like to join in.

Speedwatch

If you would like to find out more about Speedwatch without obligation, come along to the South Hall of the Village Centre at 8pm on Monday 24th September.

STAPLEHURST PARTNERSHIP

The Health Check process for Staplehurst is moving forward and it is intended to be at the stage of holding a public meeting on Tuesday 30th October, at the Village Centre, to discuss its findings.

LOCAL TRANSPORT FORUM

On Saturday 14th July a Local Transport Forum was held at Hawkhurst School. It was primarily concerned with the perceived poor performance of the new operator of the bus route from Hawkhurst to Hastings. Many of you who use this route will be aware of the problems that there have been and continue to be with the connection at Hawkhurst. Whereas the old No5 route went all the way to Hastings the new route is run by Arriva to Hawkhurst and then Country Liner from Tunbridge Wells to Hastings via Hawkhurst. Problems have arisen with missed connections at Hawkhurst and overcrowded buses with many passengers having to stand for long distances and even cases where the bus drove past stops full up. The meeting was addressed by speakers from both KCC and East Sussex CC and was well attended. The financial situation was explained in some detail but boiled down as always to too little cash.

The conclusion of the meeting was to monitor the situation for a few months to see if it improves and then report to East Sussex CC who subsidise the Country Liner route from Tunbridge Wells to Hastings. Individual parishes will report to the Forum and a joint report will be sent to East Sussex CC so if you have any problems with this new route operator then please take a note of the time and the details and send them to the parish clerk

Are your children between 11 and 13, bored and don't know what to do of an evening? Do you know that Staplehurst has a great youth club with lots to do? For more info ring Paul Butcher on 01580 891268

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

Council Surgeries are held at the Library on the last

Saturday of each month, from 10am to 12pm. A Parish Councillor, Richard Lusty (our Borough Councillor), or Chris Lomax (Community Warden) and/or Marc Pennicott (our Community Police Officer) attend, and are willing to talk over any problems.