

STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL NOTES (for September 2010)

Parish Councillor Vacancies – Four people put themselves forward for co-option to fill the three vacancies. Jenny Fairfax, Jim Frodsham and Rory Silkin were co-opted and joined this Council on 19th July.

Emergency Planning – Following the fire in the high street in July, much work has been undertaken to set up a Parish Emergency Plan led by Councillor Peter Spearink. Volunteers have come forward following the Public Meeting held on 10th August. Officers of the emergency services gave a talk on their work during and after the fire. Many useful lessons were learned, not least for the need to keep up to date contacts with higher authorities, so that local representatives can be located quickly to provide local knowledge and facilities. Councillor Joan Buller, Spar Supermarket and Sobell Cheshire Home were given particular praise for their assistance at key points throughout the day. Such assistance enabled the opening of a rest centre for people in shock having been evacuated from their homes early that morning, which ensured their needs were addressed throughout the day. In addition the constant supply of refreshments to the fire fighters and other officers dealing with all the issues encompassed by this major incident, were very much appreciated. If anyone would like to become a local volunteer within the Parish Emergency Plan, please contact the Parish Office to register your details.

Bell Lane Toilets – They are being cleaned daily and opened from 7 a.m. until early evening, then locked at night. Staplehurst Parish Council wishes to do all it can to keep vandalism repair costs to a minimum and would appreciate it if all residents could report any damage, misuse or potential vandalism problems. For non-urgent reports, please call during office hours or leave a message on 01580 891761. If an issue requires immediate attention outside office hours, please telephone 07539 692588.

Playscheme & Over 8's Activity Afternoons 2-20 August – At the time of writing Playscheme is half-way through its summer programme. Due to works at the Primary School, the venue had to be moved to the Guide Centre for weeks one and three with the middle week at the Scout Centre. Bookings are much reduced this year but those attending were having an excellent time. The Parish Council will be reviewing Playscheme during September so if any parents would like to give feedback, please contact the Parish Office (preferably by email).

Website – The Parish Council website continues to improve with additional pages of information. The Reports submitted to the Parish Council are now uploaded onto the website together with the Minutes. Local businesses and village groups are also welcome to manage their own website entries linked from the Trade Directory and Village Life pages of this website free of charge. Kindly contact the Parish Clerk for details. The Website Forum continues to be a useful source of local information and interesting comment.

Parish Information and E-groups – Copies of the Minutes of Parish Council Meetings are available at Full Council Meetings and on the Parish Council Website at http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/minutes_of_the_last_meetings.aspx . A number of e-groups are available for anyone wishing to receive direct emails of useful information about local issues e.g., Weekly MBC Plans List, Parish Council Minutes & Agendas, Press Releases, Infrastructure Group, etc. If local residents have any queries regarding Parish Council or local authority issues, they are encouraged to contact the Parish Clerk for the facts.

Parish Council Elections 2011 – All fifteen seats of Staplehurst Parish Council will be up for election in May 2011. Towards this event, MBC will be holding a “Becoming a Councillor” information day at The Maidstone Gateway between 4-8 p.m. on Thursday 30th September. All are welcome to drop in for information and ask questions.

If you would like to find out more about Staplehurst Parish Council, much information is displayed on its website at www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk or contact the Parish Clerk for details. Local electors or members of the public are encouraged to attend and listen to any Parish Council meeting. Opportunities to speak are routinely given before and after all meetings.

Speed Watch – Although the registration numbers of speeding vehicles are taken, this initiative is as much about educating drivers to respect one another by not driving at excessive speeds as it is for the Police to send speeders warning letters.

MBC Cleansing and Collection Services – Call Maidstone Borough Contact Centre on 01622 602162 for information about refuse services provided by Maidstone Borough Council. Alternatively much information is available on www.maidstone.gov.uk Use this number also to report any undesirable activities such as fly-tipping, dumped cars, littering etc. and help to keep the environment clean and tidy. A “pull-out” (or rear of property) collection service is also available to those who are unable to wheel or carry their refuse to the front boundary of their homes.

- **Waste Freighter** – The next visits of the waste freighter to Staplehurst will be on 25th September and 4th December; 0745-0830 Poyntell Road by pond; 0840-0925 at Church Green; 0935-1015 at Northdown junction with Marden Road. For full details of the Waste Freighter Schedule visit MBC website at http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/recycling_rubbish_and_waste/weekend_freighter_service.aspx
- **Garden waste** – Over the next months there will be changes in the MBC green garden sacks. To significantly improve the collection service MBC has decided to use compostable bags made from potato starch which are more environmentally friendly. From 4th October only compostable sacks will be available to purchase at £3.25 per roll. Between 4-31 October residents will

be able to exchange any unused rolls of plastic sacks for the new compostable ones. Either type of sack will be accepted for collection up to 18th December 2010. From 10th January 2011 only MBC compostable sacks will be collected. MBC Green Garden Sacks are available from Spuds 'n Buds, Henhurst Farm Shop or the Parish Office. 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) once a fortnight. The new sacks have a guaranteed shelf life of 6-12 months and will not start to rot until organic waste is placed inside. They will last over 2 weeks with waste in them.

- **MBC Bulky Collection Service** – Phone MBC to arrange a collection (details of fees are shown on http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/recycling_rubbish_and_waste/bulky_rubbish_collections.aspx). Alternatively the Tovil tip and waste freighter are available for householder's use free of charge.

REPORT IT! PC Marc Pennicott on 07980 770575 with Community Warden, Chris Lomax on 07811 271254, PCSO Pete Gardner on 07772 226134 and Special Constable Ken Baker are the local visible policing presence in our Parish, but have emergency back up from the force as necessary. Telephone any of these officers if you witness anti-social behaviour that is not life-threatening. These are not 24/7 contact numbers so do leave a message and they will get back to you when next on duty. All crime-incident reports should be given to Maidstone Police Station on 01622 690055. 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 07864 547453. The Parish Office does not deal with Village Centre bookings, although we do get many enquiries!

Dog Mess & disposal – Red dog waste bins are provided at strategic points around the parish. Thankfully only a small minority allow their dogs to defecate in public areas without clearing up the mess. However, if you witness such anti-social behaviour, telephone the Dog Warden on 01622 602117 in confidence and give details of the perpetrators. Visits to problem areas can be timed to be most effective and a fine imposed when the offender is caught.

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. For all other Highways issues contact Kent Highways.

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 <http://www.kent.gov.uk/KHSFaults/> 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.

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. The local policing team in partnership with Trading Standards has introduced a **Cold Calling Control Zone** for Staplehurst. Information has been circulated and signs put up to educate residents and cold-callers about this initiative.

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.

KCC Handyvan Services: The fitting of various security devices for householders is available through KCC in partnership with Help the Aged and Age concern. Please telephone 0845 026 1055 or Email: handyvan@helptheaged.org.uk for details. Website: www.helptheaged.org.uk

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

Planning Committees - 7 p.m. Monday 6th & 20th September 2010

Full Council Meetings – 8 p.m. Monday 6th & 20th September 2010

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Website: www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk

E-mail: staplehurst1@btconnect.com

The Parish Office is open to the public 0900-1300 hrs.
Mondays to Fridays (except Thursdays by appointment).