

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS FROM THE PAST (2)

This is the second edition of this wonderful open window to our past. We are very grateful to the Staplehurst Society who have kindly shared documents which were originally collated by Ron Hegarty in 1994 as part of the Centenary of this Parish Council. There are some jewels in the article below: some things never change, for some others we seem to have gone backwards, while we can all be grateful that the current Parish Council does not oppose a sewerage system!!!

The Staplehurst Society website, which we would highly recommend is: <http://www.staplehurstsociety.org/>



26th March 1909 - KCC requested to put up signs asking motorists to slacken speed when passing the school.

20th April 1909 - annual Parish Meeting - More urgent action to be taken to restrict the speed of motor cars passing through the village sought by those attending the meeting.

28th June 1909 - KCC advised that they would arrange for sweeping up of the dust from the village main street every Tuesday and Saturday for the benefit of the roads and that any other scavenging must be done by the minor local.

22nd November 1910 - RDC, on receipt of a report from a medical authority, advised the PC that the time appeared to have come for a proper sewerage scheme to be prepared for Staplehurst. PC replied that 'it did not think it fit and that those whose properties complained of should make themselves proper cess pits and to take any necessary steps to abate the nuisance complained of'. The PC stated that it would be a 'monstrous thing to saddle the Parish with an expensive sewerage scheme for the sake of a few'.

21st March 1911 - Annual Parish Meeting - A committee formed to collect funds for the celebration of the Coronation of King Edward VII - 15 on the committee!

20th April 1911 - Post Office Surveyors Department advised that a return had been kept of the number of transactions made at the Sub-Post Office with the result that very little business had been done after 2.00pm on Wednesdays. Therefore it was decided to close the office at that time as an experiment. (Still being tried?). Postmaster at Tonbridge also advised that it was not practical to provide an earlier delivery between the Post Office and the station. The Clerk was directed to write to the Postmaster General to state that letters were being delivered too late in the mornings for persons receiving orders from salesmen in London to despatch poultry, eggs and other commodities to London by the first train on the following day.

3rd May 1912 - A tender was put out for someone to supply accommodation for the village fire engine. Mr. C. Lavender of High Street offered to store it in the shed in Bell Lane, formerly a Smithies Forge and shop, for the sum of £5.00 per year. (This site has recently been covered over to form a new car park to the King's Head Public House.) Mr. Lavender also agreed to spend the first year rent in making good the state of the shed. (His original tender is actually stuck onto the page in the Minute Book.) It was decided to make a notice board for fixing to the front of Mr. Lavender's shed to advise the name of the Captain and where the keys could be obtained.

PARISH COUNCIL INFORMATION

Councillors

Paddy Riordan (CHAIRMAN)
Colin Bowden
Joan Buller
José Castro
Bradley Gartan
David George
Jon Grimwood
Sam Lain-Rose
Simon McNeill
Stuart McPhee
John Perry (VICE-CHAIRMAN)
Adele Sharp
Richard Smith
Peter Spearink

Clerk

Alison Smith

Deputy Clerk and Finance Officer

Mrs Deborah Jenkins

Parish Support Officer

Mrs Jean Terry

Caretaker

Paul Nyahwa

Parish Council

Contact Information

The Parish Office,
Village Centre, High Street,
Staplehurst TN12 0BJ
Web: www.staplehurst-pc.uk
Email: clerk@staplehurst-pc.uk
Tel: 01580 891761

At the moment the office is still closed, members of the public are encouraged to phone or email if they want to contact us at the present time. We will review the office closure regularly.

SURGERIES AT THE LIBRARY

are subject to status of COVID-19 restrictions at present.

PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

Full Council next meets on the 6th September and every third Monday thereafter (except December)
Planning Committee next meets on the 13th September and every third Monday thereafter (except December)
Both Meetings are at the Village Centre South Hall at 7.30pm



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STAPLEHURST

PARISH COUNCIL

VILLAGE
UPDATE
AUTUMN
2021

THIS IS WHAT MAKES IT ALL WORTH IT!

We open a small window into the recent past to demonstrate how our strong community spirit has flourished from extreme circumstances. This real story illustrates and represents hundreds of others that, while they shall remain anonymous, are equally valued by us all:

Lyndsey volunteered from the very first day of Covid lockdown, as soon as the alarms triggered. Resident in Staplehurst for 5 years, she initially responded, upon request, to a few 'jobs' each week. From the second lockdown she was assigned to keep in touch and assist two households. This is her story:

I was at the local pharmacy waiting for my usual bag of medications, lotions & potions ready to deliver to the local residents when the pharmacist asked whether I could add another resident to my list. Here starts my story and wonderful friendship with Edwin (Ted to his friends and family) and Agnes.

Due to their age (ninety years young), they were finally receiving their on-line food shop but that didn't stop the need for a 'top-up' as things ran low. In the beginning, my question always started as "is there anything you need this week?" This quickly evolved along the lines of "what treats do you fancy this week?" Bread and milk were soon replaced with doughnuts (now a firm favourite) and now - with the summer in full swing- strawberries and cream.

The visits which started off as help with shopping, optician appointments and prescription collections were soon replaced with a weekly cuppa (and usually biscuits of some sort) and catch up and laughs.

It's not my job as a volunteer that keeps me going back but the fact these incredible people are such fun to be around. I could spend hours in their company with the stories they have to tell.

I've become 'part of the family' I'm told, although I'm not sure who has adopted who! Agnes & Ted have become a huge part of my life and I thank the Emergency Help Team for allowing me to be part of something so amazing.

Edwin and Agnes were told to shield. Their age and circumstances made them contact the Parish Council and request some help. Our office received this invaluable message from them, which originated this article:

We are a couple both in our nineties and have lived in Staplehurst for over 50 years. I want to thank our great Parish Council for all the good things both in the past and in the present time which the Council have brought to the village. Our grateful thanks go particularly to the emergency help team and the lady who has become a special friend during the lockdown. Without the help of everybody it could have been a very difficult time.

Through the last 18 months we have received several messages like the one above. During these difficult times many residents stepped in to altruistically help those that needed it. We only had to coordinate them. We thank you all!



THE KALC COMMUNITY AWARD TO THE STAPLEHURST EMERGENCY HELP TEAM

Staplehurst Parish Council Emergency Help Team are delighted to have received an award from the Kent Association of Local Councils in recognition of the work that councillors, local businesses and volunteers have carried out throughout the Covid pandemic to help our community. As we are gradually coming out of lockdown, we are looking forward to having a celebration with all those who have given up so much of their valuable time to help vulnerable residents.

www.staplehurst-pc.uk

Published by Staplehurst Parish Council, Village Centre, High Street, Staplehurst, Kent TN12 0BJ

Tel: 01580 891761

Email: clerk@staplehurst-pc.uk

NEWS FROM THE STAPLEHURST NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW GROUP



Proposed Government changes to Planning makes Design a key factor in new housing. Any Design Code must be consistent with the principles set out in the National Model Design Code and meet the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). To this end, the Review Group has drawn up a Design Code which lists key components as Movement and Transport, The Built Form, Open Spaces and Allotments, Drainage, Privacy and distance between buildings, Nature, Lighting and Security, Affordable Housing, Climate Change, Extensions to existing dwellings and Construction. The Staplehurst Design Code, which we hope that the Parish Council will formally accept, will act as a benchmark for future developers and reflects local character and preference and provide absolute clarity about design expectations.



PLANNING

The Planning Committee continue to work hard, reviewing and commenting on proposed developments in Staplehurst. If you have an application coming before MBC, we see it first and you are able to attend the planning meeting and speak for 3 minutes at the start and again at the end of the meeting.

We continue to lobby MBC to ensure there is a proper and functional resolution to the sewage system necessary along the Marden Road. Recent flooding of the area due to the 'super rain' we have endured, again reinforced the need for residents to have a proper functioning system. We take the opportunity to publicly thank all members of the Planning Committee for all their unpaid hard work. There is a lot of 'spare time' devoted to research to ensure residents rights are protected.

VOLUNTEERS, YOUR VILLAGE NEEDS YOU!

The Greener Staplehurst Group has a number of cultivated and wildflower beds around the village. The Group is also charged with taking care of the Wimpey Field, which is Staplehurst's very own nature reserve. We are now looking to form a volunteer group that will assist with the care and maintenance of the various sites around the village. Why not involve the whole family? Join the Greener Staplehurst Volunteer group. For more information or to join the group up please contact Mina McPhee on 07957 460806



THE WIMPEY FIELD BIOBLITZ

On the 11th of August Medway Valley Countryside Partnership ran the annual Bioblitz at our very own Wimpey Field Nature Reserve. This has been the most successful to date, both in terms of numbers but also due to the fact that the pond was available. The event consisted of guided walks and search for mini-beasts, reptiles, birds and butterflies - to see how many different species they find. This included visits to the pond. This was of course the best part for most of the children. Several groups did take a picnic, adding to the enjoyment of the day. There was also a stall with plenty of informative leaflets.

This is the fifth time we have run this event and it comes as part of a strategy to increase the awareness of the importance and understanding of the local flora and fauna, particularly among the younger generations, and to promote our nature reserve.

Some may not yet be aware that we have a nature reserve in our village, called the Wimpey Field. Or may have never visited it. It runs almost parallel to Bathurst road. The name originates from Wimpey, the builders of the adjacent estate in the sixties. When they finished the estate, they still had what became known as the Wimpey fields. These lay fallow until what is now Taylor Wimpey decided to build the Saxon Mead estate.

The Greener Staplehurst Group and the Parish Council are organising two guided nature walks on Sunday 5th of September, at 11am and at 2pm, where Cllr. Peter Spearink, a big promotor of the reserve, will share his knowledge about the area and explain the name of the different fields and paths that make the nature reserve.

PARISH COUNCIL PROJECTS

Staplehurst Parish Council are constantly looking to make improvements to our village and have created a list of projects in the centre of the village which we hope will go ahead in the relatively near future. In no particular order, some of the projects being worked on at the current time are:

- ✓ Extending the kerb paved areas and replacing the brickwork in the planted areas at The Parade to avoid the brickwork constantly being knocked over.
- ✓ Re-surfacing Bell Lane car park including white lining the parking spaces.
- ✓ Improvements to the grassed areas in front of Bell Lane carpark.
- ✓ Further improvements at The Parade

Many other projects including the Jubilee field and skate park improvements are also underway.



NEW ROAD NAMES - DICKENS GATE (Part 2)

Dickens Gate is the estate that is being currently built on the west side of the village off Marden Road. We already commented on some of the road names in the previous Village Update. Below you can find an explanation for the rest of them:

BRAGANZA DRIVE after Peter. Long time supporter and official of the cricket club. **PEARSON DRIVE**: Mr Pearson was the village lengthsman when we still had one. A lengthsman is someone who kept a "length" of road neat, tidy and passable in the Middle Ages, with particular emphasis on boundary marking. **LADE DRIVE**: Minnie was heavily involved in the Sunday School and other church activities for many years. **VICKERY COURT**: Trevor was the much-loved Rector, having served all of his working life here. He taught at local schools and ran a boxing club. Often referred to as "Trev the Rev" because he was once caught speeding. **CROUCH ROAD**: Private John, G/13007, 1st Battalion Queens West Surrey Regiment. Died 21st December 1918. Age 33. **MAYBOURNE**, George: Private, Company 'B' 48th Infantry, 3rd division US Army. Died 22nd October 1918. **PENNEFATHER**, Captain Charles Louis: 2nd Battalion, Rifle Brigade. Died 14th June 1916 age 22.

This is the last one of our articles about the new road names in Staplehurst. We hope they have thrown some light upon the origins of these names. On following issues, we will share some interesting information about the War Memorials in our village.



ROAD SAFETY GROUP NEWS

Following the completed road painting at the quarter, we continue to work hard on a number of projects to make our roads safer. This work was merely a step on our journey to improve safety at that end of the village, as we are trying to improve the access to the bus stops. We are working towards our preferred outcome of a puffin crossing, but are told they cost from £38,000; a bit beyond the SPC budget. We are also lobbying to improve the access and safety around the primary school entrance for pedestrians by providing dropped curbs and a small area of double yellow lines. Speedwatch would welcome any volunteers prepared to undergo the training. Please do report any traffic accidents to staplehurstroadinfo@gmail.com as this helps SPC stay up to date with such matters. Not all accidents seem to be reported! We also try to help residents keep the paths clear of overgrown hedges. KCC can issue a 28 day notice before they do the work and send residents the bill, so you may get a letter from SPC first, as we appreciate residents might need some time to trim back hedges.

OWNER RESPONSIBILITY FOR RIVERS AND DITCHES

In these times of unusually heavy rainfall, it is worth knowing that, under common law, a property or land owner is the riparian owner (owner of the banks) of any watercourse within or adjacent to that property or land. In addition, where a watercourse is sited between two or more properties, each owner is equally responsible. Owners of rivers, streams or ditches must accept water from an upstream neighbour and transfer this, together with drainage from their own property, downstream and undertake necessary maintenance of the watercourse to maintain the proper flow of water. The owner is responsible for the cost of maintenance.

Also, common law imposes a duty on the owner of land adjoining a highway to maintain ditches that provide natural drainage for both the land and highway. In the majority of cases the responsibility for ditch maintenance rests with the adjacent landowner. A ditch on the side of the road which drains water from private land is the responsibility of the landowner to maintain so it doesn't cause flooding to the highway. This ditch may still take water that drains from the highway, but the ditch's principal purpose is to drain water from private land.

You can find detailed information about the responsibilities of landowners for the maintenance of watercourses on or adjacent to their land in this leaflet produced by KCC: https://www.kent.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/19957/Rivers-and-ditches.pdf



A DAY FOR YOUR CALENDAR: 18th September - Clean-up and Litter pick

Come and join us! - The Greener Staplehurst Group and the Parish Council will be having its first village-wide tidy up and litter pick since the first lockdown in 2020. The village needs this litter pick. It will do us all good. Many of you will have seen the positive changes in fauna and flora in and around the village over the past 18 months. But we also saw an increase in the amounts of litter. Fortunately, many individuals have continued to litter-pick throughout the pandemic, as has our Parish Caretaker. If you are up early you might have spotted our latest Council Merit Award, Patrick Blunt, collecting rubbish along many streets on most days. Huge thanks to everyone.

The event will be held on **Saturday 18th September** at 10am until noon, unless Covid regulations change. Please come along to the Youth Club beside the Village Centre, where you will receive your equipment, instructions and map. Children must be accompanied and supervised by responsible adults. Volunteers can only work within the 30mph area to be covered by the necessary insurance. The WI will be offering a cuppa and biscuits. On your return, please add your sack to the pile for collection by MBC.

If you wish to join the Litter Squad and/or to find out more about the Greener Staplehurst Group, please contact either Richard Smith (cllr.richard.smith@staplehurst-pc.uk) or David George (cllr.davidgeorge@staplehurst-pc.uk) for further details. Many thanks to Maidstone Borough Council for their support. Everyone is welcome - it is your village and we need you!