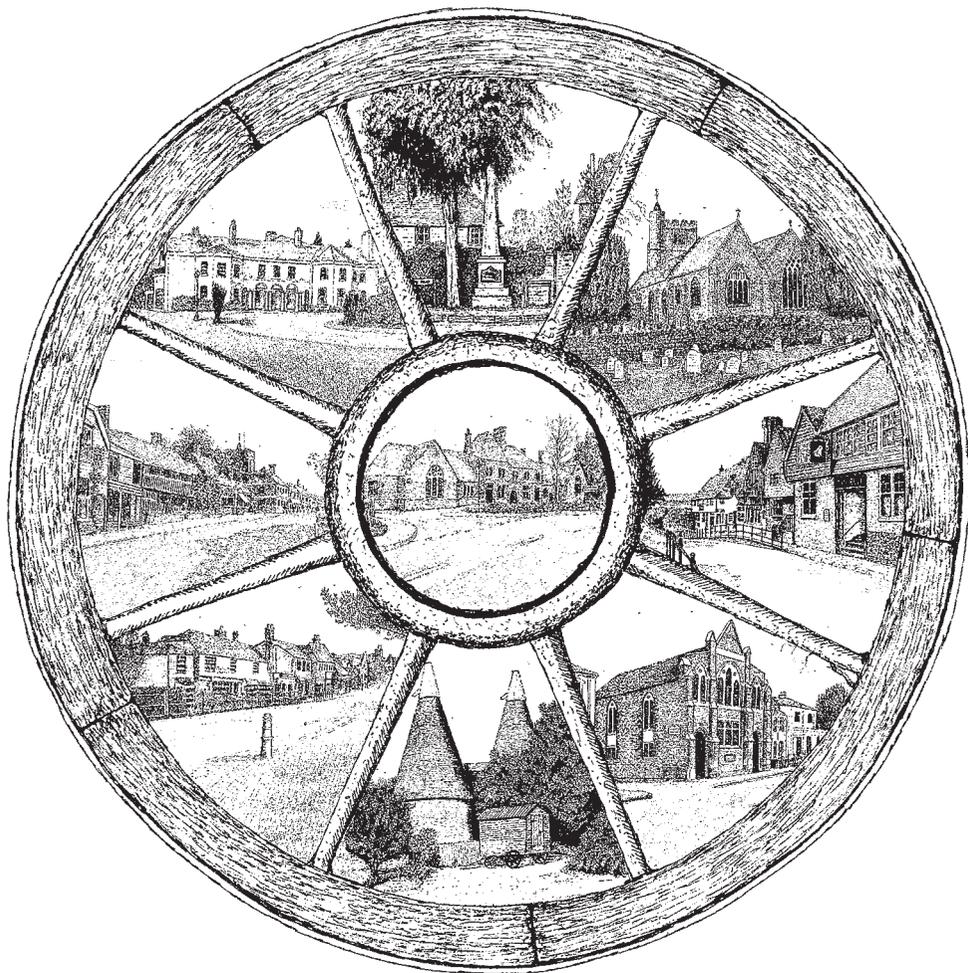


# STAPLEHURST



Staplehurst Parish Council  
ANNUAL REPORT  
2005-2006

*Cover design by The Hop Press using the cartwheel logo  
drawn by local artist Mr. Ken Collins*

# Staplehurst Parish Council

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# Staplehurst Parish Council

Established 1894

Staplehurst Parish Council represents an electorate of 4554 people living within approximately 2,230 homes. The population census figure recorded in 1991 was 6,003. This represented an increase of 217 people during the previous 10 years.

The Parish Council is made up of 15 Councillors who will serve until the next Parish Council election in 2007 or earlier resignation.

Full Council meets monthly on the third Monday at 8 p.m. in the South Hall, Staplehurst Village Centre. Planning Committee meets on the first and third Mondays at 7 p.m. and Amenities Committee meets on the third Monday monthly at 8 p.m. Finance Committee meets quarterly by arrangement.

In addition to membership of Committees, many parish councillors also work within sub-committees. Sub committees have no spending powers or direct influence on the Full Council and can include members of the public, in an advisory capacity. Parish Councillors also represent the Parish Council on outside bodies for good liaison and communication within the community.

The Parish Office is open to the public four mornings a week for enquiries, sales of MBC Green Sacks and other council-related issues between 9 & 11 a.m. Planning application papers and other Council documents can be viewed on request. Staplehurst Parish Council has adopted Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.



## Chairman's Annual Report 2005-2006

This is our second annual report and I hope you agree that it gives all parishioners a view of the activities of your duly elected council over the previous 12 months.

Your 15 member council meets on the third Monday of the month and deals with the wide range of correspondence which crosses the parish clerks desk covering everything from accidents to watercourses. They discuss issues relating to the three other committees of planning which meets twice a month, amenities which meets monthly and finance which meets quarterly, and members give feedback from the many extra meetings they attend to represent Staplehurst and make sure we have a voice and are heard. Councillors who speak at meetings they attend do so as representatives of the Parish Council and present the collective viewpoint.

Since becoming the second parish in Maidstone to achieve Quality status we have had one meeting with Boxley and MBC to discuss what benefits QC status might bring within our working relationship. Neither of us wants to take on tasks which require greater financial burden on precepts without showing an overwhelming benefit to our communities.

We as a council formally adopted the Village Design statement and would wish to express our thanks to those who worked so hard on this project. A digital copy of the VDS is available to download from the Parish Council website ([www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk)).

My thanks go to all council members who as volunteers themselves give of their time to the Parish. We are entering our final year in office and during the next 12 months I hope some of you will come and see what is involved with a view to standing for election in May 2007.



# Income & Expenditure Account

For the year ended 31st March 2006

<b>INCOME</b>	<b>2005/2006</b>
Parish Precept	62,900.00
MBC Concurrent Functions Grant	27,889.25
Other Grants for new projects	7,500.00
MBC Grant for Playscheme, fees & Summer Activities	3,686.88
Deposit Interest	4,319.60
Donations towards Christmas Lights	280.00
Skaters deposit	949.29
Sales, miscellaneous fees & donations	584.19
	<hr/>
	£108,109.21
 <b>EXPENDITURE</b>	
Allotment Lease & new fence	544.00
Caretakers' wages & equipment	3,403.08
CCTV Project	5,699.99
Christmas Lights 2005	7,238.39
Churchyard Maintenance	4,235.57
Donations to Parish Church and various other groups	3,005.00
General Administration	41,196.56
Jubilee Sports Field maintenance	4,221.16
New Burial Area Project	5,787.61
Nicholson Walk Project & Surrenden Pavilion Roof	18,281.75
Parish Street Lighting, street furniture repairs	2,909.51
Playscheme & Summer Activities	4,090.66
Staplehurst Partnership	469.83
Surrenden Playing field maintenance	10,508.75
Youth Club maintenance	3,188.50
	<hr/>
	£114,780.36
 Balance of Income over Expenditure	- 6,671.15
Balance brought forward from previous year	165,289.88
	<hr/>
	£158,618.73

# Balance Sheet

For the year ended 31st March 2006

## LONG TERM ASSETS

Interest-free loan to VCMC from Contingency Fund 8,507.00

## CURRENT ASSETS

VAT Recoverable 3,510.68

Cash In Hand 148,761.28

£160,778.96

## CURRENT LIABILITIES

Uncleared cheques at year end - 2,160.23

£158,618.73

## REPRESENTED BY:

General Fund 35,545.72

Village Centre Contingency 15,372.44

Skaters' Deposit 1,164.26

Ongoing Project Reserves:

    Burial Authority Provision 18,076.56

    Jubilee Sports Playing Field 62,195.00

    Village Centre Loan budget 21,000.00

Reserves/Underspends c/f 5,264.75

£158,618.73

The preceding two statements are only a summary of the accounts. Copies of the full Statement of Accounts will be made available on the Parish Council Website at [www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk) and from Staplehurst Parish Council Office.

Staplehurst Parish Council accounts are audited quarterly by Iden Business Services and the Annual Audit Return is made to the Audit Commission. The requisite Public Notice is given for electors to inspect the accounts annually.

# Parish Councillors



## **Margaret Arger - Chairman**

My husband and I have lived in Staplehurst over 25 years. I am honoured to have been re-elected to the Parish Council as Chairman. Parish Councillors need to work closely with our Borough Councillors, Police Authority, County Councillors as well as our MP to make sure Staplehurst moves forward in a positive and constructive manner to the benefit of our community.

## **Barry Franks - Vice Chairman**

Married with grown up children I have lived in Staplehurst since 1969 and take a keen interest in local affairs. In the past I have been actively involved with the Football Club and the PTA. I am on the Committee of the Horticultural Society. Semi-retired - I aim to be an enthusiastic and pro-active member of the Council. I am a representative of the Jubilee Sports Field Users Group.



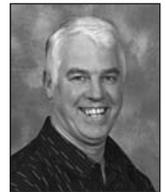
## **Joan Buller - Member of the Planning & Finance Committee**



I have served Staplehurst Parish Council for 23 years and seen many changes! As well as the monthly meetings I am on the Planning and Finance Committees. In addition I am in the Rural Partnership, Website and Village Update Teams. I am also the link councillor with the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme on which I serve as Treasurer. I enjoy being involved in the decision making processes that influence our local community and working with people. My aim is to improve the infrastructure and foster a better community spirit.

## **Paul Butcher - Member of the Amenities Committee**

As a resident for 24 years and running my own business, I understand the day to day problems affecting this parish. I represent the Parish Council on the Police/Parish Forum, Churchyard Liaison and I am also Chairman of Staplehurst Youth Club.



## **Wendy Green - Chairman of the Planning Committee**

I have been a Councillor for 8 years, serving most of my time on the Planning Committee.

I maintain an interest in all issues relevant to the progression of growth in the infrastructure of Staplehurst. I care deeply about the well being of the village and endeavour to be available at all times.

## Parish Councillors



### **Paul Kelly - Member of the Planning Committee**

Having moved my business and home to the village in 1996, I have sat as a member of the Parish Council since 2000. During this time I have been involved with the 'Carnival and Fete' and 'Youth Club' committees and *hopefully* have been of some help! In 2002, I took on board a Governors'hip at Staplehurst Primary. This is a most enjoyable, if not challenging post!

### **Angela Knowlden - Member of the Planning Committee**

During the past year I have attended training courses for new councillors, as well as a planning course. I have enjoyed getting involved in community projects such as the Staplehurst Partnership Initiative and the Skate Boarding Project. As a Council we welcome input from villagers, and at Council meetings we each have the opportunity to air our views and discuss issues, before making democratic decisions.



### **Trevor Martin - Chairman of the Amenities Committee**

The Amenities Committee has specific responsibilities for and oversees capital projects funded by the Parish Council. The long term development of facilities at the Jubilee Field has progressed over the past year and Nicholson Walk was completed. The Committee is also involved in day to day environmental issues such as grass cutting and hedgerow maintenance of recreational areas, supporting the summer Playscheme and Youth Club activities. It also liaises with Kent Highways on matters such as signage and road and lighting maintenance and with Maidstone borough Council regarding the allotments and for street cleaning and rubbish disposal.

### **Roger Munn - Member of the Amenities Committee**

I have lived and worked in Staplehurst for most of my life, as a farmer. This has given me a sound knowledge of the local area. I am married with two children, who have now left home. I am representing the Parish Council on Jubilee Sports Field, Headcorn Aerodrome and Churchyard Liaison committees.



### **Lin Plant - Member of the Amenities Committee**

I have been a resident of Staplehurst for 11 years, having lived, worked and been involved in the community in many parts of England and also in Australia and Luxembourg. I believe that Staplehurst should be a community and not just a commuter village, and hope to do my part to foster this.

## Parish Councillors

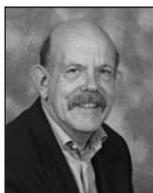


### **John Reardon - Member of the Amenities Committee**

Having moved to Staplehurst 7 years ago I was co-opted to the Parish Council in December 2004 and currently work for BT as a project manager. I am on the Amenities Committee which deals with the environment and local community issues. My aim for the next year is to become more involved in the future development of the Jubilee Playing Field. I am an active member of the Staplehurst Cricket and Tennis Club and am enjoying contributing to the work of the Parish Council.

### **Chris Rogers - Member of the Amenities Committees**

My wife and I have been Staplehurst residents for well over 30 years, and now that I am fully retired from city life I can devote my time and energy to assisting with the running of the Parish Council. I remain an active member of the Staplehurst Cricket and Tennis Club.



### **John Stewart - Member of the Planning Committee**

Along with the ongoing tasks of the current Council I have been part of the Publicity Group that has introduced the Village Update as a means of trying to improve our communications with the Parishioners of Staplehurst, being delivered to every household on a quarterly basis. I also help to ensure that the website is kept up-to-date.

### **John Swannick - Member of Finance committee**

Married with a young family and resident in Staplehurst for only 6 years, John has packed a lot in; he is Chairman of Staplehurst Cricket & Tennis Club, Staplehurst Rail Users' Forum convenor, Staplehurst Partnership co-ordinator and a committed member of the Parish Council as well. When time allows, John plays cricket, sits on the executive of a national political organisation and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, Manufactures & Commerce (RSA).



### **Don Wood - Member of the Planning Committee**

In addition to Parish Council work, I am particularly pleased to be associated with the resurgence of interest and action on the Jubilee Field project; for far too long the top Staplehurst football teams have been forced to play outside the Village because our facilities are not up to Football Association standards. Similarly the Village Centre, a vital asset for community activities in Staplehurst has reached a critical stage; key decisions affecting its long-term future are urgently required.

# Parish Clerk's Annual Report

2005 was the year in which Staplehurst Parish Council was awarded Quality Parish Council status after a lengthy process of raising standards and scrutiny. The Quarterly Village Update, delivered to every home in the parish, has now become an established part of the ever increasing publicity output of the Parish Council, which was a requirement of quality status exercise. Whilst the update provides a snapshot of the work that has been achieved over the past year, more detailed information is available on the Parish Council website. The Minutes of Staplehurst Parish Council are now available for the world to see on the Parish Council page at [www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk) together with much other useful information about our parish.

Over the past year, the Parish Council has been as busy as ever on a wide variety of issues and projects. Much work has been achieved at Surrenden Playing Field to carry out landscaping works and new pathway to Nicholson Walk, the pavilion roof and electrical works therein. The installation of CCTV is proving useful in identifying the culprits of vandalism and anti-social behaviour.

Works to create a new extension to the Churchyard have progressed with the installation of a new water supply, fencing and the beginnings of landscape works. Another successful Playscheme was run for three weeks of the summer holidays to entertain up to 60 primary school age children. The new Christmas Lights display was thoroughly enjoyed by many residents and this was supported by grants from both KCC and MBC. Councillors agreed to engage in the Speedwatch scheme to help encourage drivers to keep within the speed limits through the parish. A group of volunteers await training by the police and the purchase of equipment is anticipated.

Some progress was achieved in moving forward the much needed Jubilee Playing Field Changing Rooms project. It is hoped in the next Council year that tangible evidence of this progress will soon be there for all to see and use, but this remains subject to the grant support of the Football Foundation and local fundraising by the Football Clubs themselves. Major repair and maintenance work was carried out to the sewage pumps at Jubilee Field.

The Skaters' group after having been working on their project for two years recently received a much-needed grant of £30,000. Together with other grants received from KCC and MBC, donations from local businesses and generous residents as well as group fundraising, implementation of half of the project will become a reality very soon. The skateboard equipment is likely to be sited near the entrance to Jubilee Field.

The Staplehurst Society completed the Village Design Statement which was adopted by the Parish Council in January. A copy is now available for all to see on the Parish Council Website. Work has begun on the Staplehurst Partnership project which has its own website of information accessible through the [staplehurstvillage.org.uk](http://staplehurstvillage.org.uk) website. Community responses to a questionnaire will be needed soon in order to bring this project to a useful conclusion.

## Parish Facilities & Projects

***Surrenden Field/Nicholson Walk Landscaping Works*** – Following a survey carried out at the request of the Parish Council, the landscaping works on the field are almost complete. The hedging and trees have been cut back to encourage them to thicken up and provide better cover, and new tree whips have been planted to fill in gaps. Chestnut pole fencing is due to be installed to protect the hedges. Further work will be carried out in the autumn, including planting of spring flowering bulbs, and a regular maintenance programme will be put in place.

***The Weald Club for the Disabled*** – The Weald Club for the Disabled is an autonomous branch of the Kent Association for Disabled People - a registered charity.

The Club meets every Friday and has a membership of 22 disabled people, who enjoy a good social “get together” and a 2-course home-cooked lunch. The Club is run by 17 volunteers who include kitchen staff, carers, escorts and drivers of the Club’s own Minibus.

Club Members are proud of the past year’s achievements in raising the £31,000 required for the purchase of the new vehicle. The money was obtained from various sources; £31,200 from The Big Lottery Fund, £5,000 from Tesco Charity Trust, £1,100 from the sale of Staplehurst 2005 Calendars, £1,000 from the Newlyn Trust. The remainder came from the Club’s fund raising activities and other donations.

The new vehicle is also used to serve the community in Staplehurst through The Good Companions Club, Staplehurst Manor Nursing Home and McCabe Centre residents’ outings.

***Staplehurst Partnership*** – The Partnership is a forum for representatives of village business, community organisations, Parish Council and outside authorities to work together in managing change in Staplehurst. It is involving as many people as possible in both agreeing and delivering change. Since the formal launch in December, we have had lots of discussions as part of a Village ‘healthcheck’. This has allowed us to create an action plan which will be tested in a survey of all Staplehurst residents’ views in May. We then need to identify how best to deliver the agreed priorities. If we want to be ambitious, the Partnership needs participation from every part of the community. We are intent on looking at some fairly fundamental issues and challenging a lot of long-standing problems. We have the backing, and some funding, and the potential of some really big funding, from major local and regional players including Kent County Council and the South-East England Development Authority. Once we have strong feedback on the action plan, we need to move beyond the ‘what’ and into the ‘how’. If you are not involved, or the village organisations you belong to are not involved, then now is the time to come forward.

## Parish Facilities & Projects

***Detached youth worker*** – KCC has now appointed a full-time detached youth worker, Fiona Simpson. Fiona will be working in Staplehurst, Marden and Headcorn, initially one evening a week in each village - here she will be working and liaising with Chris Lomax, our Village Warden, probably on Monday or Wednesday evenings from 6.30. KCC has also employed paid helpers for her and they are currently undergoing training and CRB checks. They will be doing similar work to that done here previously by Martyn Ounstead and Dawn Collins, who the Parish Council employed directly. The work will include sports events, health and young people's problems, arts, music and dance. Later in the year, Fiona will be bringing the new KCC van along to the village. This van will be fitted with varied equipment such as arts and craft material and computers for the use of the young people of the villages. She is currently planning some summer activities (graffiti art/outings, etc.) and is applying for funding for these from various sources including the Parish Council.

***Youth club*** – The Chairman hopes that by the time you read this, the club will have been able to employ a paid youth worker. The Youth Forum has set aside £1,500 (from the grant they received two years ago from Kent Community Fund), which the Parish Council will administer.

***Youth forum*** – At the time of writing this article, Parish Councillors Angela Knowlden and Lin Plant are setting up a meeting for all clubs/groups involving young people in the village to join in with the Youth Forum. This is part of the initiative by the Staplehurst Partnership, and we are keen to involve as many young people as possible. For further information, please contact the Clerk or above councillors.

***The Village Centre*** – The complete change of Management Committee elected in February 2005 spent a productive if frustrating year learning the intricacies of the operation of the Centre from the day to day but vital requirements of the booking arrangements and cleaning to public safety issues and statutory inspections. It also had treated a potentially serious infestation of dry rot, recovered an area of flat roof and repairs to the main tiled roof and upgraded some of the electrical systems. Other major works are required and it became obvious that without strategic changes to the way the Centre is financed and run, and to the facilities it provides, it will not be viable in the longer term.

## Local Partnerships

**Kent County Council** – 08458 247 247 is the number for all telephone enquiries 24/7. Contact can also be made through their website at [www.kent.gov.uk](http://www.kent.gov.uk) or email to [county.hall@kent.gov.uk](mailto:county.hall@kent.gov.uk) if you are unsure who to contact. Postal address is Kent County Council, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent. ME14 1XQ

**Kent Highways** - The Kent Highways Service Hotline is 0845 8247 800 and is open 24/7 to take your reports of any defects within the local highways network. The Parish Council regularly liaises with Kent Highway Engineers to ensure that defects are repaired as soon as possible.

**Maidstone Borough Council** – 01622 602000 is the main MBC switchboard for all daytime telephone enquiries. 01622 212700 is the emergencies out of hours number. Minicom is available on 01622 602224. To report any abandoned vehicles, fly tipping or other cleansing issues, telephone 01622 602162 to report the defect for action. Reports from MBC and useful information as well as planning information is available on the website at [www.maidstone.gov.uk](http://www.maidstone.gov.uk).

**Community Police** – Close liaison amongst the Parish Council, PC Marc Pennicott, Community Warden, and Parish Special Constable takes place throughout the year. Reports of police activity and criminal incidents are given at Full Council meetings. Council and Police surgeries are held at Staplehurst Library on the last Saturdays monthly 10am-Noon for local people to air their concerns.

**Neighbourhood Watch** – Please contact Community Warden Chris Lomax for details 07811 271254.

**Village Voluntary Groups** – Many and varied interest groups exist in Staplehurst. Contact the Parish Office 01580 891761 for a list of up to date contact details, or visit the village life page at [www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk).



# Council Members

at 31st March 2006

MARGARET ARGER - Chairman (ex-officio members) .....	Ex. dir.
BARRY FRANKS - Vice Chairman (of all committees.) .....	Tel: 891514
WENDY GREEN - Chairman Planning Committee .....	Tel: 891607
TREVOR MARTIN - Chairman Amenities Committee .....	Tel: 892033
JOAN BULLER - Planning & Finance .....	Tel: 892746
PAUL BUTCHER - Planning & Amenities .....	Ex. dir.
PAUL KELLY - Planning .....	Tel: 892700
ANGELA KNOWLDEN - Planning .....	Tel: 890639
JOHN REARDON - Amenities .....	Mob: 07802 231692
CHRISTOPHER ROGERS - Amenities .....	Tel: 892258
JOHN STEWART - Planning .....	Tel: 892982
DONALD WOOD - Planning .....	Tel: 891388
ROGER MUNN - Amenities .....	Tel: 891861
LIN PLANT - Amenities .....	Tel: 893155
JOHN SWANNICK - Finance .....	Tel: 890750

-ooOoo-

Member of Parliament ANN WIDDECOMBE .....	Tel: 01622 769898
Kent County Councillor ERIC HOTSON .....	Tel: 892312
Maidstone Borough Councillor ERIC HOTSON .....	Tel: 892312
Maidstone Borough Councillor RICHARD LUSTY .....	Tel: 891353

-ooOoo-

Community Police PC MARC PENNICOTT .....	Mob: 07980 770575
Parish Warden CHRISTOPHER LOMAX .....	Mob: 07811 271254
Special Parish Constable KEN BAKER .....	Ex. dir.

-ooOoo-

Parish Clerk Mrs J SUSAN BASSETT .....	01580 891761
Assistant Parish Clerk Mrs AILEEN FERMOR .....	01580 891761



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Parish website: [www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk)



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