

Village Update

AUTUMN 2013

www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk

STAPLEHURST NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN THIS IS YOUR CHANCE TO HAVE YOUR SAY WE NEED YOUR IDEAS

Staplehurst Parish Council continues to work with the Rural Settlement Group on the development of a Neighbourhood Plan. Staplehurst has been designated as a Rural Service

VILLAGE VISIONING EVENT

Thursday 12th September 2013 – 7.30pm – 9.30pm

Village Centre North Hall

This event will examine some of the critical issues in more detail. The Parish Council and the independent planning team would like to hear your views. The event (by invitation) will be task-based and participants will be required to come prepared to share their views about what makes Staplehurst a special place to live, work and visit.

Centre (RSC) by Maidstone Borough Council. This means the village is bound to experience considerable new housing growth over the coming years.

A Neighbourhood Plan will help ensure any growth is planned and designed so that we have an attractive, sustainable and balanced village fit for the future. The Parish Council recently appointed FERIA Urbanism (www.feria-urbanism.eu), an independent planning and design practice, to provide expert advice on developing a Neighbourhood Plan. This practice has proved a recent success with Harrietsham Parish Council and its Plan. A series of events will be organised to consult with residents, community groups, key landowners, statutory agencies and neighbouring parishes.



**FUTURE OF
STAPLEHURST**

THREE-DAY DESIGN FORUM

Tuesday 8th, Wednesday 9th and Thursday 10th October 2013 9.30am – 4pm each day

Village Centre North Hall – Open door exhibition on the Tuesday and Wednesday evenings from 6.00pm until late.

The aim is to develop a draft concept plan by the end of the third day. This three-day event will be a design-led exercise that will examine how new developments can best be planned and delivered in Staplehurst. Please be prepared to share your ideas and thoughts. Feel free to attend for just part of the time or for as long as you are able to. We hope that everyone will be able to find a time that is convenient to them. FERIA Urbanism will be on-hand throughout the event to accept your comments and explain the outputs from each day's workshops.

DESIGN FORUM : FINAL PRESENTATION

*Thursday 10th October 2013 – 7.30pm until late
Village Centre North Hall*

This presentation will enable all local residents to see the results of the three-day design event. The FERIA Urbanism team will make a presentation explaining the process and the results of the previous 72 hours. Additionally this will be an opportunity to hear from the Parish Council and the planning team whilst asking questions about the emerging draft concept plan.

If you have any enquiries please get in touch with the Parish Clerk.

Staplehurst

Parish Council

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Staplehurst is one of the largest parishes in the Borough of Maidstone and I am proud to say one of the leaders of the rural areas. Our mixed community has residents involved in rural services as well as commuting to London and other areas. This makes for a very vibrant community. This is borne out by the contributions that residents make to improve the lives of others and I wish to highlight this. Darren Schlosser recently ran four marathons in three weeks and raised approximately £2000 for Sobell Lodge. Caron Holden and her father John Briffa organised the second Maidstone Riverside Run and raised £2000 for Cancer Research.

Two other recent events are fine examples of community spirit. This year's Staplehurst Carnival and Fete was very successful and managed to raise a significant sum for charities. However, what is often forgotten is the amount of work put in by the Carnival and Fete Committee to make this event such a success. They are all volunteers who give up their spare time for the benefit of the whole community. The other event is Staplehurst UpRockin which took place in July. This is the third year it has been organised and it has

gone from strength to strength. It centres on the Skatepark and it is great to see everyone having such a good time. We are very grateful to MBC and Councillor Eric Hotson for their support; it is very much appreciated. However, like the Carnival and Fete, this event requires a lot of planning and organising and could not take place without a dedicated group of volunteers who are prepared to give up their spare time to help.

I think the above highlights the spirit that exists in our community and my personal thanks and those of the Parish Council go to all those involved. I believe it is this spirit that above all we want to preserve and enhance for the future of our community; and this is one of the reasons why the Neighbourhood Plan is so important.

The Neighbourhood Plan is covered in greater detail on the front page, but I should like to emphasise a key point which is that the process for developing the plan will allow for the whole community to make a contribution. It will be subject to a referendum which should give it considerable force when dealing with other bodies. Clearly we must ultimately work within the overall Local Plan of MBC, but we believe that having a Neighbourhood Plan will give us a say in the direction we want our community to go.

John Perry

Chairman, Staplehurst Parish Council

DOG FOULING

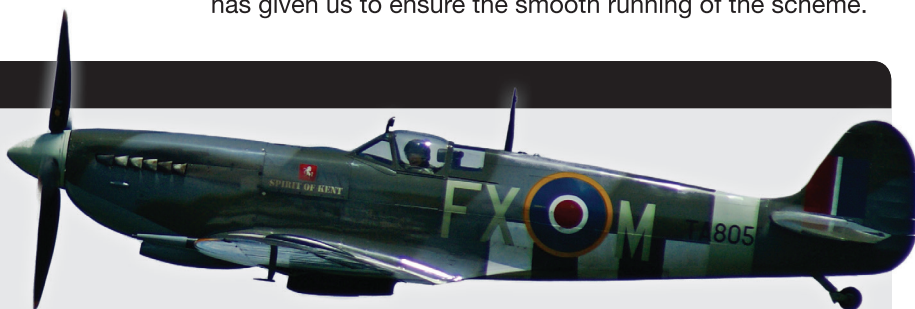
Thank you to all responsible dog owners who 'pick-up' after their dog. Unfortunately a few owners do not and when residents point out dog fouling to the owner a few have been subjected to abusive behaviour in return, which is totally unacceptable. Please report any such incidents in confidence to the Environmental Crime Officer on 01622 602202. The Parish Office has helpful "Dog Watch" information available.

SUMMER PLAYScheme

Playplace has delivered another successful playscheme this summer, working closely with the Parish Council with some funding from MBC. Numbers have dropped this year for a variety of reasons, but those attending have had an enjoyable and safe time under the excellent leadership of Karen White together with her staff. We thank the Guide Centre Committee for accommodating us and all the help it has given us to ensure the smooth running of the scheme.

CANADIAN AIRMEN REMEMBERED

The annual service of remembrance at the Staplehurst Advanced Landing Ground Memorial on Chickenden Farm saw record crowds in the fine weather come to see the MkIX Spitfire, Spirit of Kent perform a 15 minute display before the service. Kindly sponsored by Tesco's, the display sent tingles down every spine. Rev Andrew Mills took the service and this year it included a special part remembering the Canadian airmen who flew from here in 1943. Colonel Bland of the RCAF laid a wreath together with representatives from the Parish Council, the British Legion



and the sponsors. Next year marks the 70th anniversary of the USAAF flying from the airstrip prior to D-Day when many of them did not return and their names are marked on the memorial. Plans are under way to mark this special event and it is hoped that one or more of the surviving pilots will be able to make one last visit to the Memorial.

HEALTH CENTRE

Good news for the Health Centre! The new 10 year GP services contract has been signed and the Village can look forward to a steady improvement in services after the very unsettling effects of the recent tender process. Malling Health won the tender fair and square, so there is no concern over

the future of current staff. New GPs are being recruited for September. A new phone system is on the horizon, as are electronic prescribing and appointments. Of course, the NHS is under huge financial pressure and we must expect changes to accommodate the Government cuts.

UPROCKIN

Uprockin was attended by 700 adults and 240 children.

The crowds were undeterred by the change in the weather and made full use of the tea stall run in the

Guide Centre and the Football Club's BBQ. On the field we had the popular face painting tent and climbing wall. The DJ and judges worked really hard all day. Our grateful thanks go to them and to Revolution Skate Park and Source BMX for providing all the prizes. There were fewer boot fair



Photos courtesy of Frank Page

stalls than expected, but we hope this part of the event will expand in future years. The event could not take place without all the volunteers who marshalled the car park and helped with the set up and litter collection. Well done all. A full list of the winners is on the Council Website.

SEWAGE ISSUES

A Southern Water engineer attended a reported sewage overflow in the Marden Road recently and inspected the area. He reported that the problem was caused by the pump being unable to process the volume of waste produced. It had been installed in the 1960's and a lot of new housing has been built since then. The problem is exacerbated by the inappropriate flushing of wet wipes, sanitary products and cotton buds. The Parish Council has been concerned about the infrastructure problems of the village for some time now and aims to put pressure on Southern Water and any future developers to improve the situation.

MAJOR PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Vogt Solar UK is proposing to install a 14MW solar farm covering 21.5 hectares (53 acres) at Great Pagehurst Farm. MBC was asked to determine whether the company needed to submit a formal Environmental Impact Assessment with its eventual application. The Borough Council determined that it was not required; Staplehurst Parish Council had requested that an EIA be provided. Vogt Solar has held a public exhibition of its plans and an application for planning permission is awaited. MBC has granted full planning permission for a development of 53 houses by Taylor Wimpey

THE PARADE

MBC and the Parish Council have been working together to try and improve the cleanliness of the Parade area which is in private ownership. Since mid-July a local resident has been employed by the landlord. He is doing an amazing job, sweeping and cleaning The Parade properly. We hope that you have noticed such a great improvement – and long may it continue!

SURRENDEN FIELD

Staplehurst Parish Council has agreed to approach MBC with a view to acquiring the freehold or a longer lease of the Surrenden Field. At present this is owned by the Borough Council with a lease to the Parish Council that expires in 2019 and it is felt that a longer period is needed to warrant significant investment. Meanwhile it is planned to employ contractors to cut the hedge along the eastern boundary of the field in the autumn.

CARNIVAL AND FETE

Following last year's Jubilee celebrations, the Carnival & Fete on Saturday 29th June returned to its usual format – plus something extra. We were lucky enough to have fine weather and after the official opening by our longest-serving Parish Councillor, Joan Buller, a good crowd enjoyed the stalls by local organisations, the displays and the fun fair in the afternoon. Many residents returned for an evening of music from party band The Right Stuff and it was a wonderful experience to see so many Staplehurst people of all ages enjoying themselves together. We owe a big debt of gratitude to the sponsors who made much of this possible – including the free glossy programme distributed to every house in the village – and to the stalwart Carnival & Fete Committee volunteers who made it all happen and were even clearing up long after the end of the concert to leave the Surrenden Field tidy for the next day. This committee are looking for new members. Would you like to join them? Please contact the Clerk who will forward your details.



south of Oliver Road. The planning application for the conversion of the Bell public house to four residential units was considered by Staplehurst Parish Council's Planning Committee on 5th August which recommended refusal, mainly on the grounds of access on to the A229 and lack of on-site parking. Bovis Homes have also held an exhibition of their proposals to build north of the Headcorn Road and again a planning application is awaited. Sainsbury's intends that work will begin on the petrol filling station and new factory for D.K.Holdings before the end of the year. Work on the new store will follow after the factory has been completed.

PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

Local electors and the press have a right to listen to Parish Council meetings, but not to take part. At the beginning and after the closure of the Parish Council meeting the Chairman will invite members of the public to speak for a maximum of 3 minutes each relating to issues on the Agenda or about issues of local concern.

You are requested to state your name and address prior to speaking. The Parish Council as a planning consultee makes recommendations to MBC which makes the decision. All meetings are held in the South Hall, Village Centre. Planning Committee meetings begin at 7pm with Full Council following on at 7.30pm (if planning agenda is short). Contact the Clerk for details or check the website calendar page.

Meetings (all Mondays) in 2013 are:-

September	2nd	16th
October	7th	21st
November	4th	18th
December	2nd	16th

WEBSITE

The Photo Gallery is going from strength to strength this year. There are already a good collection of pictures from events in 2013. Any pictures that you wish to enter on the Gallery please follow the instructions on the Gallery page or send them to photocomp@staplehurstvillage.org.uk This is the email address for the photo competition last year. Although there is no current competition the email address is still live and we do monitor it.

NUMBER 5 BUS SERVICE

The Parish Council has been very concerned by reports of the deteriorating bus service and has written to Arriva. Since then further incidents have been reported. Please inform both Arriva and the Parish Council of any that you experience (with dates and times) to ensure a strong evidence base in future communications.

FIRE SAFETY

In June the Parish Council had a presentation from the Kent Fire & Rescue Service who also had a stand at the Fete. It was highlighted that a large number of elderly people in the village did not have working smoke alarms in their houses. Home safety visits including free smoke alarms are still an important part of the community safety initiatives. There are some criteria, but this should not deter requests. In general terms senior citizens, vulnerable groups, lone parent families or any with a risk factor will most likely qualify. At the very least they would receive information. Help might include providing items such as fireproof bedding and fire retardant materials for immobile smokers, safety gadgets such as cooker switches for dementia sufferers and smoke alarms designed for visually and hearing impaired people. If you know someone who may need fire safety advice or specialist help please call KFRS (free from landlines) on 0800 923 7000.

MOBILE POLICE CONTACT POINTS

Kent Police is sending mobile units to visit selected locations in West Kent to provide a visible contact point for police services. They will be making fortnightly visits to the Parade between noon and 1.30 pm on Fridays starting from 16th August. For further information visit http://www.kent.police.uk/contact_us/pages/Maidstone_meetings.html.

Parish Council Information

COUNCILLORS

John Perry (Chairman)
Tom Burnham (Joint Vice Chairman)
Paul Kelly (Joint Vice Chairman)
Paul Butcher (Chairman of Planning)
Margaret Ashby
Joan Buller
Anne Gosling
Simon Green
Neal Kemp
Sam Lain-Rose
Barrett Manning
John Reardon
Adele Sharp
Rory Silkin
Peter Spearink

CLERK

Mr Mick Westwood

RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER

Mrs Sue Bassett

ASSISTANT to CLERK

Mrs Deborah Jenkins

Address:

The Parish Office,
Village Centre, High Street.
Staplehurst TN12 0BJ

Email: clerk@staplehurstvillage.org.uk

Tel: 01580 891761

Opening hours:

9am to 1pm Mondays to Fridays,
except on Thursdays when it is by
appointment.

SURGERIES AT THE LIBRARY

Two Parish Councillors will attend a surgery at the Library on the second Saturday of each month from 10am until noon. Borough Councillor Lusty's surgery will continue on the last Saturday of each month. PCSO Pete Gardner will hold Police Surgeries on these Saturdays at the library:-
October 12th 10am to 11am
November 23rd 10am to 11am
December 21st 10am to 11am

You are welcome to talk through any local problems or ask questions about local issues.

