

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS FROM THE PAST (3)

Third edition already of this section. As stated before, 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. The reader will observe that some things never change. In this edition, speeding is the common issue that links us to our past. The Staplehurst Society website, which we would highly recommend is: <http://www.staplehurstsociety.org/>



18th June 1912 – Agreed that the words “Fire Engine Station” be painted on the notice and that the keys were available at Mr. Lavender’s shop in High Street. (This can be seen on photographs of the shed which The Staplehurst Society have in their archive). The PC were responsible for all items needed by the brigade – hoses, buckets, oils for the machine – and the insurance of the firemen when they were called to extinguish a fire. Clerk to ask Kent Insurance company if the sum of £3.00 for the premium was sufficient to cover the firemen who were only employed by the PC when called out to a fire!

15th April 1913 – Annual Parish Meeting – The Council were still discussing whether hydrants should be fixed to the water main in the Parish for use in case of fire.

5th May 1913 – Vote of thanks given to Mr. Williams Hoare “for the able manner in which he had presided since the formation of the PC in 1894”.

12th August 1913 – A letter from a resident complained of the annoyance to residents due to motor traffic through the village. The Clerk was instructed to write to KCC to request “that a special speed limit be fixed more specially to the heavy motor traffic passing through the village and that steps be taken to deal with the offenders who exceed the speed to the danger of the public”. (Nothing changes!)

8th August 1914 – KCC requested the PC to convene a meeting relating to “the existing state of affairs with a view to providing in each parish a Special Constable to be employed for the protection of life and property to act without pay”. (The day the war broke out – The Great War 1914-18).

3rd September 1914 – The Chairman reported that a public meeting had been held at which Special Constables had been appointed and that they had commenced their duties. The PC to purchase as many lamps for the Constables as they think necessary, also note books.

20th January 1915 – SE & CR to be advised at the extremely dangerous level of the platform at Staplehurst Station, it being much too low for persons alighting from the trains.

STAPLEHURST

PARISH COUNCIL

VILLAGE
UPDATE
WINTER
2021

VOLUNTEERING MAKES A DIFFERENCE – STAPLEHURST NEEDS YOU!

Volunteering has always been a prevalent feature of our village. Looking a few months back, we can all recall the tidy up of The Parade with record numbers of volunteers or the painting of the library and the regular litter-picking days. Possibly the best example of volunteering took place during the pandemic and how the Staplehurst Emergency Help Team and the Community Hub stepped in to reach out and help the most vulnerable in our Parish. They were first recognised with the KALC Award that we published on our previous issue. This group of volunteers have just received a second award, this time from Maidstone Borough Council. The name of the award represents all that a healthy community should be about: the Compassionate Community Award. The Parish Council Chairman, Councillor Castro and four volunteers attended a reception to receive this Award. Up to 90 volunteers stepped in and provide support to around 8% of the population of our Parish. They even provided some sporadic help to individuals and families of neighbouring villages. Scan this QR code for a brief article about the event.



MBC Mayor Fay Gooch and the SEHT team



The Compassionate Community Award



Queue for litter picking

All your Parish councillors are volunteers, as well, and put in many hours to develop and help this community. There are many more volunteers in Staplehurst. However, there is a huge need for more helping hands in plenty of areas. If you have a bit of time and feel that you want to contribute, there are a number of initiatives you can be part of. Think about it and consider contacting us. We need you!

Volunteering has numerous benefits for everyone: it builds community, reduces loneliness, increases socialising, builds bonds, creates friendships, develops emotional stability, improves self-esteem, helps those most affected by mental illness, promotes longevity, reduces risk of Alzheimer’s, leads to graceful aging, burns that stubborn belly fat, provides better job prospects and adds fun to your years.

VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITY	BRIEF DESCRIPTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Become a Councillor Litter picking Village Centre The Jubilee Field Greener Group Speedwatch Reporting Parish Council Publications delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are sometimes places available. Keep an eye on the PC website. This takes place around twice a year. Always looking for an extra pair of hands: gardening, DIY jobs such as sanding and repainting, small building works, etc. The Monarchs need volunteers to organise the parking on match days. Looking after different planters and flower beds. Contributing to and looking after the community herb bed. Tidying up and maintaining the Wimpey Field Nature Reserve. Get trained and become part of the monitoring scheme. Reporting is one way of volunteering, too! Report potholes, traffic infringements, antisocial behaviour, bus delays, etc. We always need volunteers to distribute the Village Update and the Annual Report.

PARISH COUNCIL INFORMATION

Councillors

Paddy Riordan (CHAIRMAN)
Colin Bowden
Joan Buller
José Castro
Eric Hotson
Sam Lain-Rose
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

PARISH COUNCIL OFFICE

The Parish Office is now open and usually staffed for the normal pre-Covid hours 9.00am – 1.00pm Monday to Thursday.

Due to the continued prevalence of Covid 19 and the small size of our offices, we are operating on a limited staffing arrangement. Please, call 01580 891761 before attending to ensure a member of staff will be available.

SURGERIES AT THE LIBRARY

Surgeries are the last Saturday of the month the next one will be 27th November

PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

Next meetings: Full Council is 29th November then 13th December.

Planning committee is 6th December and 20th December.

For both meetings only a 2 week gap due to Christmas. Both at the Village Centre South Hall at 7:30pm



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Website



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Let's Light Up Staplehurst this Christmas - THE COMMUNITY EVENTS GROUP



After the dismal times we've all experienced over the last couple of years, we're asking every house in our village to display lights in their road facing windows, or outside, this Christmas.

Need an incentive? There'll be 10 £25.00 prizes for houses displaying lights. We'll select the houses at random.

For those going the extra mile, there will be prizes for the best (£100); second (£50) and 2 prizes for third (£25).

Judging will be after 12th December between 6 and 9 pm. You can also post pictures, of your own or any that you think are contenders, on the Staplehurst Community Events Group Facebook page. We will be sure to view those. Remember to include the address!

A really big thank you to David Wilson Homes for sponsoring this Staplehurst Community Events Group event.

COMMUNITY MEETING

The Parish Council held a public meeting on the 28th September at Staplehurst primary school. It was very well attended. Our guest speaker was Chief Inspector Gary Woodward from Kent Police. Cllr Paddy Riordan asked questions relating to policing issues: speeding, parking, unregistered cars, antisocial behaviour, shoplifting, arson and criminal damage. He said that our community paid in the region of £600,000 from Council tax towards policing and felt that the people of Staplehurst didn't consider they were getting value for money and indeed a much more visible police presence should be seen in the village. Many residents and local business people spoke, raising other issues with Chief Inspector Woodward, some of which were quite concerning. There was a very strong feeling amongst residents that the police were not being proactive to their approach to crime in Staplehurst. Chief Inspector Woodward offered some immediate ideas, including putting Staplehurst on a red route for police cars returning from calls, to travel through the village and visit problematic areas. The Parish Council feel that there has already been a marked improvement in relation to policing since the meeting. We will continue to monitor the situation. The matter of the closure of High Weald Academy was also strongly discussed. The Parish Council made it clear that they would be supporting residents. The Parish Council continue to be actively involved with all parties in relation to this issue. Road safety matters were discussed and information was provided by one of our very able Road safety group members. On a positive note, no other matters were raised with the Parish Council, so it looks like the attendees felt that we are doing quite a good job! It was mentioned by a member of the public that it was clear a lot of hard work goes on behind the scenes at the PC and we are very pleased that this is recognised by our residents.

STAPLEHURST MEN'S SHED

We have restarted our weekly Thursday morning meetings at Staplehurst Youth Club Hut (beside the Village Centre building). Currently these are only between 10am until 12pm (subject to review).

The Staplehurst Men's Shed is a place where men from Staplehurst and surrounding villages come together to socialise, play pool, scrabble, share ideas and skills, join the choir, participate on practical projects and make new friends. Tea and coffee are provided. Current Membership ages range from 50 -80+.



We are planning more practical projects in the community. We welcome new members (if double Covid-vaccinated) so come along and join in. To find out more, contact Richard James, Leader, Staplehurst Men's Shed: 07976 009522 - thestaplehurstshed@outlook.com

SPEEDWATCH

Speedwatch is a Parish Council funded and Kent Police approved scheme to help keep Staplehurst residents safe. We monitor the speeds of vehicles on our roads. Just our presence in hi-vis jackets has an excellent beneficial effect. Persistent offenders and those exceeding speed limits dramatically are sent letters by the police. The more evidence we send in, the more likely it will be that police will set up enforcement positions in Staplehurst. In September speeders were given points on their licences and a stolen car was recovered.

To volunteer (aged 18+) to give time to this scheme, first visit 'csw online'. There is a presentation and safety training to watch. Then roadside training in Staplehurst will see you added to our small team.

Everyone can help! If you see a **road accident** or incident, please report it with as much detail as possible to staplehurstroadinfo@gmail.com

WIMPEY FIELDS - A GREEN PLACE OF OUR OWN

Mention the name to some residents of the village and they will go misty-eyed with memories. "Oh yes, I played there as a child and my children ran through it when they were young." will be the response. It seems that growing up in Staplehurst is entwined with fond memories of the place. It's only fair then that newcomers to the village be introduced to this beautiful green space - now owned and managed by Staplehurst Parish Council.

With this in mind the Greener Staplehurst Group (a sub-committee of the Parish Council) hosted two walks, led by Peter Spearink, on a Sunday in early September. Newcomers to the village were introduced to the Wimpey Fields while long established residents learnt more about its history, path names, future plans and current management.

The site was given over to the Parish Council by Taylor Wimpey in 2017, for the conservation of nature. It came with a management plan to help maximise biodiversity, including protecting the pond habitat of the great crested newt (now on the IUCN red list of endangered species). The site is a haven for all sorts of wildlife including birds, butterflies, adders and foxes.

While the area has been managed by groups of volunteers and the Payback team in the past, at present some areas have become (temporarily) overgrown. However, a new plan of work, is now being devised to bring the Fields back to their best.

Staplehurst is SO lucky to have this amazing green space where we can walk, breathe and enjoy nature.



If any of you want to get involved in helping to keep Wimpey Fields an amazing place remember that the Greener Staplehurst Group are still looking for volunteers. Contact Mina McPhee for more information on 07957 460806.

MEMORIALS IN STAPLEHURST

The main war memorial is the actual St George's chapel in the south-eastern corner of the church. The names of all WW1 and WW2 dead are on two plaques inside the chapel. We also have three other WW2 memorials in the parish. All the work of the late Ted Sergison, who was our village military historian. Most impressive of these is the American and Canadian memorial in Chickenden Lane. This records the fact that Canadian pilots worked up this forward landing ground before the USAAF took over. Sadly over 20 airmen died flying out of Staplehurst and are now on our roll of honour.

In Grave Lane there is a small cross recording the site of a crashed Hurricane flown by Pilot Officer Clifton. Part of this memorial is a recovered piece of the engine. Lastly in the station booking hall there is a splendid brass plaque to the memory of Flight Officer Doutrepoint, whose Hurricane was shot down and crashed into the station killing the booking clerk as well. There are two small footpaths named for these two men. We will tell you the sad story of Flight Sgt Fitzgerald in the next Village Update. There is a common misconception: the memorial at the crossroads is to local Marian Martyrs and has nothing to do with the war memorials, we will also learn about in the future.



Memorial in Grave Lane



The Great War Memorial



Plaque for Officer Doutrepoint

STAPLEHURST WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

The WI will celebrate its 100th birthday in June 2022, and we are deep in planning for that auspicious event. We are a friendly group of women enjoying regular monthly meetings and plenty of activity in between. Since Covid rules have relaxed, meetings have included a picnic in the park, a garden party, our produce show and a talk on "the Glory of MGM musicals". Future meetings we have planned include subjects as varied as a schoolgirl's war, our Christmas party and a demonstration about container candles. In between meetings there are plenty of other activities. During the period when we could not meet up we kept in touch by Facebook, phone calls and newsletters. We produced hundreds of masks, and Christmas bunting for the parade. Even non-sewers were able to help by cutting out pieces. Staplehurst archive holds several large scrapbooks which the WI have created, recording the life of the village over the decades. We are bringing these up-to-date for our Centenary. If this sounds enjoyable enough to explore further, please drop me an email. Caroline Highwood, Secretary: cehighwood@waitrose.com



PLANNING COMMITTEE



Planning applications continue to come in at a steady rate. Our most recent applications to keep your eye on are the Tesco sites at the North end of Staplehurst near the railway line and the old Texaco garage site near the crossroads. No formal application has been received for the garage site yet, but there has been promotion for luxury retirement homes there. The recent rain has once again raised the issue of flooding in certain areas where development is planned or ongoing. Please do make sure you use the Maidstone Borough Council planning portal to look at planning applications. You can then comment about whether you approve of the plans or think they should be rejected / amended. MBC planning like planning reasons for your opinions.

VILLAGE CENTRE



There are lots of things happening at the centre currently: We have a new kids art class on a Tuesday and Egyptian Belly Dancing starting on a Thursday after half term. There is the Under five's Halloween kids party coming up as well as a One Off comedy night on Friday 3rd December and we're having a panto on Friday 17th December. Check out our Facebook page for more details!

Any volunteers able to give a little time to their community can check out the Staplehurst Volunteer Page on Facebook and join others that are giving their spare 10 minutes as they pass, to pull up some weeds. Thank you to all those that support us.