

Village Update

SPRING 2021

www.staplehurst-pc.uk

SO IT WAS CHRISTMAS!

Traditionally the Christmas period is that time of the year when we all gather with friends and family, put on our best clothes, dance and celebrate. We travel, visit restaurants and children adventure into Winter Wonderland with our money. None of this has been possible this year. Instead, we have become experts in Zoom reunions, facetime, & distant toasts with our loved ones; crossing our fingers when reading the news. Many people created bigger and better Christmas displays this year in and outside their homes to emulate the best of the times and the Parish Council joined in this year.

An initiative to install a Christmas tree and decorations at the Parade was started by Katie Higgins & the team at Made By Kent, who raised significant funds through a GoFundMe project. Kind donations from many businesses and local residents meant that money was available to purchase a large Christmas tree, along with lighting and various other decorative items to brighten up the village at Christmas time.

Borough Councillor Louise Brice kindly obtained the relevant permissions required for the project.

Many Parish Councillors and residents joined the team

and were further supported by Kent & Sussex Tree Care, Acorn Hire, T & S Engineering Services and The Community Payback team to install the tree along with lighting on both sides of the parade of shops and in the large NHS tree adjacent to the library.

Our wonderful ladies from the Women's Institute made lots of decorative bunting to decorate the whole area. Richard James from The Men's Shed built silver stars that accompanied the tree, like sunflowers follow that the sun.

The outcome was a beautifully decorated and brightly illuminated Parade area throughout the Christmas period which was greatly appreciated by everyone after what had been a difficult year. The Parish Council also arranged for illuminated Christmas motifs to be fitted to all the lampposts up and down the High Street.

All excess funds were used to contribute provisions to the Community Hub to assist residents affected by the COVID-19 crisis.

We all look forward to a similar and even more spectacular display for Christmas 2021.



Staplehurst

Parish Council

PARISH COUNCIL MERIT AWARDS

Every year the Parish Council likes to recognise and reward a member of our local community through a Merit Award for their outstanding contributions to the Parish throughout the year. This year the Council have also introduced a Junior Merit Award.

Following a number of very worthy nominations, the Council are delighted to announce that this year's winners are Patrick Blunt and Isla Underdown.

Patrick Blunt

Patrick is a modest man who has many talents. He is a 'Raynet' radio expert, a first-aider, member of the Emergency Help Team, looks after our defibrillator at the library and champion litter-cleaver. Throughout this challenging year, he has been out early every morning, keeping our streets clean. He has different routes each day. He also reports any fly-tipping, damage or abandoned vehicles. Unless you are an early-riser you will have missed seeing him in action! He is also a very helpful neighbour. The Parish Council thought about giving Patrick 'Freedom of the Parish', but he already has this. Thank you so much, Patrick, for making Staplehurst a better place. You are a well-deserved winner.

The award was presented on December 16th 2020 by Councillor Joan Buller.



Isla Underdown

Isla is the winner of the Junior Merit Award. This summer 6-year-old Isla, decided that she wanted to do something to help keep the village clean and help save the turtles in our oceans. She decided to undertake a sponsored litter pick with the goal of

clearing 100 bags of litter from in and around the village. So far she has raised an extraordinary £1485 for Plastic Oceans UK and cleared about half of her target of 100 bags. An amazing achievement for a special young lady. The Parish Council salute her! Thank you Isla for making Staplehurst a cleaner place and thinking about the future of our Oceans and wildlife. You too are a well-deserved winner. The award was presented on behalf of the Council at School by her Headteacher Miss Davenport on the 14th Dec.

Thanks to our kind sponsors JBH Refurbishments, both winners received signed and framed certificates, an engraved vase and retail vouchers to buy themselves a treat!

STAPLEHURST IN WIKIPEDIA

We are in the process of reviewing, updating and extending the information that Wikipedia shows about Staplehurst. Anyone can write or edit most articles in Wikipedia, although there are certain control measures to ensure the quality. We have been researching a good number of other pages, and will be doing our homework prior to any possible alteration. Not only do we want to update the existing information and sections of the article

NEW PARISH CLERK

The Parish Council are delighted to introduce our new Parish Clerk. Alison Smith joined the Parish Office team late last year which enabled her to gain some valuable time and handover from our outgoing Clerk.

Alison moved to the village a little over a year ago from Ewell, Surrey, and she says the friendliness and welcome extended by villagers makes her feel like she has lived here for longer! Alison comes from a strong background in both public sector and banking and finance, predominantly in senior roles within the Human Resource arena. Her last role being as HR Director for London's largest and fastest growing independent environmental and recycling Company.

When asked about her new role she said "It's a steep learning curve, but very stimulating and interesting. The variety of work and contact with villagers means the job is never the same from day to day; is constantly busy, and very rewarding and a great opportunity to give something back to the Community I live in. It's a shame to have started the role during such difficult times, when it's not possible to meet people face to face, but I look forward to those times coming back and putting faces to the names."

I'm sure you would join the Parish Council in welcoming Alison and wishing her well as she settles into her new role.



NHS PRESCRIPTIONS DELIVERED FOR FREE

In times when it is important to preserve our health and those around us by minimising our outings, there are some services that deliver your medication to you for free.

Ordering online is easy, it is coordinated with your GP, who is informed by the service itself, you can track your orders, get reminders and even manage your whole family's prescriptions.

Lloyds Pharmacy has their system, called Echo, which can be accessed via <https://www.echo.co.uk/>, and which is a registered app in the NHS library. Pharmacy2u also works in a similar way. <https://www.pharmacy2u.co.uk/prescriptions/electronic-prescription-service-nhs>.

We have good reports of both services from residents in the village.



ECHO



PHARMACY2U

about Staplehurst, but also create new sections. It will not be a quick or immediate process as we are determined to ensure we produce good articles.

If any member of the public would like to help with this substantial but very rewarding task (Wikipedia is the 13th most visited web in the world), we encourage you to get in touch with us.

NEW ROAD NAMES - DICKENS GATE

Dickens Gate is the estate that is being currently built on the west side of the village off Marden Road. Many villagers will be unfamiliar with the new road names and their origins within this development. We will be giving a brief explanation of their relevance to Staplehurst in this article, and in our next edition.

HEGARTY, Ron and his wife moved to the village when the very first new housing estates were built in 1963 and his widow still lives in the same house. He was involved in too many village groups and organisations to mention them all. He was a councillor for 12 years and played Father Christmas up until his last illness. In the early years, he organised dances to get the new folk to meet the existing residents and help forge a new community.



Last year - Dorothy, his widow

JENKINS Harry and **ALLSTRUM Stan** were the founders of Homeleigh Timber & Building Supplies and the second and third generation are now running the business.

DAWKINS Jack is the name of the founder of DK Holdings, like Homeleigh, dating from the 60's and still going strong.

LIDDICOAT, Jean was involved in the Sunday School for many years as well as the village history group.

ULRICSON, Colonel, was the Officer in charge of the USAAF advanced landing ground in 1944/5 on Chickenden Farm.

Finally, **PENFOLD Bill** was the village window cleaner and, in the summer, could regularly be seen painting shop fronts along the High Street as well.



Cllrs Spearink and Perry with Ron Hegarty (middle)

GREENER STAPLEHURST GROUP

Despite the unkind weather that we have recently experienced, the GSG has made great progress in our endeavours to further green our village.

Saplings have been planted at the Wimpey Nature Reserve and at other locations within Staplehurst. Additionally, a number of saplings that succumbed to the elements have been replaced by new stock.

We recently purchased a small quantity of cornflower and poppy seeds which have been planted in potting frames and which, will be ready for planting out in the Spring.

When restrictions are lifted, we will be starting on the Communal Herb Bed near the library with a view to having it ready later in the year. We will also be working on the Poyntell Pond to encourage more wildlife.

We will be seeking other areas of the village where we can plant flowers, both wild and cultivated.

We would like to thank the small team of litter pickers

who, before the shutdown, did a great job in the village. Once things return to normal, it is our intention to bring the challenges of litter in the village to the front of our agenda. We will restart the biannual litter pick, so brilliantly organised by Cllr. Buller, but our intention is to ensure that this is an ongoing priority and must be tackled by us all!



We are always looking at ways to publicise our work and to raise funds. To this end, we have a limited number of T shirts for sale, modelled here by Thomas Charge. These will be sold for £12 for adults, in various sizes and £10 for children. They are currently

available from the Community Hub. There is limited stock, but if there is sufficient demand we will purchase more. T off the Summer with a T Shirt!

STAPLEHURST RUNNING CLUB

The Staplehurst Running Club is one of the most prominent clubs that we have in our village and is deeply involved in supporting various initiatives of the Parish Council. For example, the club has sponsored one of the planters that embellish the Parade, for which they must receive due recognition and appreciation.

The club began on 8th May 2014 and since then has seen hundreds of runners of all shapes, sizes and ages. At the moment, their youngest runner is 12 and the eldest is 70! There is also a great Fitness Walking group for those who are unable to run, recovering from injury or illness or just prefer to walk. Most people join the club as complete non-runners with many having not run since leaving school. They join one of the beginner's programmes (January, April or September) with gentle walk/run intervals, gradually increasing the running time. At the end of the 10 weeks people are then able to 5k! Then you may join the mixed ability group. There is a real mix of runners, from those who are happy running a couple of times a week with their friends, to those who train for races including 5 milers, 10ks, half marathons and even marathons! There is always plenty of inspiration and motivation around you.

Running aside, people attend the club for a variety of reasons: to make new friends, to lose weight, to feel fitter and improve their health or just to try something new. As with many other forms of exercise, running can help reduce stress, emotional strain and even mild depression. Those 'runner's high' endorphins really can help improve your mood and turn a bad day into a much better one.

Why not come along and give it a go? They'd love to have you join them.

IMPORTANCE OF REPORTING

One of the most relevant ways we can contribute to the society we are part of is by reporting issues that may affect us or others. Be it litter, road traffic accidents, a pest problem, a pothole, or a bus that never comes; every problem has a place for reporting it. It is certainly within our rights to expect a good standard of services, but it is within our duties, as well, to report the issues and not to expect that others will do it for us, whether they are the public or an organisation. We have made it easy for you to inform about an issue by gathering all the links for reporting on one page under the Local info page: <https://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/report-a-problem/>



PARISH NEWS FROM THE 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. Ron was a very active and popular member of the community, and the Parish Council is delighted to say that we have a new street on the Dickens Gate estate named after him. The documents give an interesting insight into Parish Council activities in bygone days. Therefore, we are going to publish them in this section spread over a number of issues. The Staplehurst Society website, which we would highly recommend is: <http://www.staplehurstsociety.org/>



More from the pages of Staplehurst Parish Council Minute Books which give an insight into the workings of the Parish Council from 1906 to 1920 and the contribution made by residents with their observations and wishes for improvement in the village. A period when the motor vehicle was making its presence felt, sewerage was a problem, postal services could be bettered - and the fire engine was a responsibility!

17th April 1905 - Clerk reported that the Postmaster at Tonbridge had written, with reference to the resolution passed at the last meeting of the Parish Council (PC) applying for a Sunday delivery throughout the Parish, that a two thirds majority of the PC was required and as the decision taken at the last meeting did not give that, no action could be taken. PC to make a further attempt. General Manager of the South Eastern &

Chatham Railway (SE & CR) wrote to say he could not agree to cheap tickets to London on Wednesday mornings.

17th April 1906 - Complaint sent to Superintendent of Police at Cranbrook regarding 'the great speed which some motor cars had taken recently in passing through the village'. Complaint sent to Kent County Council (KCC) about the state of the surface of the main road.

19th February 1907 - County Surveyor asked if it was desirable to tar the main road in order to prevent dust nuisance and asked for half the expense to defray the cost should the PC desire it. It was decided to canvass the village and the Railway District. (This description occurs several times in early Minute Books of the PC).

6th March 1908 - Annual Parish Meeting - Residents asked that KCC be made to place a 10mph limit to vehicles as they pass through the village. The attention of the Police to be called to the chalking on footpaths, fences and walls. (Early 20th Century graffiti?)

24th March 1908 - County Surveyor advised the PC that KCC would not pay anything out of its funds for road watering but that it would pay half the cost of treating the surface of the roads with tar. He also advised that KCC would not continue the scavenging of the village street (street sweeping) unless the Rural District Council (RDC) contributed one third of the costs.

9th December 1908 - KCC wrote to state that it could not accede to the PC request to limit the speed of motor cars proceeding through the village. A petition was received from residents of Clapper Lane asking for something to be done to the entrance at the north end to make it more convenient for those wishing to use the road in times of flood. Clerk was to arrange a meeting of RDC representatives with PC members at that lane to decide what could be done. (One of the first site meetings?)

21st March 1909 - Annual Parish Meeting - A request made that a Reading Room and Library be made available but, as there was no support from others attending the meeting, the suggestion was dropped! (A purpose built Library came into being in 1972.)

Parish Council Information

COUNCILLORS

Paddy Riordan (Chairman)
Colin Bowden
Joan Buller
José Castro
Bradley Gartan
David George
Sam Lain-Rose
Simon McNeill
John Perry (Vice-Chairman)
Adele Sharp
Peter Spearink
Natasha Thomas

CLERK

Alison Smith

DEPUTY CLERK AND FINANCE OFFICER

Mrs Deborah Jenkins

PARISH SUPPORT OFFICER

Mrs Jean Terry

CARETAKER

Mr Paul Nyahwa

Address:

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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. This will be reviewed regularly.

SURGERIES AT THE LIBRARY

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

PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

At 7.00pm every third Monday, at the time of printing are held online via Zoom. Next meetings: 22nd February, 15th March, 6th & 26th April, 17th May, 7th June. Planning Committee meets the following day, Tuesday at 7.00pm.



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