

Village Update

SPRING 2020

www.staplehurst-pc.uk

CHRISTMAS IN STAPLEHURST

The Parade was completely brightened up for the Christmas period with the Family Fireworks Group providing colourful lighting on one of the large trees. Made by Kent engaged with local shops and businesses to sponsor Christmas trees throughout the large planter areas. The trees were brightly decorated by children within the village. A community event was created where we had an official turning on of the lights, carols were sung by the primary school choir, Murcatto Wines supplied mulled wine and the Staplehurst Community Events Group even managed to get Father Christmas to attend.

It was a thoroughly pleasant event enjoyed by all who attended and everyone will be looking forward to it again this year.

VILLAGE CLEAN-UP

Our spring Village Clean-Up this year will be on Saturday 28th March. This popular community event delivers a cleaner village, some gentle exercise and a real feeling of achievement. Meet at the Youth Club (near the Village Centre) from 10.00 a.m. on the day. All the equipment you need will be supplied (thanks to Maidstone Borough Council). Children are welcome to help, but all under-18s must be accompanied by a responsible adult. Refreshments will be provided after you've finished.



ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

The meeting will take place on Monday 30th March in the North Hall, Staplehurst Village Centre. The Parish Council hosts this public meeting to provide local electors with a forum for discussion of parish issues and to take reports from councillors and village groups. Written reports from village groups (500 words max.) and any items for discussion may be sent to the Parish Office by 16th March. Reports will be displayed at the meeting and published on the parish council website. Oral reports and questions will be taken at the meeting if time permits.

Staplehurst

Parish Council

ANNUAL MERIT AWARD

The Parish Council was delighted to present Elaine Martin with our annual Merit award. Elaine, a very popular and long-term resident, was considered a most deserving recipient by all members of the PC.

Elaine is well known in Staplehurst. Having worked at Staplehurst Under 5 Playgroup for 26 years she got to know the children and their families well, and even children of the children she had taught. She was a very well loved and respected supervisor there.

About 25 years ago she read in her church notices a request for helpers at McCabe Sunday lunch club, held monthly. She volunteered to help with the washing up etc. "anything as long as I don't have to cook" she said.

Soon after that she took on the role of cooking, together with her husband Trevor and other friends she persuaded



to help. When she retired from playgroup in 2000, she took on the Thursday lunch cooking as well, which takes place every week apart from a short break at Christmas, Easter and the summer. This involves not only cooking but planning

the meals, shopping, preparing vegetables, organising rotas, and keeping volunteer staff and members happy.

She ensures the members have a good nutritional meal and moreover that they can enjoy the social aspect in the company of others. Additionally, she arranges outings and parties for the members.

She cares for all the members, visits them if they are unwell or if they move into nursing homes. She contacts their relatives if she has concerns and goes way beyond the role of "cook".

Over the past year, despite being unwell, Elaine remained involved by advising and supporting the "alternative" cooks, reminding them of how, when and where things happened, when special birthdays were taking place, etc. and ensuring the lunches went without a hitch. Staff and members were thrilled when she made such a good recovery and is now back taking the reins!

Well done, Elaine – and Thank You!



GREENER STAPLEHURST

Greener Staplehurst Group is a collective of local residents and Parish Councillors who care deeply about the natural world and who want to help mitigate the effect of the climate and ecological emergency, as declared by Maidstone Borough Council.

We are embarking upon a journey to make areas of our village more biodiverse and supportive of nature. This spring you will start to see wild flowers, longer grasses and pollinator friendly planting in various spots around the village. Do look out for our Greener Staplehurst Group signs too; these will mark the areas we are working on.

We are starting fairly small but are hoping to expand the project quickly. We are fortunate to be supported in our work by the expertise of Michael Wachter from Great Dixter, who will be giving us seeds and plants as well as practical advice and support. Great Dixter are consulting on several projects in villages around the

Weald and helping to join the dots between more nature friendly areas.

If you would like to support us in this work, the more diverse your garden is the better; a range of trees, shrubs and flowers makes a huge difference and



if you leave an area of your grass to grow longer over the summer, you will be creating a haven for a huge range of insects who benefit from longer grasses, including crickets and butterflies.

We very much hope you will join us on this journey.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Parish Council, the Neighbourhood Plan Review Group and The Greener Staplehurst Group are heavily involved in providing evidence to Maidstone Borough Council to object to any further building in Staplehurst that conflicts with the Staplehurst neighbourhood plan.

In the 2016 referendum, 92% of voters supported our neighbourhood plan which sets out our vision for Staplehurst up until the year 2031. We are supported in our efforts by our Borough Councillors and we are lobbying Helen Grant MP who is very supportive of neighbourhood plans.

The Parish Council will be calling a meeting which all residents are very welcome to attend, to highlight issues in the call for sites and the local plan review. The date of this meeting will be Tuesday 25th February. We hope that all interested parties will be attending. The Parish Council considers this a very important issue and we hope to receive resounding support from our residents. We would therefore be very grateful to see many of you at the meeting if you are able to attend.

PAYBACK TEAM



The Payback Team members have continued to work very hard to improve our village. Recent work involved a lot of path clearing where vegetation had encroached from each side reducing the width of the path. They have also planted 12 sacks of bulbs by the library and along the line of Horse Chestnut trees. Quite a bit of ditching is to be done before the summer when we shall be doing some painting.

RECYCLING AT STAPLEHURST LIBRARY

The Library have set up two recycling collection boxes located in the Library for:

- Crisp Packets (including the outer bag of multi packs) - any brand.
- Confectionery wrappers and bags - any brand.

Please do not include any wrapping that can go into home recycling (paper, foil, etc).

The collection boxes will be sorted by hand. There is a full list of what can and cannot be included next to the boxes. Please ensure only acceptable items are placed into the recycling boxes. Thank you.

STAY SAFE STAPLEHURST

The security, safety and wellbeing of ourselves and our family are vitally important to us all.

Staplehurst Community Events Group and the Parish Council are

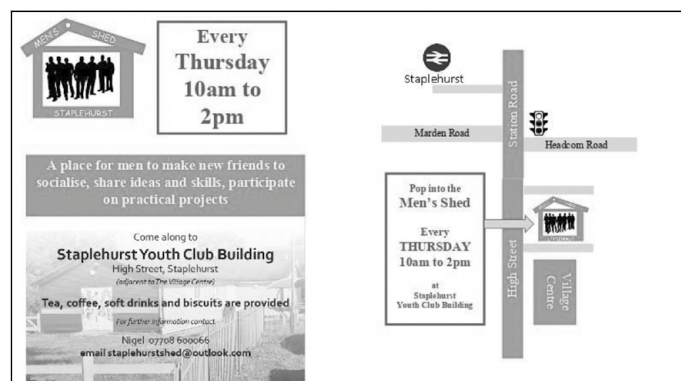
organising this year's annual Stay Safe Staplehurst event which will be sponsored by Golding Homes Community Chest. The event will take place on Saturday 18th April from 10.30am to 3.00pm at Staplehurst Village Centre.

Please come along, visit the stalls and displays to find out how to better protect yourself, your family and your home.



THE MEN'S SHED

As many of you know, but possibly not all, every Thursday from 10am to 2pm, the Men's Shed opens its doors at the Youth Club building. It is a superb opportunity for all



those men that have some spare time. Open to ANY man aged 18+, it provides not only a place to have a chat or some company but there are also talks that particularly concern men including: men's health, men's mental health awareness, etc. Culturally, it is expected that men keep everything to themselves and cope with their very own problems. The Men's Shed is an ideal place to fight these clichés, open up, break the ice and meet new people. It is also a good opportunity for people that have moved to the area and want to establish some connections.

Nevertheless, not everything is as serious as it is described above. In fact, if you just want a game of pool or scrabble or dominoes or just a chat and a laugh over a cup of tea or coffee then this is for you. It's the kindness and generosity of its members that's the key. So, if anyone wants to experience fun, banter, laughter and a sense of humour, why not pop in on a Thursday and see if you like it.

Not many communities have this useful service available. This is why the Staplehurst Men's Shed is seen as a beacon to other Men's Sheds in Kent as the right way to engage with men. Hence, we encourage everybody to use it. We hope to see you soon.

STAPLEHURST EMERGENCY HELP TEAM AGM

A willing volunteer to give practical help or support is very much valued by those in distress. The Emergency Help Team provides voluntary assistance to support such people in cases of non-life-threatening emergencies.

The Annual General Meeting of the Staplehurst Emergency Help Team will take place at 7.30pm on Thursday 12th March at the Free Church in Station Road. Please come along to the meeting to receive a warm welcome and find out more about the team's work. Read more about the team at <https://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurst-parish-council-13607/emergency-help-team/>

Most of you will know by now about VE75 and our plans to mark the occasion. For those of you who are not online, here is what we plan for the weekend of 8th to 10th of May:

In the **Village Centre North Hall**, we are holding a small exhibition mainly for our children but also, we hope, of interest to everyone. The highlight will be an accurate copy of an Anderson Shelter, which will be fitted out just as though it had been through the blitz. The Scouts will be recreating an Air Raid Precautions (ARP) post alongside a display about the ARP. We also hope to gather an exhibit of wartime memorabilia to be displayed. Around the walls will be a series of Home Front posters of the period and we hope, lots of your family photos of the war at home and abroad, in and out of uniform, so please look through your family photos and share them with us all.

In the **Village Centre South Hall**, the WI will be setting up an exhibition on food and life on the home front as well as serving some wartime treats. There will be exhibitions of Jitterbug Dancing and at least one choir to sing favourite wartime songs for us. Home Guard helmets, Ration Cards and ARP Warden helmets will be displayed. The first 100 children under the age of 11 will be issued with identity labels, so please encourage your children to join us early in the weekend. There will also be a Piper and a Town Crier to ensure we can fully participate in the international part of the weekend.

On the Sunday there will be a church service celebrating 75 years of peace, which will be non-denominational and open to all. Full details are on our Facebook page www.facebook.com/pg/VEday75page where you will find regular news updates.

Throughout the weekend we will be collecting for The Soldiers, Sailors and Air Force charity which is the charity the Government has asked to be supported.



Your village needs you!

To share your wartime photos with us, please send them to StaplehurstVE75@gmail.com. Alternatively, take them in to the Parish Office where they will be scanned and kept safe until you collect them. We hope to have as many pictures as possible, especially of villagers and the village, so please do dig them out and share them with us.

If you would like to get involved by making a display for floor or wall please contact us. Also, if you can spare an hour or two to help with hosting the exhibition, we would be delighted to hear from you.

One last thing, you may come across some unexploded bombs scattered around the village but just follow the signs to a shelter and you will be fine!

PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

At 7.00pm every third Monday in the Village Centre, Planning Committee followed by Full Council. Next meetings: 24th February, 16th March, 6th & 27th April.

Parish Council Information

COUNCILLORS

Paddy Riordan (Chairman)
Colin Bowden
Joan Buller
José Castro
Mick Chapman
Susan Forward
David George
Sam Lain-Rose
Helen Miller
John Perry (Vice-Chairman)
Zara Rawlinson
Adele Sharp
Peter Spearink
Natasha Thomas
Catherine Walsh

CLERK

Mr Mick Westwood

DEPUTY CLERK AND FINANCE OFFICER

Mrs Deborah Jenkins

PARISH SUPPORT OFFICER

Mrs Jean Terry

CARETAKER

Mr Paul Nyahwa

Address:

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

Email: clerk@staplehurst-pc.uk

Tel: 01580 891761

Opening hours:

9am to 1pm Mondays to Thursdays,
other times by appointment (closed Fridays).

SURGERIES AT THE LIBRARY

- Borough Councillor Perry:
last Saturday of each month
from 10am until noon
 - Parish Council: last Saturday of each month
from 10am until noon
 - PCSO Pete Gardner: Saturdays from
10.00am to 11.00am on 22nd February,
14th March, 25th April, 16th May, 27th June
- You are welcome to talk through any local problems or ask questions about local issues.