

STAPLEHURST

PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

1 April 2022
to
31 March 2023

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF SERVICE



Staplehurst Parish Council marked the retirement from the Council of Mrs Joan Buller and 40 years of service. She was presented with a 'Scroll' confirming the Council's highest accolade, **"Freedom of the Parish"**.

Councillor Riordan, Chairman of Staplehurst Parish Council, said, "It is a genuine honour to have worked alongside Mrs Joan Buller who is stepping down after 40 years' service to Staplehurst Parish Council. Her knowledge and experience on all Parish matters is almost unique and her willingness to assist and encourage new members has proved so beneficial for the Parish Council. We have all benefitted from working alongside her and her wisdom, especially in planning matters where Planning Officers and Planning Inspectors alike tremble at the sight of her standing up, shuffling her papers and saying "Right, with regards"

Joan has made a huge contribution to the life in Staplehurst and has always been an upright character in the community. Her volunteering for so many organisations, groups and clubs is unrivalled.

I know Joan lives and breathes for the local community, always putting others before herself. Her tireless work has touched people of all ages, making a real difference to their physical and mental wellbeing in so many ways: making the village cleaner and tidier, supporting vulnerable people and delivering stimulating activities for young and old alike – to name but a few of her positive contributions. Everyone knows that Joan is (Photo courtesy of Frank Page) always available, approachable and ready to help.

Her caring, honesty and understanding of people are all attributes stemming from her teaching credentials matured here in Staplehurst. How lucky Staplehurst has been for the past 40 years to have had a truly magnificent resident and councillor.

It could have been so different, for whilst at teacher training college she qualified as a Football Association referee! I know her, and her husband Malcolm, are looking forward to a few holidays, seeing more of their children, and grandchildren as well as continuing to volunteer in various village groups. 40 years of service. We will really, really miss her at the Parish Council and wish her all the best for the future."

www.staplehurst-pc-uk

Published by Staplehurst Parish Council, Community Centre, High Street, Staplehurst, Kent TN12 0BJ

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



**COUNCILLOR
PADDY RIORDAN**

During the last year the Parish Council has worked tirelessly to improve the quality of life for residents.

This was the last year on the Parish Council of Joan Buller, her knowledge and expertise will be greatly missed. We will so, so, miss her.

We are delighted to have our Clerk, Richard who joined us last July, and all the team. Deborah, Jean and Paul, who have helped to improve the whole running of our parish office, assisting councillors and residents and helping us press forward with projects which we hope will be a huge benefit to our community.

We constantly engage with the Police, Maidstone Borough Council, Kent County Council, various utility services and authorities to help with the everyday running the village.

We organise a twice a year community litter pick, which I am delighted to say is well attended by our parishioners to try and keep our village clean.

We regularly work with the Community Payback Team to make various improvements, such as painting, cutting hedges, working on the telephone box, cleaning paths and driveways, cleaning gutters, working at Surrenden Field, the Jubilee Field and throughout the village.

The Parish Council Greener Staplehurst group do some fabulous work around the village, maintaining flower planters, planting wildflower areas and trees.

I'm delighted to say we now have some allotments on one of the new developments which the parish council are taking control of.

We work in partnership with all stakeholders to enhance

facilities around the village working with Play Place to find a safe and enjoyable environment for the three week summer long playscheme. We work with the Jubilee Field Management Committee and football clubs to enhance facilities at our sports field. We maintain the skate park.

This year we have taken ownership of the Youth Club building and I'm delighted to say the facility is being enjoyed by many of our young people in the village.

We enjoyed supporting the Women's Institute celebrate their hundred year anniversary, we brighten up the village every year at Christmas time with Christmas motifs and a Christmas tree & lights at the parade, we support the village Remembrance Day parade, we constantly attempt to improve communication with our residents via our website, social media and village update magazine.

We have various projects in the pipeline at the moment. Many of you will be aware of a 3G all-sports pitch we are looking into at the Jubilee Field. We want to improve the damaged brickwork at The Parade area and install bicycle racks at there. We have agreed to install an outdoor adult gym at Surrenden Field, due to open in summer 2023.

The Road Safety Group are constantly looking to improve the road and pavement network, which I'm sure you would appreciate is quite a difficult job at the moment.

We are constantly heavily engaged in planning matters. We are regularly reviewing our neighbourhood plan policy and we are engaging with Maidstone Borough Council in relation to the local plan for the area.

We also run our yearly Volunteer Awards Scheme which was presented to 4 fantastic youngsters for their volunteering in the community plus Christine Ralph for her outstanding service to Staplehurst. She also received the Kent Association of Local Council's Volunteer's Award this year.

MONEY MATTERS 2022/23

The Income & Expenditure Account and the Balance Sheet with Supporting Statement are (at the time of printing) subject to Council approval, internal and external audit. Iden Business Services undertake the Internal Control of Staplehurst Parish Council accounts and the Annual Audit Return is made to Mazars LLP, Chartered Accountants. In accordance with the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, the dates set for the period of exercise of public rights commence on Monday 12th June 2023 and end on Friday 21st July 2023.



PARISH COUNCIL FINANCE

REPORT & ACCOUNTS 2022 - 2023

Subject to external audit

Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31st March 2023

INCOME

Parish Precept	214,500.00
MBC Parish Services Grant	13,256.00
KCC Community Project Grants	6,000.00
Other Income (BL electricity, Merit Award, SF Licence refund, Kathie Lamb rent)	403.00
MBC S106/CIL Grants (CIL various)	11,832.27
Other Grants & Donations (Youth Club)	4,204.00
Interest on Investments	1,862.73
TOTAL INCOME	252,058.00

EXPENDITURE

General Administration (Parish Office staff, utilities, equipment, insurance, subscriptions, training, publicity & website, Village Update, stationery, postage, council tax, rent)	130,437.50
Office Equipment	842.42
Donations (CAB, CCDA, Heart of Kent Hospice, Involve Kent, KSSAA, Kenward Trust, Merit Awards, RBL, Samaritans, SPCC, Victim Support, WI)	1,901.12
Street Lighting Energy & Repairs, Defibrillator Parts, Tree Survey, Planters, CCTV & Caretaker equipment	17,752.65
Playscheme	1,951.00
Jubilee Sports Field Maintenance	4,095.28
Youth Club (Land & Buildings maintenance, equipment, KCC Lease/Purchase)	10,899.39
Surrenden Playing Field Maintenance, Repairs and CCTV	9,586.02
Churchyard Maintenance	1,678.44
Christmas Lights	1,983.99
Professional Consultant Fees	3,890.00
Public Convenience Maintenance & Repairs	10,438.21
Wimpey Field (Mowing, strimming, water, litter bin, Bioblitz, MVCP)	4,130.81
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	199,586.83

Balance of Income over Expenditure	52,471.17
Balance brought forward from previous year	138,591.97
	191,063.14



Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2023

LONG TERM ASSETS

None (see supporting statement below) 0.00

CURRENT ASSETS

VAT Recoverable	3,144.69	
Cash in hand	<u>189,773.33</u>	
		192,918.02

CURRENT LIABILITIES

Accruals	0.00	
Creditors (PAYE)	<u>(1,854.88)</u>	
		<u>(1,854.88)</u>
		<u>191,063.14</u>

REPRESENTED BY:

General Fund		114,313.88
Ongoing Parish Project Budgets:		
Allotment Fund	10,000.00	
Surrenden Playing Field Project	26,500.00	
Wimpey Field Open Space	1,000.00	
Jubilee Field	15,000.00	
Greener Staplehurst Project	200.00	
Youth Club Activities & Equipment	2,899.26	
Youth Club Building	15,000.00	
Balance c/fwd for future budget	<u>5,750.00</u>	
		76,349.26
RESERVES (held on behalf of others)		
Rural Warden Memory Café	<u>400.00</u>	
		<u>400.00</u>
		<u><u>191,063.14</u></u>

Supporting Statement to the accounts

LONG TERM ASSETS

Assets have been treated as an expense item at the time of purchase for accounting purposes. As at 31.03.2023 the following assets were held:

COMMUNITY ASSETS

Jubilee Field (Freehold)	0.00
Land between west side of High Street & Chestnut Avenue (Freehold)	0.00
Land north east of Bell Lane (Freehold)	0.00
Land south side of Marden Road, opposite North Down (Freehold)	1.00
Wimpey Field Open Space (Freehold)	0.00
Footpath KM312 rear of Bathurst Road (Freehold)	0.00
Lease/purchase of Youth Club land from KCC	14,300.00

BUILDINGS (purchase value)

Sectional Building (Surrenden Pavilion)	6,300.00
Jubilee Pavilion	500,000.00
Public Convenience - Bell Lane (Leasehold)	0.00
Youth Club Building	0.00

OTHER ASSETS (purchase value)

As listed on the Asset Register 31.03.2023 held at the Parish Office	225,567.92
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LEASES - As at 31st March 2023 the following leases were in operation: -

Lessor	Purpose	Rent	Expiry
Maidstone Borough Council	Bell Lane Toilets	Peppercorn	2028
Maidstone Borough Council	Surrenden Playing Field	Peppercorn	2144
Kent County Council	Youth Club Land Lease & Purchase	850.00	2050
Staplehurst Parish Council	Jubilee Field Management	5.00	2035
Trustees of Jubilee Field	Lease of land for Guide Centre	5.00	2088

STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL 2022/2023



CLLR. PADDY RIORDAN - CHAIRMAN
Communications, Employment, Finance
& Strategy, Greener Staplehurst,
Youth Club, 3G Working



CLLR. JOHN PERRY - VICE CHAIRMAN
Employment, Finance & Strategy,
SCENIC, Neighbourhood Plan Review



**CLLR. ADELE SHARP - CHAIRMAN OF
PLANNING COMMITTEE**
Communications, Employment, SCENIC,
Road Safety, 3G Working



CLLR. MEL ALESI
Communications, SCENIC,
Road Safety



CLLR. JOAN BULLER
Planning Committee, Employment,
Finance & Strategy, Neighbourhood
Plan Review, Road Safety



CLLR. JOSE CASTRO
Communications, Greener Staplehurst,
Youth Club



CLLR. JORIS EERDEKENS
Planning Committee, Finance &
Strategy, Neighbourhood Plan Review



CLLR. CATHERINE FARRAGHER
Planning Committee,
Youth Club,



CLLR. ERIC HOTSON
Employment, Finance & Strategy,
SCENIC



CLLR. KELLY MCLEAN
Youth Club, Road Safety



CLLR. BILL MCLAUGHLIN
Planning Committee, SCENIC, Greener
Staplehurst, 3G Working



CLLR. STUART MCPHEE
Greener Staplehurst,
Youth Club.

OUR TEAM

Clerk: RICHARD GRIFFITHS

Deputy Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer: DEBORAH JENKINS

Parish Support Office: JEAN TERRY

Caretaker: PAUL NYAHWA

PARISH ACTIVITIES

GREENER STAPLEHURST GROUP (GSG)

This year has seen a lot of change for the group, with our founding Chairman, David George, stepping down, but continuing his work in the group and handing over to Natasha Thomas. We have continued to maintain the 17 beds across Staplehurst while also doing further planting in key areas including additional trees we were given by Kent County Council as part of their tree programme. We continue to commit time and effort in making sure the village is a beautiful place for all and hope more in the village will come forward to join our volunteers' group because this year has proven how together we can make things beautiful. Special thanks to businesses in the village who donate bulbs, plants, and equipment (Bumbles, Frankie's and Acorn Hire); villagers who donate plants and bulbs (or stop to say thank you), the Community Payback team who have supported larger clear ups and maintenance work which we couldn't do alone, and

our dedicated volunteers who give so generously of their time, own plants and knowledge.

We are currently refreshing some of the planters across the village, but many are already looking beautiful and also planning areas for further tree planting. Please reach out if you'd like to join us, we need you – all skill levels welcome!



Parade Beds



Jeffrey Close



Ponytell Pond



YOUTH CLUB

This year has been about settling in to delivering a regular Youth Service to the young people in Staplehurst. The highlights are that we regularly get 15 – 20 young people attending - sometimes more - and enjoying a range of activities such as cooking, pool, IT games. music etc.

The excellent KCC Youth Service staff are brilliant; leading activities and able to offer assistance in a range of areas to support the young people with the pressure of today's world, including counselling when needed.

We have had a number of events such as the Christmas trip to a pantomime and the Family Funday. We look forward to another Family Funday at Surrenden Field on the 2nd August 2023. We are planning a potential weekend trip later in the year.



We have also done some improvements including a new entrance ramp to improve access.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

REVIEW GROUP Contact: Margaret Arger

We welcomed two new councillors to the group and one new resident. Sadly, we saw the passing of Robin Kenworthy, a founder member of the group and a strong advocate for the those with disability and a strong proponent on the environment.

We have spent 2022 reviewing our plan and having new eyes has brought fresh ideas and clarity. This was greatly helped by meeting face to face and enabled a free flow of ideas and opinions. We now have a draft document which with agreement from the Parish Council will be forwarded to the proposed consultant. The Parish Council have agreed to our request for a Housing Needs Survey as our last one was in 2016 and the world is a different place, so we look forward with interest to the results and still await confirmation of a start date.

The group are looking to a two-day consultation in the late Autumn for you to view the plan and have your say.

My grateful thanks to the members of the group for their time and effort in getting to this stage in the process. (Members' details can be found on the Parish Council website).

COMMUNICATIONS GROUP

Staplehurst Parish Council are eager to engage with our residents, using several options available to us.

We continually update our website and put relevant information on our Facebook page.

We do a quarterly magazine, village update and annual report which have lots of interesting and informative information in them.

We join the Borough Councillors at "drop in surgery" at Staplehurst Library 10am – 12noon on the last Saturday of each month, where residents are very welcome to raise issues with us.

We also welcome residents to every Council and Planning Committee meeting where they are welcome to speak at the public forum before and after the meeting on matters of interest or concern.

SCENIC



This year the work of SCENic has focused on Surrenden Field. We have installed new benches and bins throughout the area.

We have tendered and agreed the installation a new Outdoor Gym plus the playground to be improved with new designs on the playground floor – both being installed as we write.

In addition we have installed some new bike racks at the Parade, finished off the telephone booth which is now available for Community Groups to advertise the meetings or events.



ROAD SAFETY GROUP

The Parish Council's Road Safety Group meet regularly to discuss safety issues in the village and seek solutions. In the 2022/23 we have;

Correspondence

Residents' emails and comments to the parish office are forwarded for discussion and include obstructions of the footpaths by hedges and wheelie bins which we try to deal with through a polite letter. The Parish Council can refer such matters on to MBC or KCC as appropriate as they have enforcement powers. Nesting birds should never be disturbed, but where strands of bramble, hawthorn or stinging nettles protrude beyond your boundaries, please snip them off for everyone's safety. For major hedge cutting work, the season is during the six months from the 1st September until the end of February.

Highways Improvement Plan

This is KCC Highways' engagement scheme with every parish. Our priority has been safety around the school and we achieved the installing of dropped kerbs for disabled and push chair users at the entrance and the yellow lines at Gybbon Rise are due soon.

We have been lobbying for improvements to the Hawkenbury Bridge for years. Finally improved signage was installed, only to last on the Hawkenbury side a short while before being shunted into the hedge. The repair, reported immediately, has finally been made.

Speed Indication Device

Three locations for a SID have been identified, consulted on and approved. They are due to be installed in July 2023. This system will be moved between the locations and it will record numbers of vehicles and their speeds as they pass, but most importantly, give a visual numerical speed to the drivers and any passing pedestrians. The battery power available does not make this suitable for use on the A229.

Sainsbury's Shuttle Bus

A condition placed on Sainsbury's planning approval was the provision of a shuttle bus service for Staplehurst. We continue to lobby Sainsbury's for a sensible shuttle bus route for Staplehurst.

Community Speedwatch

Volunteers who have passed the straightforward Kent Police on-line training course are given a roadside induction by our scheme's leader. All speeders are logged into the police database and actions follow for regular speeders. Our role is educational – we do not issue fines or points, but the police can follow-up on the information we provide to add to our efforts. Volunteers welcome.

Auto Speedwatch

This police-controlled automatic system to support our efforts was installed in Staplehurst in June 2022, only the second location in the county, where 40 mph is the signed limit. Those travelling past at 46mph and above were recorded and a letter issued. In July, 595 vehicles triggered the device. 16 of these had no valid tax and another 12 no MOT. Some of these vehicles were persistent offenders and when the increasingly strongly-worded letters were ignored, a uniformed officer would hand-deliver the next having parked a shiny car for the neighbours to see. One vehicle has been recorded 11 times, but it is encouraging to see that this is the exception. Numbers recorded have dropped as the letters have taken effect. From June 2022 until the end of March 2023 there have been over 2,000 letters sent and over 100 tax or MOT follow-ups.

Road Accidents/Incidents

Please report all accidents / incidents to staplehurstroadinfo@gmail.com or via the links on the PC website. Any details of time, date, location, direction of travel, vehicles involved, damage to people or vehicles, emergency service involvement are all valuable to build the true picture.

Report

Please report potholes, damage to roads and footways, signs, blocked drains etc directly to KCC Highways > report a problem.

EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY

FAMILY FUNDAY

Free Event

Wednesday 2nd August 11am - 4pm
Surrenden Field

SKATE JAM

Free Event

Tuesday 15th August 10am - 3pm
Staplehurst Skate Park (Headcorn Road)
Coaching, showcase your skills at a fun competition.
Open to all ages and abilities

MBC, Parkwood Theatres & The Hazlitt Theatre

TREASURE ISLAND

Saturday 19th August 4pm
Surrenden Field

Set sail with Hazlitt Theatre Productions
for a swashbuckling family tale
All Ticket £5 / Family Ticket £15
Contact the Box office: 01622 758611

Parish Council grants to local community groups

If you are a local group looking for financial support you can apply to the Parish Council for a grant. The basic criteria are:

- Any grant made by the Council must directly benefit the Parish of Staplehurst and its electorate.
- The Council cannot make a grant to individuals.
- The organisation making a grant request should be a non-profit making voluntary organisation where membership is open.
- The maximum limit for Grants is £1,000 per application.
- The Council will not commit to any continuing revenue expenditure.
- Grants cannot be awarded retrospectively, after the relevant event or project has been completed.

For further information call 01580 891761 or for an application form visit; www.staplehurst-pc.uk

PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS TO DECEMBER 2023

Staplehurst Community Centre Monday's 7:30pm South Hall

MEETING	DATE
Council	17th July 2023
Planning Committee	24th July 2023
Council	7th August 2023
Planning Committee	14th August 2023
Council (Tuesday due to Bank Holiday Monday)	29th August 2023
Planning Committee	4th September 2023
Council	18th September 2023
Planning Committee	25th September 2023
Council	9th October 2023
Planning Committee	16th October 2023
Council	30th October 2023
Planning Committee	6th November 2023
Council	20th November 2023
Planning Committee	27th November 2023
Council	11th December 2023
Planning Committee	18th December 2023

PARISH COUNCIL INFORMATION

Clerk –

Richard Griffiths

Parish Council Office, Community Centre, High Street, Staplehurst TN12OBJ
01580 891761 Hours: 9.00 – 13.00 Monday to Friday

Deputy Clerk / RFO –

Deborah Jenkins

Parish Support Officer –

Jean Terry

Caretaker –

Paul Nyahwa

Chairman of Council – Paddy Riordan

Cllr.paddyriordan@staplehurst-pc.uk

Vice Chairman of the Council – John Perry

Cllr.johnperry@staplehurst-pc.uk

Chairman of Planning Committee – Adele Sharp

Cllr.adelesharp@staplehurst-pc.uk

For more information visit:www.staplehurst-pc.uk



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