STAPLEHURST

PARISH COUNCIL

VILLAGE UPDATE SPRING 2024

RESIDENTS SURVEY 2024

Dear Resident,

Staplehurst Parish Council wants to hear your views and priorities. We would appreciate it if you could complete the survey, located in the centre of the Village Update. We encourage everyone in your household to contribute. It is important to get views from across the whole community: young and old, singles and families, local workers and commuters, so that we better understand what matters most to you. It will provide real, meaningful evidence to help inform the shape of services in Staplehurst, the next Neighbourhood Plan, and the Parish Council to lobby on your behalf. Please return the surveys to the Parish Office or use the pre-paid envelope supplied.

The results of the survey will be reported to the Parish Council and published in the Village Update and online.



Best Regards, Cllr Paddy Riordan

Residents Survey Prize draw:

There is a prize draw with $3 \times £100$ shopping vouchers to be won. To enter the prize draw, complete the survey and return with your details at the end of the survey.

MERIT AWARDS

The Parish Council recently held its annual 'Thank You' gathering for village volunteers, where the prestigious Merit Awards were presented. The Council acknowledged the invaluable contributions that make Staplehurst a fortunate community.

Linda Savage was honoured with the annual Merit Award for her exceptional dedication. Renowned for bringing smiles to the people



Linda Savage, 2023 Merit Award Winner

of middle Europe during Christmas, Linda has been tirelessly leading this effort since 2016, coordinating the collection, filling, and wrapping of 510 shoe boxes destined for Romania and Ukraine. Linda also provides second-hand warm clothes, shoes, and pet supplies. Although she insists it's a collective village effort, Linda's unwavering commitment sets the foundation for this impactful initiative.

The total number of filled boxes to date stands at an impressive 1768, a testament to Linda's remarkable



Gil Anthony, 2023 Junior Merit Award Winner

achievement and the community's generosity.

The junior award went to Gil Anthony, an avid user of the Jubilee Field skate park. Gil actively engaged with the Parish Council, addressing issues affecting fellow users and proposing solutions. Taking the initiative to gather user opinions, he presented concerns and requests, demonstrating exemplary

communication skills during a Full Council Meeting. Gil's ongoing efforts have prompted the Council to address current Skate park issues and explore future improvements, making him a valuable representative of the youth in the community.

His Worship the Deputy Mayor of Maidstone, Councillor Martin Cox, presented the awards, extending his congratulations to the well-deserving recipients. Special thanks were also expressed to JBH Refurbishments Ltd, sponsors of Staplehurst Merit Awards.

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY VILLAGE CLEAN UP

Saturday, 13th April 10am until noon Meet at the Youth Club In addition, bring along unused "Cycles and Tools" to be collected by the Rotary Club, who will then donate them to Charity.



CHRISTMAS TIME

While it seems like a long time ago now, the Parish Council was pleased to attempt to brighten up our village during the festive period. Christmas motifs were once again added to lampposts throughout the centre of the village, and a Christmas tree was arranged at The Parade, providing residents and visitors with a warm festive welcome from our community.



The Parish Council intends to explore the possibility of arranging Christmas motifs that are easier to manage and, hopefully, more financially viable. We are well aware that our residents enjoy the festive lighting, and we aim to devise a better, more sustainable system, as the current motifs have been problematic, to say the least.

The Parish Council carried out the annual Christmas tree chipping event in fond memory

of Jon Grimwood, who had managed the event for several years, who sadly passed away last year. His work associate, Neil Jackson kindly carried out the work assisted by parish councillors with machinery supplied by Gary Bridgland Ltd Tree surgeons. £362.50 was raised from kind donations from residents, which will be split between the Heart

of Kent hospice and British Heart Foundation. The photos show Neil and one from last year with Jon, who is sadly missed.

PARISH and BOROUGH COUNCIL ELECTIONS ARE COMING

An early reminder that there will be elections on

2nd MAY 2024

so please make sure you have your photo ID ready to enable you to vote. Please, know that a gun licence is not considered a valid ID.

Polling stations will be located at the Library and the Staplehurst Community Centre.



The Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan Review Group

The Neighbourhood Plan Group is undertaking a review and are now dependent upon the results of the Housing Needs Survey and Residents Survey to add further weight to the document. The document, as it stands at present, will be assessed by an independent consultant who will prepare the Pre-submission Draft document and facilitate a drop-in event for the public, to allow residents to comment. 2024 will be busy.

Employment, Finance and Strategy

The Employment Finance & Strategy Group spend a lot of time during the autumn and winter working on the annual budget for the Parish Council. This includes the annual precept, which is the portion residents pay towards the Parish Council, as part of their council tax.

The group also manages all staff employment matters. Recommendations from the group are provided to the Full Council for decisions.

The Parish Council is very proud of the way financial matters are dealt with for our residents. Financial reports are published in our Annual Report magazine delivered to all residents.

GREENER STAPLEHURST GROUP

As we move beyond the winter solstice, the Greener Staplehurst Group reflects on the past growing season and looks ahead to the coming year. Much like the plants around the village, we try to take this period to regain some energy and focus, and also set our ambitions to reach more corners of the village. Some activity that has already taken place will set us up for this exciting year ahead: the brilliant repair work to wooden planters around the village, especially the ones around the Parade, preparing flower beds and planting an extensive amount of bulbs in existing beds, and the hugely significant Christmas tree shredding, spread around the Parade beds to suppress some of the weeds that tend to proliferate in the area.

Special recognition goes to Shirley Wigzell, our most active and dedicated member, who has taken on additional responsibilities for multiple beds around the village. We extend our



David George at work

heartfelt appreciation to Shirley and her husband for their invaluable contributions. We invite anyone interested in supporting the Greener Staplehurst group, whether through one-time, regular contributions, or donations of bulbs, plants, wood chippings, or mature manure, to contact Natasha Thomas (Thomas.natasha@icloud.com) or Parish Chairman Paddy Riordan. Stay connected by joining our Facebook page - Greener Staplehurst - for updates on planned activities.

STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL **RESIDENTS' SURVEY** CLOSING DATE: 8TH APRIL 2024

Dear Resident,

Staplehurst Parish Council is the first tier of local government in our area. We work closely with Maidstone Borough, Kent County Council and with services such as the Health Service or Environment Agency on your behalf. This means that we are at the heart of our local community and are here to reflect our resident's views and priorities and to lobby on your behalf on matters affecting Staplehurst.

The Parish Council provides a range of services; the nature reserve at Wimpey Field; Jubilee Field sports pitches/skatepark; Bell Lane public toilets, Christmas Lights; CCTV coverage of key areas of the village; provide local community grants and promote local events. For further information on "who does what in Staplehurst" visit the Council website

https://www.staplehurst-pc.uk/community/staplehurstparish-council-13607/who-does-what-in-staplehurst/ or Staplehurst Library or Parish Office.

Staplehurst Parish Council wants to hear your views and priorities. We would really appreciate it if you could complete this survey and encourage everyone in your household to contribute. It is important to get the views from across the whole community: young and old, singles and families, local workers and commuters so that we better understand what matters most to you. It will provide real meaningful evidence to help inform the shape of services in Staplehurst, the next Neighbourhood Plan and the Parish Council to lobby on your behalf.

The Residents Survey should only take a few minutes of your time. You can also request additional paper copies of the survey by contacting the Parish Office or complete an on-line survey - www.staplehurst-pc.uk

Please use extra paper to expand on answers. The results of the survey will be reported to the Parish Council and published in the Village Update and online.

Prize draw

There is a prize draw, 3 x £100 shopping vouchers for residents.

To enter the prize draw, complete the form at the end of the survey.

All information will be held in line with the UK -General Data Protection Regulations of Staplehurst Parish Council. This means any report will be anonymised, the data will only be used for this project and then destroyed after 18 months. For further information visit www.staplehurst-pc.uk

LIFE IN AND AROUND STAPLEHURST

Q1. What do you like the most about living in Staplehurst:

Please place numbers in each box, ranking your choices in order of personal preference, where the *lowest number* is the *most important* to you.

E.g. '1' = most important, '2' = second most

import	tant, etc.
	A vibrant civic centre with a good range
	of shops and hospitality
	Transport links
	Access to community facilities
	Sense of community
	Good schools
	Access to London
	Access to green spaces / open
	countryside
	Shared ownership housing (affordable)
	Employment / Business opportunities
	A safe place to live and work.
	Other – please explain below.
	ervices are there any you think Staplehurst Council could provide:
	PRIORITIES FOR LOCAL SERVICES
Sta doi	nat ONE thing do you think plehurst Parish Council could be ing better?
Plea	ase only choose <u>ONE</u> option from the list.
	More grant funding for local
	organisations
	More community events
	More Civic events
	Improve the way the council communicates.
	More services/facilities for young people
0	Improved representation with other
	levels of government
Pleas	levels of government e provide more details about your

 Q4. Staplehurst Parish Council aims to complete the following projects in the next four years. Please place them in priority order with most important as 1 and second as 2 etc. 3G pitch at Jubilee Field Improve pavilion at Surrenden Field 	 Aware of it, but hardly ever use it Use it once every few months Use it at least once a
 Improve Skatepark at Jubilee Field Youth Club refurbishment 	month.
What other projects would you like to see included in	Use it several times a
the future? Please give details:	month.
	Q11. We are currently considering a new pavilion at Surrenden Field, would you support this project?
In our area, three councils provide different	☐ Yes ☐ No
services: Kent County Council, Maidstone Borough Council and Staplehurst Parish Council. Q5. From what you know about the work your Parish Council does, how would you rate the job Staplehurst Parish Council does for our community?	Q12. With regards Bell Lane public toilets, are you aware that there are public toilets at Bell Lane? If so, do you use them?I am aware there are public toilets - and I make use of them.
Please rate on a scale of 1-5, where 1 means a very poor job and 5 means a very good job. 1 2 3 4 5	I am aware there are public toilets - but don't use them.I am not aware there are public toilets.
Q6. From what you know about the work Maidstone Borough Council does, how would you rate the job they do for our community? Please rate on a scale of 1-5, where 1 means a	Q13 . With regards Jubilee Field we are developing the 3G pitch project and car park, would you support improvements to the Skatepark
very poor job and 5 means a very good job.	☐ Yes ☐ No
1 2 3 4 5	MEDICAL
Q7. From what you know about the work Kent County Council does, how would you rate the job they do for our community?	Q14. Which NHS GP practice are you registered with? Staplehurst Marden Cranbrook Headcorn Other (Please state)
Please rate on a scale of 1-5, where 1 means a very poor job and 5 means a very good job.	Treddeoin Other (Freuse state)
1 2 3 4 5	
Q8 . Staplehurst Parish Council offers community grants which can be accessed by local organisations within the Parish. Were you aware that community grants were available from the Parish Council?	Q15. Have you experienced any difficulty registering with a local NHS GP practice? – YES/NO If yes, please provide details below:
les Ino	
Q9 . In 2024/25, Staplehurst Parish Council has set aside grant funds of £3,200. Thinking about the amount of grant funding, do you think the council should provide grant funding to local organisations?	Q16. If you are registered with Staplehurst Health Centre, have you experienced any difficulties in getting an appointment with a health professional? – YES/NO If yes, please provide details including whether an appointment with a doctor/nurse or another specialist
Much more fundingA little more fundingA little less funding	was required:
 Much less funding No funding 	
Q10. Staplehurst Parish Council manages Surrenden Field. How often do you make use of	
Surrenden Field: How often do you make use of Surrenden Field? Wasn't aware of it	

Q18. How often do you use the pharmacy in The Parade? Please circle one option: Once a week More than once a week Once a month Never Q19. Are you registered with an NHS dentist? YES/NO. Tyes, where are you registered? Staplehurst Sissinghurst Marden Cranbrook Headcorn Other (Please state) Q21. Have you experienced water supply interruptions e.g. loss of supply or low pressure at your home? - YES/NO If yes please give your postcode: Q22. Have you experienced water supply interruptions e.g. loss of supply or low pressure at your home? - YES/NO If yes please give details of your postcode: TRANSPORT Q31. Have you experienced water supply interruptions e.g. loss of supply or low pressure at your home? - YES/NO If yes please give details of your postcode: TRANSPORT Q31. Do you rely on public transport to get to work? YES/NO If yes please give details of your postcode: TRANSPORT Q32. If you use public transport for other reasons please state destination, travelling by bus or train and whether the service provided meets your needs: Q32. If you use public transport for other reasons please state destination(s), frequency of use and whether the current service meets your needs: Q33. Do you use a car/motorcycle/bicycle to get t work or to the railway station for onward travel? - YES/NO if yes, please provide details of where you travel to, where congestion is encountered and how often: Q34. Do you regularly experience traffic congestion your route? - YES/NO if yes, please give your postcode: Q35. How many cars are there in your household free yes, please give four postcode: Q36. Do you experienced water supply interruptions e.g. loss of supply or low pressure at your home? - YES/NO if yes please give your postcode: Q37. Would you support for other reasons please state destination, fraveling by two or train and whether the current service meets your needs: Q38. Do you use a car/motorcycle/bicycle to get twork or to the railway station for onward travel? - YES/NO if yes, please provide details of where you t	Q17. Have you consulted the pharmacist in Staplehurst on a medical matter? YES/NO.	WATER Q28. Have you experienced surface water flooding at	
Once a week Once a month Once a week Once a month Once of session urse a month Once of session on plus or train and whether the service provided meets your needs: Once of sepace state destination, travelling by bus or train and whether the service provided meets your needs: Once of sepace state destination, travelling by bus or train and whether the service provided meets your needs: Once of sepace state destination, travelling by bus or train and whether the service provided meets your needs: Once of sepace state destination, travelling by bus or train and whether the service provided meets your needs: Once of sepace state destination, travelling by support to get to work? YES/NO If yes please give detalls of your postcode: Once of sepace state destination, travelling to work? YES/NO If yes please give d		or near your home? – YES/NO	
PSC NO. Are you registered with an NHS dentist? YES/NO. YES/NO. Q20. If yes, where are you registered? Staplehurst Sissinghurst Marden Crahbrook Headcorn Other (Please state) Q21. Have you experienced any difficulty registering with a local NHS dentist? - YES/NO If yes, please provide details below: Q21. Have you experienced any difficulty registering with a local NHS dentist? - YES/NO If yes, please provide details below: Q22. Does your household have primary school age children? YES/NO. If yes please enter school name in the box below. Q23. If your children do not attend Staplehurst School is this due to: LACK OF SPACES/CHOICE. Please circle. Q24. Does your household have secondary school or college age children? YES/NO. If yes please enter school/college name in the box below. Q25. Did you have a choice of secondary school: YES/NO. If yes, please provide details of where you travel to, where congestion is encountered and how often: Q26. If yes, did you get your first choice: YES/NO. If no, what was the reason given: Q27. Would you support Staplehurst having its own secondary school? YES/NO. If yes, where in Staplehurst A toy out think it should be located? (please give details below) Q38. Would you support introduction of traffic calming measures on estate roads? - YES/NO is measures on estate roads? - YES/NO calming measures on estate roads? - YES/N	Once a week More than once a week	blockages or overflows at or near your home? -	
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Staplehurst do you think it should be located? (please give details below) Q38. Would you support introduction of traffic calming measures on estate roads? – YES/NO		Q37. Would you support a 20-mph speed limit zone on estate roads in Staplehurst? – YES/NO	
circle: speed bumps, raised platforms, staggered restrictions, speed cushions.	Staplehurst do you think it should be located? (please	calming measures on estate roads? – YES/NO If yes, would you prefer any of the following? Please circle: speed bumps, raised platforms, staggered	

DEVELOPMENT Q39. What do you think about the houses that have been built in Staplehurst over the last 10 years? Please circle all that apply: About right amount, too much new housing, houses too big, too little housing, too expensive, too small, inappropriate design, good design. None of the above. Give details: Looking forward what housing do you think Staplehurst needs? Please circle all that apply: older people (over70), young people (under 25), large families (5+), small families (4-), single people, people with disabilities, none of the above. Give details: **Q41.** What type of future development do you think would be suitable for Staplehurst? Please circle all that apply: Single houses, small groups of less than 10, building conversions, well designed larger groups, extension of built-up area, None. Other (give details

ENVIRONMENT

Q42. Staplehurst Parish Council is considering the creation of a Green Strategy for our community. We want to hear what is important to you.

Q43.	Does your home have any of the following?

- Solar panels YES/NO
- $\bf Q44.$ Heat pump for hot water and/or home heating YES/NO
- **Q45.** Loft insulation to a depth of 200mm (8 inches) YES/NO/Don't know
- Q46. Cavity wall insulation YES/NO/Don't Know
- **Q47.** A charging point for electric vehicles YES/NO If no, do you have off-street parking suitable to fit a charging point YES/NO

SOCIAL

Q48. Have you witnessed or experienced first-hand anti-social behaviour e.g. damage to property, cars, graffiti, noise, aggressive behaviour in the last year YES/NO. If yes please give details below.

Q49. Do you feel safe walking around Staplehurst on your own? YES/NO. If no please give details e.g. times and places:
Q50. Have you experienced any of the following crimes in Staplehurst in the last year? Please circle all that apply and provide detail in the box provided: vandalism, drunkenness, theft, burglary, mugging, speeding, illegal parking, pavement parking (obstructing disabled access), none, Other.
How Staplehurst Parish Council, COMMUNICATES WITH YOU AND THE WIDER COMMUNITY
Q51 . Below are the ways Staplehurst Parish Council communicates with people in the area. Please let us know which you are aware of. Please circle as many options as applicable: Council website, Council notice boards, email, social media, Council meetings, Village Updates, Annual Report and Parish Magazine.
Q52. Do you feel that you are kept up to date by Staplehurst Parish Council about issues, services and events? Very up to date Somewhat up to date. No.
Q53. What one thing could Staplehurst Parish Council change or improve to communicate better with you in the future?
Prize draw: If you wish to enter the prize draw for 3 x £100 shopping vouchers, please provide:
Name
Email

Thank You

or telephone number.....

Paddy Riordan, Chairman Staplehurst Parish Council

COMMUNICATIONS GROUP

We are focusing this year on improving communications with the residents of Staplehurst and enhancing internal communications within the Parish Council. Concerning the former, we have launched two

VILLAGE UPDATE SPRING ANNUAL REPORT & ACCOUNTS

VILLAGE UPDATE SUMMER VILLAGE UPDATE AUTUMN

surveys, the second of which is included in this current Village Update, and we are working towards reintroducing Chairman video reports through our social media channels. In relation to the latter, we are researching how to modernise our systems while simultaneously reducing costs.

Upon completing the surveys, we will once again allocate space in the Village Update to active community groups and reinstate sections such as 'News from the Past,' or articles about the history of Staplehurst, and introduce new sections. Additionally, we aim to create a small card explaining the responsibilities of the different government bodies in the parish, facilitating the reporting of issues and complaints.

Finding a suitable logo for the Parish Council is an ongoing project, a task proving quite complex due to the diverse range of opinions. During our meetings, we continually explore new ideas and designs, keeping in mind the results of the consultation launched a few years back, although a suitable design has not yet been identified.

ROAD SAFETY

Hopefully, you are benefiting from the new improved Sainsbury's shuttle timetable! At last, people can get their shopping done in a sensible amount of time.

We have requested that Kent Highways repaint the white lines at the Sainsbury's roundabout and crossroads and elsewhere. Some lines seem to have been done, and we hope that the crossroads and roundabout will be soon.

Unfortunately, there is no Parish Council hotline to Kent Highways to get potholes sorted out; we have to do the same as everyone else and report them online at

kent.gov.uk. The likelihood is that the more reports of the same place having a pothole, the swifter it will be dealt with.



The Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) with Kent Highways (KH) is how KH can plan to implement major improvements, budget willing. Of the two live projects we are allowed yearly, we have requested improvements to the High street and the Cranbrook Road / Quarter end of the village by the garage. We are also actively campaigning on the Hawkenbury Bridge which continues to suffer mysterious damage, apparently not the result of any Road Traffic Accidents (RTAs)!

So, if you know of any RTAs, let us know via staplehurstroadinfo@gmail.com. It helps to build a picture to lobby Kent Highways. We also have

a Speedwatch Group who are trained to monitor traffic through the Village, encouraging everyone to drive safely. Please do contact us if you would be interested in joining.

3G WORKING GROUP

The 3G Multi-sport project at the Jubilee Field is moving forward following the consultation in 2023 and we are working on three key areas

- Business Plan
- Design and planning
- Management
- Ongoing Consultation

The first draft business plan was presented to Council on the 29th of January 2024 and is available on the Parish Council website – we are taking on board the comments from Councillors and the public as the project evolves.

Design and planning is moving forward. We have met MBC planning officers on site and received their pre-application comments. We have only just received pre-application comments from KCC Highways – which has slowed down the design. The aim is to present a draft of the whole site design at a Parish Council meeting in the near future, to enable involvement from Councillors and the public.

Management of the Jubilee Field is being transferred from the JFMC trustees to the Parish Council. The Parish Council will manage the Jubilee Field in the near future but is looking at potential leisure contractors to manage the whole site if the 3G multi-sport pitch is built.

Consultation, we have published a Consultation Feedback Report and the updated Frequently Asked Questions on the Parish Council website.

We are continuing to engage with the public – public presentations and with an emerging Staplehurst Youth Council to focus on the views of young people.



PLANNING COMMITTEE

Approximately every 3 weeks, the Parish Council planning committee meets to review Staplehurst planning applications and submit our recommendations as a formal consultee to the Maidstone Planning office. Although we have no obligation to, we try to post a notification to neighbours about planning applications to enable everyone to comment. It's always best to use the MBC planning portal and upload your comments there as well.

Most of what we see are extensions and associated works. We always look at planning conditions when assessing the appropriateness of developments, which come from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Maidstone Local Plan, and our own Neighbourhood Plan. These give guidelines about what is considered acceptable and what isn't.

MBC will consider the planning application at their planning committee meeting, if it has been called in by Borough Councillors or the Parish Council, where applicants and other relevant parties can speak for 3 minutes about the application. MBC also provides pre-

planning advice for applications.

Search for a planning application at MBC website: https://maidstone.gov.uk/home/primary-services/planning-and-building/planning/search-for-a-planning-ap



SCENIC

We are currently working on a number of projects. We are hoping to provide a defibrillator for the southern end of the village, installing it in the old telephone box, assuming the electrical connection is strong enough. There are defibs at the Kathie Lamb Centre, Library, and Sobell Lodge with 24-hour access.



We continue to be very happy with the way Growing Concern maintains the tubs in the village, so a big thank you to them.

Our biggest project currently is to ensure the Youth Club building maintenance is completed so it can reopen. It's been an unforeseen and frustrating process that will hopefully be resolved very soon.

It's that time of year when we start tidying up our gardens from the winter hiatus. One of the things that we look into is hedge complaints. Residents, especially pushchair and wheelchair users, often advise us about hedges that are encroaching on the public footpaths. We pop a letter through your door politely asking if you can trim it back to your boundary to enable everyone to be able to use the pavements safely.

PARISH COUNCIL INFORMATION

PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

Monday 11th March 2024 - Tuesday 2nd April 2024 - Monday 22nd April 2024

Clerk - Richard Griffiths

Deputy Clerk / RFO - Mrs Deborah Jenkins **Parish Support Officer**- Mrs Jean Terry

Caretaker - Paul Nyahwa

clerk@staplehurst-pc.uk deputyclerk@staplehurst-pc.uk admin@staplehurst-pc.uk

Address: Parish Council Office, Community Centre, High Street, Staplehurst TN12 0BJ
Office opening hours: 9.00 - 13.00 Monday to Thursday
Phone: 01580 891761

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



Parish Council Website



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