

# STAPLEHURST

## PARISH COUNCIL

VILLAGE  
UPDATE  
SPRING  
2023

### Parish Council Election 4th May 2023 Make a positive difference

The Electoral Commission

Find out more at  
[electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID](http://electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID)  
No ID? You can apply for free voter ID

**REMEMBER TO**  
1- Register to vote  
2- Check my photo ID  
3- Vote at a polling station!

1. **Make sure you are registered to vote by 17th April 2023** – contact [electoralservices@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:electoralservices@maidstone.gov.uk) or phone 01622 602000

2. **Photo identification** To cast your vote at the Parish Election 4th May 2023 – you will need valid photo identification one of:

- Passport
- Driving Licence (provisional is fine)
- A Blue Badge
- Bus pass

If you do not have one of these you can get a free “Voter Authority Certificate”.

Contact [electoralservices@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:electoralservices@maidstone.gov.uk) or phone 01622 602000

This must be done by **5.00 pm Tuesday 25 April 2023**

3. **Parish Councillor** If you are interested in being a Parish Councillor phone the office for an informal chat – 01580 891761

You can get an information pack, nomination forms and learn more by contacting online [electoralservices@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:electoralservices@maidstone.gov.uk) or 01622 602000

Closing date **4:00 pm Tuesday 4 April 2023**

4. **Election**  
**4th May 2023** – between 7am – 10pm in the North Hall, Staplehurst Community Centre, High Street, Staplehurst

## PARISH COUNCIL FINANCE

As always, the Parish Council take the responsibility of managing your money, the parish finances, very seriously. We are in a strong financial position. We have supported the community, but we are very aware of how challenging these times are and, unlike other authorities, we have NOT increased our portion of the Council Tax for three years. This is something we are proud of!

**Thank you to all the Councillors and staff  
who have served Staplehurst over the past four years.**

[www.staplehurst-pc-uk](http://www.staplehurst-pc-uk)

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During the last four years the Parish Council has worked tirelessly to improve the quality of life for residents. In October 2019, the PC held a celebration event to mark the 125th anniversary of the formation of Parish Councils; Staplehurst being one of, if not the first, to be formed.

### **Safe, Clean and Green**

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- Engaging with the Police, Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) Community Team, Kent County Council (KCC) Warden and have improved CCTV in four areas of the Village
- Organising a twice-annual Community Litter Pick
- Regularly working with the Community Payback team to make improvements around the village, especially in the Parade area
- Organising an annual Bio-blitz event at Wimpey Field
- Wimpey Field is now managed by a maintenance plan
- Installing flower planters at the village gateways, Jubilee Field, outside of the former South-Eastern hotel and planting a wildflower garden along the A229 adjacent to Chestnut Avenue
- Improved areas of The Parade including cutting down the planter vegetation, installing flower planters adjacent to Spar and Maddie's Garden and repainting the outside of the library building
- Organising Eco friendly energy supplies to all Parish Council Buildings
- Working with Growing Concern to provide flowered concrete planters throughout the village
- Working to open Parish allotments in 2023

### **Working in partnership with all stakeholders to enhance facilities**

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- Working with Play Place to provide a safe and enjoyable environment for the 3-week-long Summer Playscheme
- Lobbying Sainsbury's to build the store and engaging with them throughout the project; this led to Sainsbury's financing the tarmacking and white line marking of Jubilee Field car park
- Working with the JFMC and football clubs to improve the Jubilee Field: new flood lights, dugouts, storage facilities, spectator stand, hedge cutting, ditch clearance, internal painting the pavilion and new drainage to the football pitch
- Maintaining and annually painting the Skate Park
- Improved the vehicle access gate at Wimpey Field, and installed a pathway for disabled users
- Engaging with MBC to resurface and install white line markings and fencing at Bell Lane car park
- Supporting the Scouts, helping maintain their building and the adjacent land
- Taking ownership of the Youth Club building following COVID and running a very successful Youth Programme
- Installing a new pathway to the children's playground at Surrenden Field enabling residents to access the play area all the year round and encouraging walking to access village facilities.
- Liaising with MBC by putting forward street names for new roads and two pathways: Ashdown Walk and Doutrepoint Walk named after the two victims of WWII plane crash into the station ticket office

### **Supporting our community**

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- During COVID: supporting vulnerable residents in need by providing transport to vaccination centres; obtaining grants to assist those in need; erecting blue lights at the Parade in recognition of the NHS and engaging in social media to bring the community together. Staplehurst Emergency Help Team and Community Hub received two prestigious awards for their services to Staplehurst
- Assisting the Women's Institute by installing a bench and tree, planted in honour of their hundred-year anniversary
- Brightening up the village each year with Christmas motifs, a Christmas tree and lights at the Parade
- Supporting the Village Remembrance Day Parade
- Improving communication via the SPC website, social media and the Village Update

### **Working in partnership and planning for the future**

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- In February 2020 hundreds of residents gathered to hear the presentation of SPC's reaction to the latest MBC 'Call for Sites' and overwhelmingly supported the stance of SPC in refusing all new sites for Staplehurst
- Engaging and working with our partners including KCC, MBC and Helen Grant MP, in relation to planning applications, litter bins, street lighting, refuse collections, roads and pathways, hedges and green space and to seek grant funding to deliver improvements and to lobby on behalf of Staplehurst
- SPC Planning Committee engages with the various authorities relating to drainage and such issues and supporting residents, Councillors attend MBC Planning Committee and Appeals to try to achieve the best outcomes for our residents
- Regularly reviewing our Neighbourhood Plan and updating accordingly



## ROAD SAFETY GROUP



Following the 'Stay Safe' exhibition and subsequent national press and local TV coverage, the SPC formed a Road Safety Group to look at all aspects of safety in our community. This group has been busy. We have been working on the Sainsbury's shuttle bus to try and make it more effective for the residents.

'Seasonal weather' potholes continue to be a problem, but if you report them to Kent Highways online, they are usually pretty good at filling them in.

If you know of any RTA's (Road Traffic Accidents) let us know via [staplehurstroadinfo@gmail.com](mailto:staplehurstroadinfo@gmail.com). It's useful to build up a picture enabling us to lobby Kent Highways about areas such as the Hawkenbury Bridge. We also have

a Speed Watch 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 volunteering.

## YOUTH CLUB

Staplehurst Youth Club continues to grow. It is open to all aged between 13-17 years and meets 6pm 'till 8pm on Tuesday evenings (7pm - 9pm in the Summer). There is no entrance fee, but all attendees have to be logged in. This is a joint venture by Staplehurst Parish Council and Kent County Council Youth Services.

The evening events include outdoor and indoor games; table football, Wii games, cards, pool and table tennis have been the most popular during the winter, including occasional knock-out tournaments. There are often joint cooking sessions and pasta bakes of various sorts have been particularly popular lately. WI-FI is available on site.

We are also planning other events for young people in the village including a repeat of the summer "Fun Day" at Surrenden Field, open to all ages, which will be held on August 3rd this year. Hundreds of youngsters, toddlers and their parents attended last year. Let's hope for a hot day again.

## 3G ALL-SPORTS WORKING GROUP

A small team of villagers, including Parish and Borough Cllrs, have been working for some time on bringing forward a proposal for a 3G pitch at Jubilee Field. This would provide an all-weather facility for everyone and make more use of the boggy ground at the back of the field.

This is a complicated process, as the project needs first to be considered by the FA as viable. Then it requires speaking with various funding bodies to see what project they would be most likely to support before liaising with MBC to see what funds are available from village housing.

Potential designs and costings are now being provided so that we can go out to everyone across the village to ensure any redevelopment meets people's needs. We know that we all want to see more facilities in our village so we hope to bring forward a proposal for consultation shortly.

My thanks to all those who give up their time to work on this group, including Nicola Stonebridge and Lee Seal of the Monarchs Football Club - Senior and Junior teams.

Chairman of the 3G Working Group, **Louise Brice**

## VOLUNTEER AWARDS

The Volunteer Awards 2022 were delayed due to the bad weather before Christmas and were held on the 20th February 2023 at Staplehurst Community Centre. It was the first time for a few years that we have been able to hold this Event and we hope all who attended enjoyed the evening.

Christine Ralph was awarded the Merit Award in recognition of her outstanding service. Chris has worked tirelessly for Staplehurst over very many years including helping at the school with reading, sewing, setting up and running the school garden and as a dinner lady. She has been fully involved with the Women's Institute, Guides, Neighbourhood Watch and so much more!

Congratulations to Yasmin Fletcher, Sienna Stainton, Cerys Butler and Imogen Barker who received 'Junior Merit Awards'. Yasmin and Sienna from Staplehurst Monarchs give up their time volunteering to coach 'Mini Monarchs' & 'Wildcats' on Saturday mornings and also help the 1st team on match days. Cerys Butler and Imogen Barker have both been outstanding in their support for Girl Guiding and Village Events throughout the year. They have been allocated as Buddies, Car Park Attendants, Face Painters, Demonstrators of Activities, Bakers, Crafters, Litter pickers and in the nature of Girlguiding, of course can make a decent cuppa and clean up an area without supervision. Thank you to local business JBH Refurbishments Ltd who have kindly sponsored the awards for a number of years.

We would like to thank all volunteers who give so much to our village community – it is part of what makes Staplehurst a special place to live. Long may it continue!



## NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW GROUP

The Neighbourhood Plan Review Group welcomed two new councillors and one new resident. Sadly, we saw the passing of Robin Kenworthy, a founder member and strong advocate for those with disability as well as a proponent for 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 which has enabled a free flow of ideas and opinions. We now have a draft document which, with agreement from SPC, will be forwarded to the proposed consultant. SPC 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. The group are looking to a two-day consultation in the autumn for you to view the plan and have your say.

My grateful thanks go 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 SPC website).

## GREENER STAPLEHURST GROUP

We have been greatly shocked and saddened by the recent deaths of two of our members, as we are sure have all residents of the village. They are both sorely missed by their colleagues.

Members have been busy weeding and planting bulbs in the numerous villages borders and planters, when weather has permitted, and plans are being made to further enhance these areas during the year, as money and time permit.

Other plans include another Bioblitz at the Wimpey Field after the huge success they have had in the past, giving opportunities for children and adults to see and learn more about the wildlife in this area. Perhaps we will be lucky enough to see another Greater Crested Newt!

### Annual Meeting of the Parish 17th May 2023, 7:30pm at North Hall, Staplehurst Community Centre

- **Kent and Sussex Air Ambulance – guest speakers**
- **Opportunity to hear an update on the Parish Council and from a range of residents' groups**
- **Opportunity to meet the Parish Councillors elected on 4th May 2023**
- **Questions and Answer session**

**All welcome**

## PARISH COUNCIL INFORMATION

**Parish Council meeting**

**Parish Council meeting**

**Parish Council meeting**

**Monday 11th April 2023**

**Tuesday 2nd May 2023**

**Monday 15th May 2023**

**Clerk** - Richard Griffiths

**Deputy Clerk / RFO** - Mrs Deborah Jenkins

**Parish Support Officer** - Mrs Jean Terry

**Caretaker** - Paul Nyahwa

**Address:** Parish Council Office, Community Centre, High Street, Staplehurst TN12 0BJ

**Office opening hours:** 9.00 - 13.00 Monday to Thursday

**Phone:** 01580 891761

clerk@staplehurst-pc.uk

deputyclerk@staplehurst-pc.uk

admin@staplehurst-pc.uk

For more information visit **Web** [www.staplehurst-pc.uk](http://www.staplehurst-pc.uk)



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