



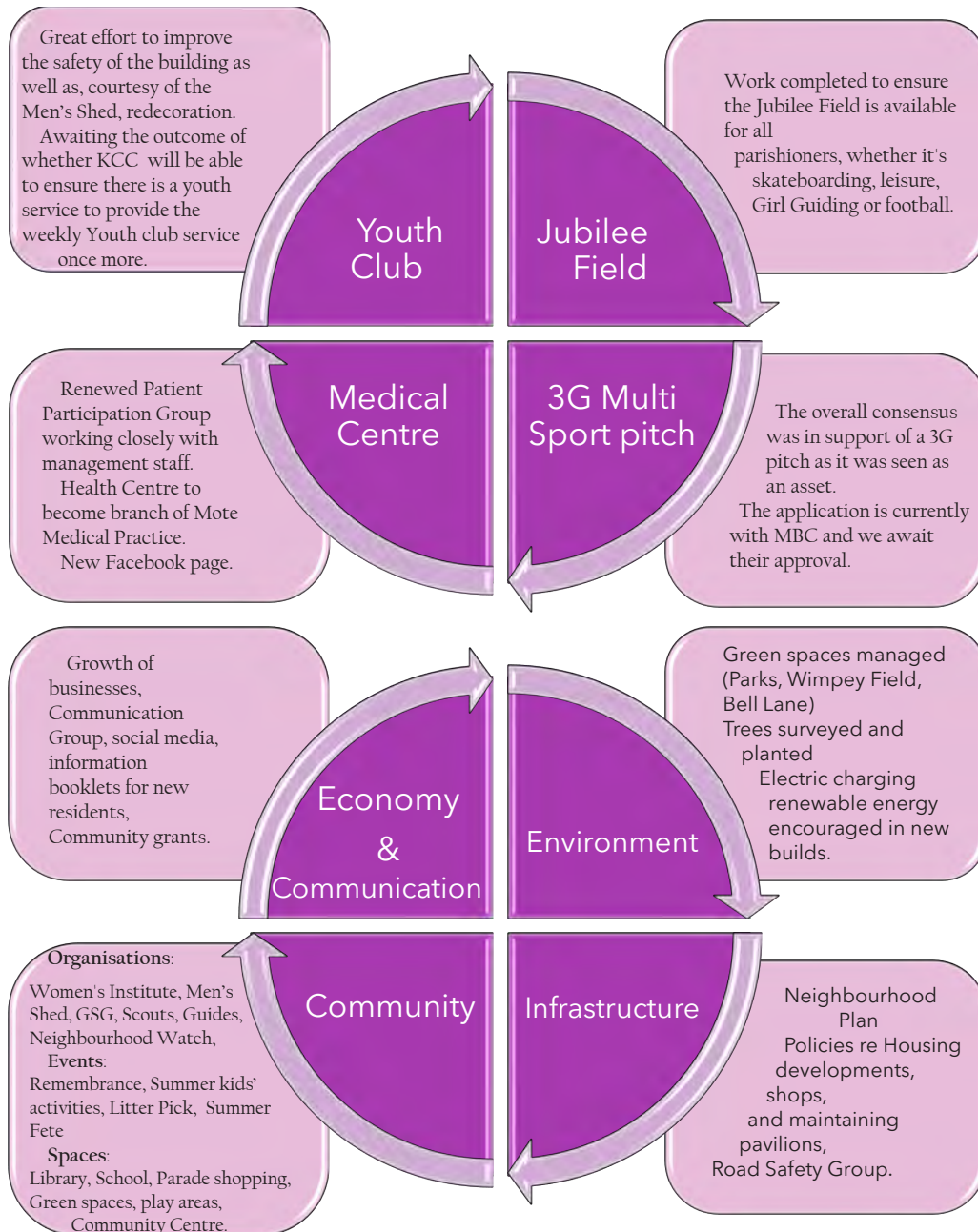
# STAPLEHURST

## PARISH COUNCIL

VILLAGE  
UPDATE  
SPRING  
2025

### A VISION FOR OUR VILLAGE: PARISH COUNCIL PRIORITIES

As we look ahead to the year to come, inspired by the resident survey, the Parish Council (SPC) identify its priorities for enhancing village life. From supporting local facilities to promoting sustainability and fostering community spirit, we are committed to making Staplehurst a thriving, connected, and welcoming place for everyone.



With these priorities in place, Staplehurst Parish Council looks forward to working closely with residents, partners, and local organisations to deliver real improvements for Staplehurst. Together, we can ensure a sustainable, connected, and thriving future for our village.

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

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## LIFESAVING DEFIBRILLATORS IN STAPLEHURST

The Parish Council have organised the installation of an automated external defibrillator in the telephone box at Church Green. It is for use by any member of the public in emergencies 24/7.

The defibrillator is now registered on The Circuit – the national defibrillator network. It's also now connected to **South East Coast Ambulance Service** and more likely to be used in an emergency.

Staplehurst is now fortunate to have four public defibrillators available for emergencies, ensuring rapid access to lifesaving equipment. These defibrillators are located:

- **The Parade**, by the library
- **Church Green**, inside the telephone box (*newest, with settings for children*)
- **Jubilee Field**, on the Kathie Lamb Pavilion
- **Staplehurst Train Station**, by the side of the tracks (*managed by Network Rail*)

In a cardiac emergency, every second counts. These devices are designed to be simple and user-friendly, with voiced instructions guiding you step-by-step through the process to deliver assistance before professional help arrives.

If you do use one of the defibrillators, please remember to report its use to ensure the pads are replaced promptly, keeping the equipment ready for future emergencies.

The newest defibrillator, located in the Church Green telephone box, is specially equipped with child settings, adding another layer of support for our community.

We encourage everyone to familiarise themselves with the locations of these defibrillators and consider learning basic first aid to increase confidence in using them. Together, we can make Staplehurst a safer place for all.

In the first instance, if someone collapses ring 999 for an ambulance and follow the call handlers' instructions.



## A FESTIVE SEASON IN STAPLEHURST

The Parish Council was busy spreading festive cheer this Christmas season, starting with the annual Christmas tree installation in the Parade. Despite a cold and wet morning, Parish Councillors worked hard to put up the beautifully traditional Christmas tree, donated by Jason Wood at Henhurst Farm Shop, which was adorned with baubles designed by the 1st Staplehurst Brownies, adding a special personal touch. The tree brightened the village throughout the season before being taken down on 4th January during the Christmas tree shredding event.

The tree shredding was kindly provided by G. Bridgland Ltd, with Neil Jackson operating the shredder in memory of his late friend and associate, Jon Grimwood. Collection buckets on the day raised an impressive £313.81, which was donated to the Heart of Kent Hospice. Parish Councillors assisted with dismantling the tree and spreading the chippings on the Parade's flower beds, giving the decorations a sustainable farewell.

Staplehurst also enjoyed its now-traditional tractor run, which was warmly attended by residents. The day featured services organised by Churches Together in Staplehurst, adding a reflective and joyous touch to the celebrations.

In preparation for the frosty weather, Councillors distributed salt into smaller sacks and replenished salt bins across the village, ensuring



safer roads and pathways for residents.

Thank you to everyone who helped make this Christmas season memorable in Staplehurst!



## JUBILEE FIELD WORKING GROUP

It has been rather a damp few months to say the least. Storms Bert and Darragh along with weather warnings, flooded roads and then freezing weather – that's Winter for you. It's made using the ground for anything more than difficult, in fact for a lot of our football games, impossible and they have had to play elsewhere. Even the skateboarders had to wait for the snow / ice to thaw!



Our efforts to ensure the Junior pitches were not ruined were somewhat scuppered when someone decided to ride their pony and cart round the field. The deep hoof marks and ruts show that it wasn't the best idea and has left us trying to repair / fill them in. Another smaller gate that was used to access this has now been shut leaving one pedestrian access in front of the guide shelter.

There are also some maintenance improvements occurring inside the pavilion to ensure the changing facilities are better for all. Unfortunately, we are still waiting for our mower repairs to be completed (a part had to come from abroad) which we hope will occur soon and enable us to mow more efficiently. General maintenance work continues: the senior football club are maintaining the main pitch that they use and SPC are mowing and lining the junior pitches.

The Kathy Lamb Centre also continues to host all things Guide related – Rainbows, Brownies, Rangers and Trefoil too! They are represented there most evenings, and the hall is available for some hires.

## 3G MULTI-SPORT WORKING GROUP Update January 2025

Prior to Christmas Kent County Council (KCC) Highways put in a holding objection to the planning application.

The Council has been working with the Design and Build Consultants plus had meetings with KCC Highways Officers and Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) Planning Officers to bring forward the necessary amendments. The main point is to formalise and increase the overflow car park to 62 car parking spaces. – See plan.

Also, it is suggested that "All groups that hire the Jubilee Field site should promote and detail alternate suitable parking locations, sustainable travel/car sharing on their website / social media". This will be added to all hire agreements at the Jubilee Field.

The hope is that the planning application will be determined by MBC Planning in the near future.



## SCENIC (STAPLEHURST COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT NEW IDEAS COMMITTEE)

Hopefully you all enjoyed the Christmas Lights along the main road this year thanks to the efforts of many in the background organising it all. Lessons learnt this year will hopefully mean it will be even better next year. In the gloom of winter, those lights spread cheer.

Our newest addition is the CPR machine in the telephone box on church Green opposite the church. It caters for adults and children with the flick of a switch. Remember if you need to use it, call 999 first, let someone know you are there, before you start. The machine explains everything, such as where to place the pads and to not touch the patient while it delivers the shock. Thanks again to our local volunteer Patrick that keeps an eye on the library one and this one for SPC. There are other 'non SPC' ones locally at Jubilee Field, Poppies and Sobell Lodge.



If you frequent the Surrenden Field near the Primary School, we hope you are enjoying the facilities such as the play area and outdoor gym. Work to replace the Pavilion with a similar sized building as the current one has come to the end of its life. The aim is to replace the exhausted building with one that has a usable toilet, refreshments in the summer and a pop-up exhibition space for local groups.

## PARISH COUNCIL MERIT AWARDS



The Parish Council was delighted to host its annual Merit Awards during the 'Thank You' gathering for village volunteers. With refreshments generously donated by Balfour Winery, the evening was a chance to express heartfelt gratitude to all volunteers whose dedication enriches Staplehurst.

This year's Merit Award was presented to **Bob Ham** in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the village. Over many years, Bob has served on the Carnival and Fete Committee (later the Staplehurst Community Events Group), including as Chairman. Under his leadership, the group organised beloved events such as the Annual Carnival, fun runs, Christmas Fayre, and

Santa's Sleigh. The committee's profits supported local groups, and their Carnival programme, featuring history snippets and event details, was delivered to every household.

Bob also worked with the Lions to support individuals in need and assisted the Parish Council by delivering Updates and Annual Reports. A devoted family man, Bob has now retired to spend more time with his loved ones, leaving behind a legacy of exceptional service.

The junior Merit Award went to **Savannah Rhodes**, an advocate of the Staplehurst Emergency Help Team (SEHT). Savannah earned the Duke of Cornwall Home Award and has since supported SEHT at events, water stations, and fundraisers. She assists at the artisan market in her personalised hi-vis jacket and even starred in a video for the Kent Resilience Forum.

The Merit Awards were kindly sponsored this year by three Parish Councillors, and the Council extends its gratitude for their support.



## GREENER STAPLEHURST GROUP

Last November, a new planter was installed at the village parade, on the pharmacy (South) side of Offens Drive. This bed is in memory of one of our earliest members, who died tragically two years ago, Jon Grimwood. The bed was constructed, sited, lined and filled with compost by Greener Staplehurst member, Dave Charge, with the help of his son. In December, Jon's daughter chose the colours for planting, pink and red. Cyclamen and bulbs have been planted and in Spring there should



*Thomas Charge at work*

be a display of red and pink tulips. Spring and Summer plants will be added to the bed at the appropriate time. It is our intention to add a plaque, bearing Jon's name, to the planter in due course. We are also planning, when the weather allows, to plant more bulbs around the village. But all this work needs volunteers, and we need more. If you are interested, or would like more information, please phone Dave George on 07903447326 for a chat.

## NEW YEAR - NEW RESOLUTION - REPORT ASB

Dear Residents,

Rather than "moan on Facebook" why not report incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour by phoning 101 or use "My Community Voice" to help reduce Anti-Social Behaviour in the village

The New Year is time for new beginnings and fresh opportunities to make your community stronger, safer, and more connected. Register on <https://www.mycommunityvoicekent.co.uk/> to get involved today and be part of the Community trying to address Anti-Social Behaviour

### You will be able to

- Share your input on important community matters.
- Help create positive change and address key issues.
- Work together with neighbours and local leaders to make your community a better place for all.
- You will be able to play an active part in police appeals as well as keeping updated on what is happening in your local area.



*Access the Web*

So let's kick off the New Year by coming together to strengthen our communities and encourage others to sign up and join the My Community Voice Family, spread the word amongst your family & friends so we can all improve the area we live.



## ROAD SAFETY GROUP

Staplehurst Primary School - Gibbons Road / Surrenden Road

There is always pressure and safety concerns expressed by many about the safety of pedestrians as well as the impact on local residents being unable to park at their own homes.

Kent Highways, SPC and the school have worked together to mitigate and improve this.

SPC's application to join a 20mph trial in the surrounding area was not successful. Due to high demand, competition was fierce and SPC was not selected.

That doesn't mean we can't all drive at 20mph around the area, particularly at school times!

SPC have lobbied Kent Highways for improvements, who have painted zig zag lines at both ends of Bower Walk, double yellow lines and installed bollards to dissuade bad parking.

We even have the speed indicator on Bathurst Road periodically which rarely catches anyone speeding. Either no one speeds (!) or it works in slowing them down!

The school put signs out and communicated with parents about doing their best to drive around the area carefully and respectfully. Both the police and a traffic warden also visit.

Ultimately, everything that can be, has been installed, so we hope that the school and parents will be able to work together to communicate the best way to drop off and collect the children from school.

On another note, if you would like to train and become one of the Speedwatch volunteers, go to [communityspeedwatch.org](http://communityspeedwatch.org) watch the training videos and do the test to join.

If you know of any RTA's, let us know via [staplehurstroadinfo@gmail.com](mailto:staplehurstroadinfo@gmail.com)

### Use:-

[kent.gov.uk](http://kent.gov.uk) to report potholes

[southeastwater.co.uk](http://southeastwater.co.uk) to report a leak.



## STAPLEHURST HEALTH CENTRE

As from 1st April, Staplehurst Health Centre will become a branch of The Mote Medical Practice in Maidstone. There is currently a 3-month transition process in place. All current staff will remain in post under TUPE arrangements. The ICB has written to all patients to explain the changeover

## PLANNING COMMITTEE - Cllr. Sharp

It's been relatively quiet on the planning front recently, but there have still been a steady trickle which will no doubt increase now it's the new year.

In the last update we mentioned the Solar Farm at Mathurst which now has an extension for consideration until March so is still being considered.

Many of you will have been watching the development of the Churchill retirement homes site. SPC have liaised with them about the labourers parking around the site and they have put signs up in some roads now.

I encourage you all to retain an interest in the development that occurs in Staplehurst and make use of MBC's planning portal to add your own thoughts about applications, for or against them.

In the meantime, our planning committee continue to check applications as they come in and make our recommendations to MBC in line with our Neighbourhood Plan and Maidstone Borough Council's planning policies. We try to ensure that development is necessary, appropriate and where possible environmentally aware as possible.

## FINANCE & STRATEGY GROUP

The Group has been working hard on the Parish Council budget. We have focused on trying to pare down on expenditure and apart from general inflation, that we are all aware of, the biggest challenge was the Youth Club.

Last year Kent County Council reduced their funding for Youth Services in Kent, the impact was that Staplehurst was not considered a "County Wide priority" and the funding for the Youth Services Workers at Staplehurst was withdrawn late last year.

We have worked hard to obtain some partnership funding but are required to add £14,000 to the Parish Council budget to get a Youth Service back into Staplehurst.

The Council budget was approved on the 27th January 2025 with a precept of £300,000, this equates to a 48p per week or £2.06 per month increase on an average Band D property.

We will continue to work with partners such as Maidstone Borough Council and Kent County Council to do the best for Staplehurst.

## ENTITLED TO A EUROPEAN PENSION?

You may be required to complete an annual 'confirmation of life statement.'

### WHERE TO COME

Forms can be brought to the Parish Office where the Clerk will be able to check and stamp them for you. It is best to phone 01580 891761 or email [clerk@staplehurst-pc.uk](mailto:clerk@staplehurst-pc.uk) to arrange an appointment.

### WHAT TO BRING

Please bring your forms with the personal details already completed. In addition:

- You must bring a Passport/ National ID Card or Driving licence Card and proof of address.
- If your form requires confirmation that you are married or in a civil partnership, you must bring an original copy of the marriage/civil partnership certificate
- A death certificate needs to be presented if there is reference to the death of a spouse on the form

## STAPLEHURST EMERGENCY HELP TEAM

SEHT continue to work hard in the background to keep Staplehurst safe and moving.

The stormy weather kept us busy removing trees blocking roads, rescuing cars from ditches and water, operating water stations for those with burst/frozen pipes etc.

New courses have been undertaken, the first screening of our video made by Kent Resilience Forum went out and new insurance found.

We have had some new members and actively encourage residents to be as resilient as possible to keep themselves safe.

Please remember our call out number is for use in emergencies not for mice in the loft or running out of petrol.

The highlight of the season was definitely working alongside the highly popular tractor run. SEHT provided crowd control along the route, first aid stations and walking first aiders. Over 40 Tractors paraded the streets and Staplehurst doubled its bucket takings from 2023 and raised just over £3000 for the Air Ambulance.

The whole event has raised around £25K. Well done Young Farmers! A massive undertaking but highly successful and enjoyable event.

Anyone interested in learning more about the SEHT please email on [chairseht@gmail.com](mailto:chairseht@gmail.com).



## EVENTS

### VOLUNTEERING OPTIONS

The following organisations – and many others we are aware of – are looking for volunteers. Please scan the QR codes hidden in the balloons to contact them. In the current times, it is increasingly difficult to find an extra hand, and funding is scarce to keep them running.

Volunteering offers a range of personal benefits beyond just helping others. It's a chance to develop new skills, boost your confidence, and gain valuable experience that can benefit both your personal and professional life. Volunteering connects you with like-minded people, helps build lasting friendships, and fosters a strong sense of community. It's also incredibly rewarding – knowing that your time and effort are making a real difference can bring a deep sense of accomplishment and purpose. Whether you're supporting a local cause or helping those in need, volunteering enriches your life as much as it does others.



Scan these QR codes to contact these organisations that are currently looking for volunteers



## IN THE SPOTLIGHT:

### NOTABLE FIGURES OF STAPLEHURST

Interview with

**SILKE TETZLAFF - Rector of All Saints**

Silke was brought up in Rostock in East Germany, where young children were encouraged to think about their future careers. Early on, she'd thought she'd like to be a chef, but as her father was a GP, she also liked the idea of nursing. However, he persuaded her to train as an audiologist instead. East Germany worked on a 5-year plan to ensure sufficient jobs met needs; they needed audiologists and so, aged 17, Silke left home and moved south to Jena, near Weimar, to train. All medical students worked together as hospital assistants, combining practical training with theory and learning much of each other's craft.

Silke cut short her course to train as a teacher of audiology and practice in Berlin. Students were allowed to attend other faculty lectures for free and one day, Silke attended a lecture about Comenius, a theologian and a teacher. This was a revelation to her and she realised that this was what she wanted to study. She knew she wanted to teach, but rather than medicine, she wanted to teach theology.

When the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, a whole new world of travel and education opened up for East Germans and Silke was accepted on a full-time theology course in Berlin.

After holidaying with friends in Ireland in 1990, Silke took a gap year in England to learn English. She enrolled on a 5-month course in Southwark, working as a waitress and then in MacDonalds to earn enough to study. Accommodation for mostly foreign students was dire, with people crammed into rooms at a Quaker hotel in Bedford Square – free lodging in return for 'slave labour' at the hotel, with time off to attend classes.

To complete her gap year, she spent the remaining time backpacking with friends around Scotland, practising English and enjoying life, before returning to her flat in Berlin and completing lectures there.

Having decided to return to England, she enrolled at Kings College to study for a theology degree and lived in Sydenham. Her initial plan was to return to Germany after one year, but realising that she would have had to start her course again, she stayed on in England. Unlike in Germany, a theology degree in England doesn't mean one has to be ordained.

At this point, Silke was experiencing all denominations and during her 2nd year, she lived above Bloomsbury Baptist Church, carrying out caretaking duties in return for free lodging.

The ordination of women was allowed in England in 1992, which was perfect timing for Silke, who by now believed she had a calling to be ordained. With the support of the college Dean, Silke took up 2 parish placements, in the east end of London and Hitchin, Hertfordshire as a parish worker, unpaid posts but with free accommodation. Her English was good enough for her to work as a part-time audiologist, in order to finance her work in the parishes. Her reputation for hard work and dedication was soon established – traits she attributes to the ethos of her East German upbringing.

Silke was now selected to attend Westcott House in Cambridge for her two-year ministry training, before moving to Luton Leagrave, near Dunstable as Curate for the next 4 years. At this point she gave up her audiology work for good.

In 2005, she embarked upon her first incumbency in Weston, Herts, which ultimately included four villages. After 6 happy years, she decided it was time to move on and having experienced life both in big cities and tiny villages, Staplehurst appealed to her, because it was in between. She took up her post as Rector of All Saints on 24th November 2011 and she loves her job.

And what does she love about Staplehurst? Silke believes Staplehurst has the perfect infrastructure for ministry, with a wide representation of all walks of life, with good networks and people who know one another. Surrounded by lovely countryside, so much like Rostock, she says it feels like coming back home..



## PARISH COUNCIL NEWS FROM THE PAST (8) - cllr castro

On this occasion, we are taking a strategic approach to our news selection. You may be aware that the Parish Council has finally succeeded in securing some allotments after years of pursuing this matter. For this reason, we plan for the next issue of "Parish Council News from the Past" to focus on allotments, tying in with a dedicated article about the allotments we have finally achieved.

In the meantime, we present below a selection of news from 1929, including references to the fire brigade that once served our village, alongside other issues of interest. Those were the days!

As always, our thanks go to Tom Burnham for his invaluable help in deciphering the scripts – a task that is far from easy.

**18th March 1929** – *It was proposed... and carried... that the question of the disposal of the Fire Engine be referred to the Parish Meeting to be held shortly.*

*The Foot-Paths Committee reported that the repairs to the foot-path in Bell Lane were in hand and that the posts in Horns Lodge Lane were to be white-washed.*

**8th April 1929** – *The question of insuring the Fire Brigade against personal accidents while engaged at work was then discussed and the terms offered by various Insurance Companies. It was proposed... and carried that the terms offered by the National Farmers' Union Mutual Insurance Company be accepted for 12 men working at the same time.*

**1st July 1929** – *Mr. Councillor Gibson reported that he had called on Mr. French with reference to the Insurance of the Fire Brigade asking that the policy should include any substitute working at the pump during a fire while a Member of the Brigade was absent.*

*Mrs. J. Couchman of Bell Lane complained of rubbish being deposited in the lane such as broken glass making it dangerous for horses as well as unsightly to the residents.*

**12th August 1929** – *It was proposed... and carried that the terms of the "Farmers Commercial Insurance Company Limited" be accepted and the Premium of £4 for Insuring the Members of the Fire Brigade in case of personal accident be paid.*

### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- Saturday 5th April 2025** - Village Clean Up - 10am at the Youth Club
- Thursday 8th May 2025** - 80th Anniversary of Victory in Europe Day - Surrenden Field
- Monday 12th May 2025** - Parish Council Annual General Meeting - 7.30pm Staplehurst Primary School
- Friday 16th May 2025** - Staplehurst Awards and Social Evening / Annual Parish Meeting - 7.30pm North Hall, Community Centre

## PARISH COUNCIL INFORMATION

**Parish Council meetings - 7.30pm at the Infant Hall - Staplehurst Primary School**

Planning - Monday 24th February, 17th March, 7th April, 28th April

Full Council - Monday 10th March, 31st March, 22nd April (Tuesday), 12th May

**Clerk** - Richard Griffiths

clerk@staplehurst-pc.uk

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

deputyclerk@staplehurst-pc.uk

**Parish Support Officer** - Mrs Jean Terry

admin@staplehurst-pc.uk

**Caretaker** - Paul Nyahwa

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

**Phone:** 01580 891761

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



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