

Village Update

WINTER 2018

www.staplehurst-pc.uk

STAPLEHURST REMEMBERS

Everyone would have been aware that this year was the 100th anniversary of the end of the Great War 1914-1918. As a Parish we normally have a well-attended Remembrance Parade and Church service. This year we had an additional evening event held in Surrenden Field. Everyone who was organising these events were hoping for an increase in public numbers and were not disappointed.

The Parade featured Verity. Verity is a chestnut Irish draught horse attended with authentic period saddle, tack and bit, together with First World War reenactors leading the Parade, who were from The Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment.

This year we also asked the public to join in with the Parade after it had passed. It was great to see this in action. Pictures show that when the head of the Parade reached the Church the rear was still at the shopping parade. The Church was standing room only and the service including the Bishop of Dover was well received. Well done to the Scout & Guide Associations who organise their members and are the focal point of the Parade. Thanks go to the marshals that every year manage the road closure to allow the Parade to take place. Special thanks go to the four marshals who man each end of the A229, who sadly don't get to see the Parade.

Staplehurst joined around 1000 other communities in the UK and overseas territories to mark this anniversary. A



service was held in Surrenden Field that included a special reading titled 'Tribute to the Millions' and the lighting of a Beacon at 7pm, following the Last Post. Thanks go to the group that organised the evening event, Parish Councillors Barrett Manning and John Reardon with Graham Sivyer. Both Barrett and Graham are part of Staplehurst Community Events Group and without their assistance and access to the group's equipment this event would not have been possible. The service was led by Rev. Andrew Royal (URC) and supported by Rev. Silke Tetzlaff (All Saints Church) and Pastor Dhenis Stafford (Staplehurst Free Church.) The Beacon was lit at 7pm and remained alight till 8pm. During this

time the Bells of All Saints Church rang. Thanks to the team ringing the bells who gave up the opportunity of being at the Surrenden Field, in order to perform that act of remembrance.

The numbers attending the Church service were mid 600's. This means the Parade would have attracted around 700. The Surrenden Field Beacon event was estimated at 450. Who would have thought we would have got 450 people out to a muddy field on a wet November's evening? Facebook came alive after the events of the day. Many messages to say how fitting the tributes were, and one particular resident stated that it was great to see that this Village was regaining a strong sense of community spirit. Well done Staplehurst.

Staplehurst

Parish Council

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Vacancies on the Parish Council have been filled by co-opting Susan Forward and Paul Kelly in May and Hannah Pontet in October, and I'd like to welcome all three to the Council and thank them for taking on this role. We now have a full complement of fifteen Councillors. There will be a new Parish Council from May 2019, with an election on Thursday 2nd May if there are more than fifteen people nominated. If you think you might be interested in standing, please contact the Parish Office or any of the present Parish Councillors to discuss what's involved.

Our Remembrance Sunday events on 11th November have a particular significance this year as they mark the centenary of the Armistice at the end of the First World War. Thank you to the many people and groups who have helped to arrange commemorative events in and around Staplehurst over the last four years. Although the First World War was described at the time as the "war to end wars", we know now that this was by no means the case, and we should also be remembering the sufferings of victims of conflict and the sacrifices of Britain's armed forces today and throughout the last hundred years.

Cllr Burnham (Chairman)

RECENT CRIME

Over the last few weeks we have become aware of an increase in the number of thefts or attempted thefts, especially agricultural vehicles, in the area.

Plus, as this Update was being written we hear of an attempted break-in to a residential house during daylight hours. Please keep your property secure and if you see any crime committed call the Police.

Staplehurst Neighbourhood Watch meets regularly and is always looking for members to support any initiatives to assist in reducing crime. Please see the Parish Council website for details.

ROAD SAFETY IN STAPLEHURST

During this Autumn the Speedwatch teams have been out, helping to keep motorists reminded that we prefer them to drive carefully through Staplehurst.

1256 vehicles passed us of which 126 have had their details recorded and submitted to Kent Police because they were exceeding the speed limit by at least 10% plus 2 mph (35mph or more in the 30 area or 46 in the 40mph areas). 110 were first-time offenders (that's anywhere in Kent in the last twelve months), but police letters were sent to the others. For one young driver who was clocked at 58mph in Station Road, the letter was delivered by a uniformed officer so we can hope that this shock treatment will be the turning point to make him a much safer driver. Our data also flags up where vehicles are untaxed, but being used!

Our team would welcome any new volunteers. There is online training to complete and then a practical session here in Staplehurst by the roadside. The commitment is to participate sometimes so when qualified you can offer to help when it suits you. Search Kent Police / Speed Watch or let the Clerk know you are interested.

WIMPEY FIELD UPDATE

At the end of October your reserve is still teeming with wildlife with lots of tiny golden slow worms, lizards and adders still out sunbathing. If you are concerned about adders then please keep yourselves, children and dogs on the path, but unless you know where to look you are unlikely to see them.

Breaking news - We may have hedgehogs! Please don't put food out for them because if they are to survive and thrive they need to do so without being dependent on human intervention.

We still need volunteers with strong gloves and their own hand, not machine tools. Contact us via our "Friends of the Wimpey Field" Facebook page or leave contact details with the Parish Office.

BEING A PARISH COUNCILLOR

In light of Parish Council Elections next year we thought we would have a small section explaining the view of two Parish Councillors.

View from a new Councillor's Chair

I sat in the public gallery and occasionally addressed the Parish Council for a year before I decided to go for co-option to a vacant seat, so I thought I knew what I was letting myself in for... I was wrong! Things look very different from this side of the room. The first hint of the work to come was when a long-established Councillor presented me with an official "SPC Litter Picker". What a welcome!

Five months in and I sometimes feel overwhelmed by the amount of work and time needed to be effective. I am on a very steep learning curve and have only seen the tip of the iceberg so far. I have been genuinely astonished and humbled to understand the dedication,

knowledge and expertise shown by your Parish Council which is working for you.

Response from a long-established Councillor

It is always great to see parishioners attending and passing comments at the start and finish of meetings. I am still on a steep learning curve, often wondering if the goalposts will ever stay still. I have been fortunate to witness the efforts and new ideas of very many willing volunteer councillors, who all try their best to improve the lives of the residents of Staplehurst. I am always willing to share what little wisdom I have, as well as litter pickers!

AUTUMN CLEAN-UP

Councillors Burnham and Buller, with the help of Malcolm Buller, organised the second Clean-Up of the year. A huge thank you to the 25 residents who helped collect masses of litter from our village streets.

We concentrated on the 4 main roads and The Parade area as these generate the most litter. Many estate roads were also cleaned. We would like to thank a further 8 or so residents who worked on our rural lanes at their own risk as MBC will not insure people litter picking outside of the 30mph zone.

The refreshments, amiably dispensed by two members of the Men's Shed Group, were very welcome. We are grateful to the Youth Club Management for allowing us to use their building and the site for storing the many bags of rubbish.

We also would like to thank MBC for the loan of the necessary equipment and for their prompt collection of all the rubbish. Thank you too to Mick and Jean in the Office who also worked hard on this event. Mick also returned to the village and filled several bags of rubbish to add to the pile. Well done too to Borough Councillors Louise Brice and John Perry for joining in this task.

We had fewer volunteers than usual, so not every estate road was cleaned. It was good to see young children with their parents recognising how important it is to help others. (Chocolate biscuits are a good reward too.) The challenge is to educate people not to drop their litter in the first place especially those who throw it out of their vehicles as they drive through Staplehurst.

Real success would be for Clean-Ups to be unnecessary. We know many residents also litter-pick on a regular basis in addition to our Clean-Ups. Thank you to them! We hope to see you next Spring when we will do this all over again.

STAPLEHURST EMERGENCY HELP TEAM

'Beast from the East 2' – Are you prepared for it?

The village's Emergency Help Team (SEHT) maintain a list of village residents who would welcome a call in 'adverse conditions' so, when the 'Beast' peaked last winter, SEHT 'phoned all those residents to see if they needed help.

While some were out of fresh greens, all were fine, and most of them still had several days of pasta in the cupboard – they had all planned ahead.

But, had the Beast continued for another week, with empty supermarket shelves, some would have needed help – when SEHT would have placed a 'group order' for collection the following day and, using a 4x4, distributed the milk, bread, eggs, pasta... to those who were running low.

If you would welcome a call, or you know of someone (possibly someone with mobility problems) who would welcome such a call, in the event 'The Beast' should strike again this winter, please contact the Parish Office who will, in the strictest confidence, pass your details directly to SEHT.

A SEHT volunteer will then call the individual resident soon after, a) to make sure the contact details provided are correct, b) to get a little more information & to answer any questions, and c) to confirm that the resident does want SEHT to hold their details – which is a requirement of the recent data-protection regulations).

PLANNING UPDATE

Hen and Duckhurst Development: SPC continues to try and get guarantees regarding the drainage on this site. Conditions were put in place by MBC and we have once again refused the application for us to sign off certain conditions as even KCC were not convinced by the drainage plans put forward. Building is not meant to take place until these conditions are passed and the roundabout on the site should be built before any houses are begun. It is also a condition that all site vehicles should be parked on site and not on estate roads nearby. Mud from the site should also be washed off contractors' vehicles and the main road kept clean.

Headcorn Road Development: There have been a few amendments for the front show houses and some road works relating to this site. Please take care when driving past towards the corner out of Staplehurst.

Holman House: (next to the Free Church) made amendments to their original planning application and, although SPC did not feel this was sufficient, MBC passed the latest application.

Oasters new access at Knoxbidge: As many of you are aware the movement of traffic past the cafe has been a concern to Knoxbidge locals for some time. Masters / Fridays applied for a new access further up across their fields. SPC supported this application and MBC approved (finally) on condition that the area was suitably screened and kept as countryside except for the road through.

Sainsbury's: Nothing further to report. And a big thank you for those that did all the planning and organisation of the Remembrance Parade and lighting of the Beacon on Surrenden Field this year.

Cllr Sharp

CRICKET SUCCESS

Staplehurst 1st XI were formally crowned Division 5 champions of the Kent Cricket League. At the awards night skipper, Tom Davey, received the Division Champion trophy and a flag which is the clubs to keep and fly for the 2019 season as they battle to keep the record of consecutive promotions going in League Division 4.

In further League news, the 2nd XI have also been promoted to the Kent League and will start the 2019 season in Kent League Division 5 (2nd XIs). So huge congratulations to all the cricketers for another fantastically successful year.

In the Spring we are sure we will be able to report on great news from the village football teams playing on Jubilee Field.

PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

Local electors and the press have a right to listen to Parish Council Meetings, but not to take part. At the beginning and after the closure of the Parish Council Meeting the Chairman will invite members of the public to speak for a maximum of 3 minutes each relating to issues on the Agenda or about issues of local concern.

You are requested to state your name and address prior to speaking. The Parish Council as a planning consultee makes recommendations to MBC which makes the decision. All meetings are held in the South Hall, Village Centre. Dates and times of meetings are advertised on the Parish noticeboard and website.

Forthcoming Meetings:

Monday 17th December (North Hall)

STAPLEHURST FAMILY FIREWORKS



Our Jubilee Field was pleased and honoured to again play host to Staplehurst Family Fireworks. A joyous evening organised by and for our community. Here our Vice Chairman Paddy Riordan and our Maidstone Borough Mayor David Naghi go Cutlass to Cutlass, before blast off.

Parish Council Information

COUNCILLORS

Tom Burnham (Chairman)
Margaret Ashby
Joan Buller
Susan Forward
Paul Kelly
Sam Lain-Rose
Barrett Manning
John Perry
Hannah Pontet
John Reardon
Patrick Riordan (Vice-Chairman)
Adele Sharp
Rory Silkin
Gillian Smith
Elaine Symes

CLERK

Mr Mick Westwood

DEPUTY CLERK AND RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER

Mrs Deborah Jenkins

PARISH SUPPORT OFFICER

Mrs Jean Terry

Address:

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

Email: clerk@staplehurstvillage.org.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: every Saturday from 10am until 11am
- PCSO Pete Gardner Saturdays 8th Dec, 19th Jan and 9th Feb at 10-11am.

You are welcome to talk through any local problems or ask questions about local issues.