

STAPLEHURST

PARISH COUNCIL

VILLAGE
UPDATE
SPRING
2022

OUR PAST

“A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots.” – Marcus Garvey

Once upon a time (1974) **The Staplehurst Society** was formed following a planning proposal to demolish Surrenden House in the High Street and build 37 houses on the site. The concern expressed by residents regarding this event resulted in a threatening phone call! Other planned developments included Wimpey building 204 houses on Marden Road, with a further development of 200 to extend the site, 180 houses at the end of Chapel Lane and 400 properties for what is now Hurst Close.

Forty-seven years on many might say that, like King Canute, they have not held back the tide of development but they have really tried!

The Society's objectives, according to its constitution, are to stimulate public interest, promote high standards of planning and architecture and to preserve and protect the history of Staplehurst.

It is to the history of Staplehurst, both people and places, where members of the society now channel their energies. The Society's archivists care for nearly 4,000 photographs, maps, deeds, work ledgers, posters, artefacts and biographies relating to Staplehurst. The archives are held at the Village Community Centre, 1st floor and are available to view by appointment on Monday mornings 10am – 12noon.



Staplehurst High Street 1877



Ellen and Richard Weeks at the Knoxbridge Toll House



Bell Inn Etching 1871

The archivists would love to see any photographs you might have of Staplehurst, people, places and events from 1920 to 1970 to add to their photographic archive. They would also like to hear from people who have memories of the various events, clubs and organisations within the parish.

So, if you would like to know about where you live, please contact them via: archive@staplehurstsociety.org.
Website address: www.staplehurstsociety.org.

The Society's annual **membership** is £5 per person.

EVENTS in 2022 *(All dates, time and venue to be confirmed)*

- Slide show
- Talk – Suffragettes in Kent by Jennifer Godfrey
- AGM – Talk by Anita Thompson
- Visit to Cranbrook Museum
- Village Trail

The Parish Council considers that the Staplehurst Society is one of the little known gems of our Parish and, therefore, we want to thank them for their hard work. We thought that opening this Village Update with their article would be a good way to support and contribute to their wonderful mission.

www.staplehurst-pc-uk

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

Tel: 01580 891761

Email: clerk@staplehurst-pc.uk

NEW COUNCILLORS

Four more councillors have joined the Parish Council recently. Look out for Matt Clifton, Bill McLaughlin, Kelly McLean and Paul Skinner. The Parish Council is composed of a mixed group of skills, ideas and experience. We welcome them to the Council. With the number of projects increasing, their time, energy and expertise will be appreciated by all!



Cllr. Matt Clifton



Cllr. Bill McLaughlin



Cllr. Kelly McLean



Cllr. Paul Skinner

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

9TH OF APRIL

VILLAGE CLEAN UP

Meet at the Youth Club
(next to the Village
Community Centre)

14TH MAY

GREENER STAPLEHURST Eco-Day

(in collaboration with
All Saints' Church)

**More information closer
to the date**

VILLAGE CENTRE



Aerial view of the
Village Centre.
Credit to Richard Hawkes

Just as we were getting used to fewer Covid restrictions, Omicron plunged us into Plan B. However, we are now emerging from that, and thanks to the resilience of our users, the halls are filling up with interesting events again. The one-off Comedy night in December proved to be such a success that there is another one planned for the spring. Watch our Facebook page for details. For card game lovers the Bridge Club has taken up temporary residence in the West Hall on Friday evenings. Why not try it out? And the Farmer's Market takes place again monthly from February. This is on top of the usual array of regular events, clubs, parties and sessions. We're open to all

Find out the dates for
Parish Council meetings.
Please scan this code:



PARISH COUNCIL MERIT AWARDS

Staplehurst Parish Council Annual merit awards were, once again, presented to some very deserving recipients.

Martin Ralph, one of our local scout leaders, was presented with this year's adult award. Apart from his tireless work with the SCOUT GROUP, Martin regularly helps with the Greener Staplehurst Group and can be regularly seen planting at the parade of shops. He has assisted the community payback team, particularly at Poyntell Road pond, and he is one of the main representatives in the Village Remembrance parade.

This year's junior award went to young Thomas Charge, who can regularly be seen working with his dad at the Greener Staplehurst Group sites around the village, doing his part to make Staplehurst look more beautiful. Very well done, young Thomas!

Two further awards were presented to residents of the village who are partners of two of our parish councillors, so it was not thought appropriate to put them forward for the main awards.

Mandy Riordan and Malcolm Buller received certificates of appreciation. These were for Mandy's hard work running the Community Hub throughout the Covid pandemic lockdowns and Malcolm's tireless work in other aspects of the community including the Road Safety Group and Speedwatch.



MERIT AWARD WINNER:
Martin Ralph



JUNIOR MERIT AWARD WINNER:
Thomas Charge



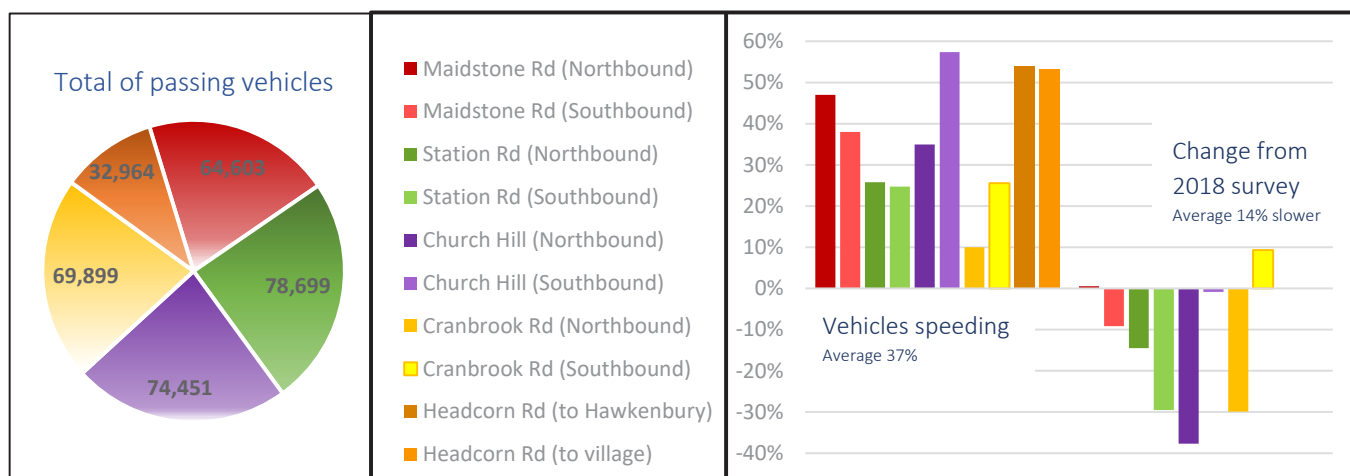
Mandy Riordan



Malcolm Buller

ROAD TRAFFIC REPORTS

The Parish Council, in co-operation with KCC Highways, commissioned Transport Traffic Systems (TTS) to conduct a week-long survey at four sites along the built-up area of the A229 during mid-November 2021. This was to mirror the survey carried out in 2018. A second report was also commissioned by the Parish Council to TTS for a survey at Headcorn Road. The graphics below summarise the main findings.



The headline message is the very significant difference that the extra road markings have had on traffic coming into our village from the south, proving that KCC money has been well invested. In Cranbrook Road in particular, the speeding vehicles have reduced from 39% to a 9%. Traffic generally has slowed throughout the village.

For access to a more thorough interpretation of the data by Malcolm Buller, on behalf of the Road Safety Group, to all the data collected in the survey and to a comparison to 2018 survey, visit our website, under the Road Safety tab, or scan this QR code:



Staplehurst has a Speedwatch Team that can operate at police approved sites. If you are interested in joining it, go to the Kent Police website and follow the CSW (Community Speed Watch) links to see what the scheme entails, give your details to join the Staplehurst Team and watch the training video



The inquisitive reader may notice in Parish Council News from the Past (4), the last article of the present issue, that some things never change.

STAY SAFE STAPLEHURST

Kent Police have recently reported an increase in Delivery Scams.

If you receive a text message stating that you have missed a delivery and that you need to click on a link to organise a new delivery date and pay a nominal fee BEWARE.

Any unsolicited messages like this are likely to be a scam. By clicking the link, you will normally be re-directed to a very convincing website, which will ask for your personal details and card details to pay the above fee. A recent example reported by 'Which' was of a bogus text message being sent that impersonated the Post Office and the web sites that people were redirected to were very convincing. This has been reported.

Whilst often the offending website is taken down, just as quickly it is likely other spurious schemes will replace it. Please remember to treat with suspicion any text or email messages asking you to click on a link, as it may well be a scam. If unsure you should confirm by calling via a trusted number to ensure any request is genuine.

Forward suspicious emails to report@phishing.gov.uk and suspicious texts to 7726.

Try to avoid clicking on links out of curiosity, as there is always a danger you may download malware.

Staplehurst Community Events Group

For approaching 60 years the Staplehurst Community Events group (and its predecessor Staplehurst Carnival and Fete Committee), have organised local events for the village, providing good fun and entertainment, alongside raising tens of thousands of pounds to support local groups and organisations.

This year we are organising the Party in the Park to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee in June, "Whites Landscaping" 5k and 10k runs, and later in the year we hope to bring a funfair to the village, and also repeat the successful Santa Sleigh runs around the village in December.

However, we really do need both more committee members (including a chairperson) and helpers on the event days – could you help? If you'd like to know more, please email us at staplehursteventsgroup@gmail.com or via our Facebook page. Alternatively call Bob Ham on 892742 or Mandy Carley on 07780 646960.



PARISH COUNCIL PROJECTS - UPDATE

Details of local projects which the PC are working on at the current time.

- Re-surfacing and white lining of the Bell Lane car park (with wider spaces). SPC initiated the project in conjunction with MBC, who will complete it.
- Repainting of the bollards at The Parade
- Repainting of the railings on Church Hill
- Completion of the South Bank telephone box
- Continued research into a potential pedestrian crossing along Cranbrook Road (near the petrol station)
- Installation of the new path as Surrenden Playing Fields
- Tree planting throughout the village for the Queens Platinum Jubilee year
- The takeover of the Youth Club from the Staplehurst Youth Group and research into invigorating the facility for the youth of our village.
- Installation of the final new litter bin at The Parade



Top Left: Bell Lane Car Park

Top right & below : New gates at Wimpey Field



MEMORIAL (2)

Many people, especially newer residents, think that the obelisk memorial at the crossroads is the village war memorial. It is in fact a memorial to five Marian Martyrs. They were Alice Benden, Alice Potkins and Joan Bradbridge from Staplehurst, and Edmund and Catherine Allen from Frittenden. Alice Potkins died of starvation in prison at Canterbury, but the others survived to be burnt to death. The Allens and Joan Bradbridge in Maidstone on 18th June 1557, and Alice Benden in Canterbury on 19th June 1557.

The congregation of the Strict and Particular Baptist Church in Chapel Lane was responsible for erecting the memorial.

If you look closely, you will find a plaque on the wall of Drake's, by the bridge in Maidstone which marks the spot where the executions took place. The railings have recently been repaired and repainted after a car crashed into them.

My next article will be on the village war memorial which is in All Saints' Church.



PLANNING NEWS

The Planning Committee has been very busy as usual during the last three months, considering very carefully every application submitted in our parish. If we recommend refusal to Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) it is supported by reference to relevant planning policies. We are consultees but MBC make all decisions.

As well as the usual mix of extensions, barn conversions, replacement dwellings and tree works, the plans to redevelop the High Street garage site into retirement homes have been submitted. We recommended refusal in its present form because of its design and lack of sufficient parking. This would have a detrimental effect on the surrounding area.



We have also asked for this application to be referred to the MBC Planning Committee if necessary.

Many residents have expressed dismay at the demolition of the chalet bungalow, Penryn, in Station Road to be replaced by four homes. Both councils opposed this for a variety of policy reasons, but permission was granted on appeal by a Planning Inspector. The Parish Council has submitted a thorough and detailed response to MBC's Regulation 19 of the Local Plan Review. This can be read on our PC website via the Local Plan Review tab.

SAINSBURY'S Shuttle Bus Service

Sainsbury's have confirmed that planning for free Shuttle Bus service is progressing, and they have sent the relevant documentation to KCC Highways for approval. We will update you further as soon as we receive any more details. Nearly there!

STAPLEHURST YOUTH CLUB

Since 1987, Staplehurst Youth Club has been run independently – via the Staplehurst Youth Group (registered Charity). Covid has had a huge detrimental effect on the functionality of the Youth Club and its ability to survive. Following the AGM, the trustees felt Charity Status was not the best vehicle to move forward on such a village asset. Therefore, it was agreed that the building be offered to SPC, with all of its resources to move it on, for the benefit of the village.

This approach was confirmed at the Parish Council meeting in January and a working group has been set up to manage the restart and reinvigoration of the Youth Club, with a target to resume operations soon. Staplehurst Parish Council are already committed to the long-term lease purchase of the Youth Club land. This has been in progress for some time.

We have big plans to restart the youth club.



We are currently planning a small refurbishment and modernisation of the Youth Club building – including repainting and installation of WiFi – and we are in discussion with other potential partners such as a new “after school” computer club. The building is already used by other local groups such as the Staplehurst Men’s Shed and the Bridge Club.

We are investigating a variety of funding sources. We are also in discussion with KCC. They fund a specialist Youth Services team - Salus Group - and we are talking to them about how they might help provide some resource and expertise to help ensure a successful restart of the Youth Club.

If you would like more information, please contact: CLlr.Stuart.McPhee@staplehurst-pc.uk



WE ARE PAINTING THE SKATE PARK!

The Parish Council needs to paint the sides of the ramps at the Skate Park regularly as part of our maintenance programme. Traditionally we’ve painted them black, but this time we felt it would be good to work with young people in the village and get them painted more in line with the culture and ethos of skateboarding and scootering. So, we have engaged a brilliant local artist - who has worked with MBC on the new mural at their central bus station in Maidstone - to help lead a new look.

By the time you read this we will have had a session with young people to ask them what they feel it should look like and then started the painting. We are hoping (weather dependent) that the painting will take place on the 18th/20th and 26th or 27th of February. So, you may already be able to see the new look emerging. But if you know any young artists who’d like to get involved, then contact the Clerk at the Parish Office and she can confirm when the final dates of painting will take place and hopefully enable you to get involved.

Watch out for the new look next time you are passing!



Update from Staplehurst Health Centre

New Practice Manager

The surgery would like to welcome Gillian Osborne as the new Practice Manager, who commenced in post on the 24th January 2022.

Repeat Prescriptions

Online Patient Access is the fastest way to order your repeat prescriptions. If you do not have an online account, please contact surgery by emailing gp.g82681@nhs.net

COVID

Thank you for your continued support in keeping the Practice staff and patients safe by wearing a mask to your appointments.

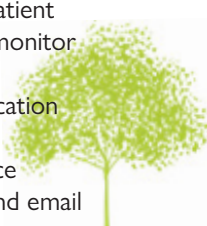
The Practice has now delivered over 1000 COVID vaccinations to registered patients.

Patient Participation Group

To make it easier for patients to make their views known, we are introducing ‘virtual’ meetings, to give patients the opportunity to have their say via a Zoom meeting with the Practice. The purposes of the group will remain unchanged, which are as follows:

- give patients and practice staff the opportunity to discuss topics of concern, and to provide a means for patients to make suggestions about the healthcare services they receive
- explore issues from patient complaints and patient surveys, contribute to action plans and help monitor improvements
- to support health awareness and patient education

If you are interested in joining the virtual or face-to-face Patient Participation Group, please email your name and email address to gp.g82681@nhs.net



THE PAYBACK TEAM

The community payback team continue to provide resources to undertake valuable work for our village and our community. They undertake work nearly every Saturday under the management of Hazel McKenna and councillor volunteers.

Recent projects undertaken include:

- Assistance with the erection of Christmas Tree and lights at the Parade
- Litter picking
- Starting work on clearing ditches around the Jubilee fields
- Clearing the Bell Lane pond and cutting back overgrown brambles

Work planned for this quarter includes:

- Assistance with the planting of saplings around the village
- Assistance with further litter picking
- Bollard painting
- Reglaze of telephone box
- Wimpey Fields – various maintenance tasks.
- Repaint and refurbish of Youth Club premises.



Cllr. Peter Spearink has decided to step down from involvement with the team strictly due to health problems. However, his commitment and passion for the team remains unchanged. Cllr. Spearink was the main Parish Councillor involved from the start and led the team for several years

If you have any suggestions for work for this team for this year, please do not hesitate to contact us

THE JUBILEE FIELD



The Jubilee Field has had significant improvements as a result of a joint effort by the Parish Council, Jubilee Field Management Committee, the men's and junior football clubs and our Borough Councillors. Further funding was provided by the Football Stadium Improvement Fund.

A 50-seater stand has been added to complement the small standing area and team dug-outs have also been added at the side of the pitch. On match days, hot and cold food and drinks are being sold to spectators. Why not go down to the Jubilee with your family, support our local team and enjoy the new facilities?

Defibrillator Project

Maidstone Lions have launched a project that they hope will result in every school in Maidstone having at least one defibrillator; approximately one third do not have a defibrillator. Staplehurst Parish Council is contacting our local primary school and have decided to contribute should there be a need for one in our school.

As you know, there are a number of defibrillators in our village. The most central one is outside the library by the herb garden, which is owned and maintained by the Parish Council.

The use of a defibrillator significantly improves the chance of survival in the event of a heart attack. This is the largest project that Maidstone Lions have attempted in its 53 years of raising funds. If you, as an individual, would like to contribute to their project, you can do so directly from their website: <http://maidstonelions.org.uk/wp/defibrillator-project/> You can reach it easily just scanning this QR code



GREENER STAPLEHURST

While the winter is normally a quiet period for gardens, the Greener Staplehurst Group has still been busy over the last couple of months.

Before Christmas some of the volunteers cleared the community herb bed by the library. A few perennial herbs as well as some primroses, shrubs and bulbs have now been planted. As spring takes hold, more herbs will be planted. Staplehurst residents will be welcome to the herbs for their personal use once the herb bed is properly established.

Following a generous donation of several hundred tulip bulbs to the Group, volunteers have planted these along the hedge near the traffic light crossroads - watch out for a line of colour in late spring and early summer. Volunteers have also been keeping the



various community flower beds and planters clear of weeds so that they are ready to be replanted with annual flowering plants in the spring. These include the flower beds and planters at the Parade, the planters at the edges of the village and the large flower bed on High Street, opposite Cornforth Close.

More immediately, there are plans to plant saplings across the village over the next few weeks and volunteers will be needed to help plant these. If you fancy digging some holes for these saplings, please do not hesitate to contact the Greener Staplehurst Group via Facebook.

Working groups are also planned when the weather warms up to clear the overgrown, unnecessary vegetation within Wimpey Fields Nature Reserve.

On 14th May the Greener Staplehurst Group will be working in partnership with All Saints' Church on a Staplehurst Eco day. The day will focus on fun activities for the whole family, guaranteed to help you get closer to nature. Watch out for the signs around the village!

A COMMUNITY FRIDGE IN STAPLEHURST

A community fridge is a type of mutual aid project that enables food to be shared within a community. It can be accessed by anyone and everyone who wants to share food, volunteer or get involved with other food, environment or related activities the group have to offer. The main aim of community fridges is to reduce food insecurity, while also mitigating food waste.

The idea is fairly recent, and a number of community fridges have been set up across various countries. At Staplehurst, we are incredibly lucky that the Free Church in Station Road decided to operate one, taking over from the successful project that was our Community Hub.

Two local councillors visited the Shepherd's Pantry Community Fridge to learn more about this fantastic project and see how the Parish Council can help to support it. They were welcomed by Roy Laming and Mary and Bob Howse, in the newly opened Coffee Shop, set up to support the project.

The fridge is brilliantly organised and, at present, they seem to be coping with the volunteers they have. However, keep an eye on the volunteer opportunities section in this Village Update.

They are seeking food donations – especially items that would otherwise go to waste - from businesses and individuals. They have some local providers already, but the need is even more as the project is a real help to people on low incomes or whose circumstances have changed unexpectedly and enables them to access food at no cost in a more dignified way than food banks.

The Community Fridge opening hours are: Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 12 to 4pm. Saturday from 12 to 2pm. The Coffee shop is open: Thursdays & Saturdays, 12 noon to 2pm. If you would like more detailed information, please, scan this code:



VOLUNTEERING IN STAPLEHURST

Volunteering opportunity	Brief description
Become a Councillor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are often places available. Keep an eye on the PC website. There is currently one vacancy. Contact: Parish Council Clerk - clerk@staplehurst-pc.uk
Litter picking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It takes place around twice a year (pre-pandemic). Next: 9th April. Contact: Councillor Paddy Riordan - cllr.paddyriordan@staplehurst-pc.uk
Village Community Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Always looking for an extra pair of hands: gardening, DIY jobs such as sanding and repainting, small building works, etc. Contact: Councillor Adele Sharp - cllr.adelesharp@staplehurst-pc.uk
The Jubilee Field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Monarchs need volunteers to organise the parking on match days. Contact: Councillor Bill McLaughlin - cllr.billmclaughlin@staplehurst-pc.uk
Greener Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Looking after various planters. Contributing and looking after the herb bed and flower beds. Tidying up the Wimpey Field Natural Reserve. Contact: Mina McPhee - kk_mina@yahoo.com
Speedwatch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get trained and become part of the scheme. Contact: Councillor Joan Buller - cllr.joanbuller@staplehurst-pc.uk
Community Events Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both committee members and helpers needed to organise events for the Staplehurst Community. Contact: staplehursteventsgroup@gmail.com or via our Facebook page.
Parish Council Publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteers to distribute the Village Update and the Annual Report. Contact: Parish Council Office - admin@staplehurst-pc.uk
The Community Fridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Shepherd's Pantry Community Fridge at the Free Church are looking for food donations from individuals and businesses. Contact: Bob Howse - bobfhowse@gmail.com, 07837 809279
Paddock Wood and District Lions Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serving the people of Staplehurst for 40 years. They always welcome members to help in the community and raise vital funds. Contact: 0345 833 9564 (directly through to one of their members)
Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reporting is volunteering, too. Report potholes, traffic infringements, road traffic accidents, antisocial behaviour, bus delays, etc. Contact: Staplehurstroadinfo@gmail.com

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS FROM THE PAST (4)

Fourth edition of the document originally collected by Ron Hegarty in 1994 as part of the Centenary of the Parish Council. The document has been provided by the Staplehurst Society, which features on the cover of this issue. Apart from the common complaints about traffic, it appears that the Post Office was in the bad books of the Parish Council. The Staplehurst Society website, which we would highly recommend is: <http://www.staplehurstsociety.org/>



19th April 1915 – Clerk to write to the Superintendent of Police “with regard to the terrific speed of motor cars through the village, to the danger of the public and nuisance to the residents”.

9th September 1915 – The meeting of the PC was held in The Parish Room (not its usual venue, which was a room at the School.)

17th March 1919 – Annual Parish Meeting – A proposal made that a memorial be erected to those in the village who fell in the War. (Eventually established, in 1921, in The Parish Church of All Saints’ – the St. George’s Chapel.)

9th September 1919 – PC resolved that the old fire engine be sold by auction by Messrs Winch and Sons at their next market. (In Market Street).

3rd December 1919 – Proposed that a public meeting be called to form a Rat and Sparrow Club. This was due to the infestation of rats and sparrows being a problem in the village – the club formed to exterminate these creatures.

20th April 1920 – Clerk to write to the Post Office complaining of the too late deliveries of letters in the mornings and the too early collections in the evenings, especially in the station area, and to point out that the postal arrangements in Staplehurst were “far worse than they were before and during the War”.

19th October 1920 – The GPO stated that the question of affording Staplehurst with an earlier general post delivery and a late night collection could not be admitted under present conditions. Clerk to point out to the GPO Surveyor that “the poor postal arrangement hampered businesses of all descriptions with the risk of increasing the number of unemployed in the Parish and trusted that an effort would be made to prevent this sad state of affairs”

Despite increasing the size of the village update, we have not been able to include all the articles in the paper version. You can see these additional articles covering: Christmas 2021, Surgeries, Police update, Corrections and Personal Safety app on line – in the Documents section of our website, or scanning this QR code.



PARISH COUNCIL INFORMATION

Councillors

Paddy Riordan (CHAIRMAN)
John Perry (VICE-CHAIRMAN)
Colin Bowden
Joan Buller
José Castro
Matt Clifton
Eric Hotson
Sam Lain-Rose
Bill McLaughlin
Kelly McLean
Stuart McPhee
Adele Sharp
Paul Skinner
Peter Spearink

Clerk

Alison Smith

Deputy Clerk and Finance Officer

Mrs Deborah Jenkins

Parish Support Officer

Mrs Jean Terry

Caretaker

Paul Nyahwa

Parish Council

Contact Information

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

Web: www.staplehurst-pc.uk

Email: clerk@staplehurst-pc.uk

Tel: 01580 891761

PARISH COUNCIL OFFICE

The Parish Office is open but due to the continued prevalence of Covid 19 and the small size of our offices, we are operating on a limited staffing arrangement. Please call 01580 891761 before attending to ensure a member of staff will be available. Normal hours for any appointments are 9:00 – 1:00pm. Monday to Thursday

SURGERIES AT THE LIBRARY

Surgeries are the last Saturday of the month the next one will be 26th February and then the 26th March.

PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

Next meetings:

Full Council is 14th March then 4th April.

Planning committee is 21st March and 11th April.

Both at the Village Centre South Hall at 7.30pm



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Website



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Council



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[@staplehurstpc](https://www.instagram.com/staplehurstpc)



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Staplehurst Parish
Council