

# **STAPLEHURST ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2019**

# **LOCAL GROUP REPORTS**

## Staplehurst Community Events Group

2018 was the first full year under our new name of **Staplehurst Community Events Group**. We created new logo & publicity material and our revised look received lots of positive and welcomed feedback.

In addition to the four annual events that we usually host, we also assisted with Staplehurst's Centenary Remembrance Day Commemoration and continued to support a range of other local groups, charities and good causes in our community by donating funds of almost £3000 in total.

Our first event of 2018 was the **10K run** and in early June, roughly 400 runners ran the established village circuit in perfect weather. They were supported by many friends, families and volunteer marshals. This event was kindly sponsored by local building company, Yew Tree Construction & Landscaping Ltd. All finishers received a die-cast medal sporting our new clown logo with Yew Tree's details on the ribbon.

Again, the weather was perfect on 30<sup>th</sup> June when we hosted our **Summer Fete**. In the main arena we had Jack Davidson Dance School and Sky Birds of Prey Flying Display in which children were invited to participate. Live music came from Headcorn Ukele Group and local band Fingles Cave who played a selection of 60's & 70's hits. All of this was enjoyed by spectators having a cool drink from our very welcome beer tent. We also had a variety of stalls from local groups and businesses, a chain saw carver, an animal corner, some bonnie babies and plus the ever-popular funfair.

Our **French Market / Christmas Fair** was in Mid- November with our French friends selling their products and delicious smelling food and an array of local traders also selling beautiful items and gift ideas for the festive season.

On 11<sup>th</sup> November, **Centenary Remembrance Day**, a friend of our Chairman kindly agreed to don his authentic WW1 soldiers' uniform to escort our own 'War Horse' through the High Street and up to the Church in the Village Parade. Our group also covered the cost of printing the special Church Remembrance Day Order of Service Sheets and assisted with the setup of the National Beacon Lighting Ceremony in Surrenden Field the same evening.

Unfortunately, rain stopped **Santa's Sleigh** touring the village on two out of the four planned evenings in December. He was however made very welcome by the many children he did manage to see and they all received small present and a big smile. We jointly organise this event with The Paddock Wood and District Lions with whom we share any collected donations. Thanks to Staplehurst Tyres for sponsoring the sleigh, Lainey's Farm for supplying the vehicle and Toby Marsh as Rudolph the driver.

We are a small, dedicated group of volunteers and would welcome new committee members and helpers to aid in the continuation of both existing and new village events. This would, in turn, help us to continue making funds available for distribution to other village worthy causes in the future.

## All Saints' Church

All Saints' Church, the 'Church on the Hill', is open all day, every day. The church welcomes everyone to take time out in a tranquil place, to pray, to light a candle or just explore a beautiful medieval building.

Every Sunday two morning services, including Holy Communion, are held in church, with evening services twice a month. The 10am service includes Bible crafts which children joyfully embrace. The Communion Service every Wednesday morning at 9.30 is followed by coffee.

Serving the community by the provision of baptisms, weddings and funerals remains a central part of our ministry. Visit our website [allsaintsstaplehurst.co.uk](http://allsaintsstaplehurst.co.uk) or ring the Parish Office 01580 891258 for more information.

Last November, as the nation commemorated the end of the First World War, All Saints' Church was the focal point of our village remembrance. Many residents contributed poppies to decorate the church, which cascaded down the walls, spilt over ledges, and included displays from village organisations as well as single poppies carefully placed by individuals. With over 700 people in church it was one of the few times when we wished for a larger building! Remembrance Sunday 2019 in Staplehurst included many high points: in church we particularly valued the sermon preached by the visiting Bishop of Dover and children poignantly singing 'Make me a channel of your peace'.

Maintaining a large medieval building is a challenge and we appreciate the financial input of the Friends of All Saints. As well as funding regular maintenance to the roof, guttering, heating, stonework and plenty more, the Friends are supporting our investigation into the subsidence of the Chancel Floor. Following many meetings and the subscan in December, we hope for a clearer trajectory of the work required.

All Saints supports a different charity each quarter as well as collecting for Maidstone Homeless Care, Cruse and the Children's Society. The congregation also give in response to international disasters.

All Saints' values the many volunteers who enable so many aspects of church life to function: our parochial church council, our choirs and their leaders, flower arrangers, cleaners and bellringers and many others. This year we sadly closed Minisaints, our parent/carer and toddler group, due to the retirement of the voluntary staff: we remain hopeful that others may come forward to lead this.

Our church members are also widely involved in the community. 'Tea with the Vicar' held on the first Tuesday of the month has grown into a church/community bridging event that is enjoyed by many people. We are grateful to the King's Head pub for their provision of the venue and freshly made scones!

All Saints is welcoming those moving into the new houses in Staplehurst with free editions of the Parish Magazine, containing helpful local information.

All Saints organised a wide range of social events during the year: our Church Fete (held in the grounds of Staplehurst Manor), wine tasting, themed meal and film evenings, cheese tasting, musical concerts, Open Gardens.

All Saints' Church building, the largest in the village, is available to other community organisations – please ask.

## **Staplehurst Interest Group**

For the last seventeen years this group of friends has met almost weekly; that's about 765 times. We have been, and still are, welcoming new members who come along to the Schoolroom of the United Reformed Church on Thursday mornings. What we do is up to members to decide.

In the past year we have played Beetle, Dominoes, Countdown, Puzzles, Cribbage, Table games, What's my line? and Calling All Bluffers. We've joined in other village events, made poppies for the church display, Christmas crafts and had a play with watercolours. We've chatted about Nostalgia, what makes a good read, films, what annoys us, musical and poetic tastes, my first ..., interesting objects, holiday snaps and kept each other aware of village developments (and opinions shared). Some wrote short-stories and members were challenged to spot the hidden words as they were read. We read some pantomime scripts; not acted! We arranged a guided tour of the Lashenden Museum and guided walk around Chapel Lane and up to All Saints for cakes and coffee, which were greatly enjoyed.

Our guest speakers, both members and from the wider community, are always greatly appreciated. The subjects cover such a wide range; Walking in India, How the Canterbury Homeless have written their story, Women's Institute in Staplehurst, The Flag Man, Walking up Everest, old Wills from Staplehurst, Ethiopia, the Parliamentary building, Behind the Scenes with the Royals, Iceland and Greenland, Snapshot of the National Trust and My journey to Staplehurst. If you've a story to tell, or would like the chance to hear some, then SIG is the group to contact. We do our own thing!

Joan and Malcolm Buller

## **Staplehurst Bridge Club**

The Bridge Club has now been meeting at the Youth Hut for just over 18 months. This has proved to be a very positive move for us. Although it can be a little draughty on chilly evenings, our members feel comfortable and settled in this venue. We are grateful to Paul for going into the Hut before we get there and putting on the heaters for us.

Our membership has increased slightly over the last few months, and our members usually attend on a regular basis – this at a time when nationally the number of bridge players is decreasing as the average age rises. Of course, we would welcome an influx of younger players – we meet at 7pm on a Friday evening – just the right time for those getting off the 5.30 train from Charing Cross and all will be very welcome.

We are a very friendly club; we play duplicate bridge and draw lots for partners each evening, and we make a point of ensuring that everyone who turns up to play gets a game irrespective of whether or not we have an odd number of players. Our table money is an exceptionally reasonable £1 per person per evening, and we make a small charge for tea or coffee.

We very much look forward to welcoming new members on Friday evenings and if you would like to call for more information and a chat, please contact Liz Mitchell on 01580 713856

## **Friends of All Saints Church Staplehurst**

The Friends of All Saints Church Staplehurst is a registered charity created in 1994. Our sole objective is raising funds to preserve, repair, maintain and improve the fabric of All Saints Church Staplehurst and its churchyard for the benefit of the community. Events are run each year raising funds to meet our objectives and these are open to both members and non-members. During 2018/2019 we were able to reimburse All Saints Parochial Church Council (PCC) over £7600 to cover the cost of various routine and general maintenance works. These works included organ tuning, clock servicing, central heating repairs, roof repairs including rainwater gutters, tile replacement, lead & flashings repair and removal of choir stalls for investigating the Chancel floor settlement issues.

Events run in the past year included our ever-popular Brain Game, a fantastic summer BBQ, a September walk along the river Beult with lunch at the Stile Bridge, a Charity Lunch at the London Beach Hotel, the Shepherd's Market for all those unique Christmas presents and a Christmas concert by The Staplehurst Community Choir. It was a particularly successful year and the total monies raised by subscriptions, donations and events was sufficient to cover all expenditure and the committee thank all those who took part in any way.

Our focus remains on the Chancel floor which is an ongoing major project for the PCC and likely to be expensive. Currently church services, baptisms, weddings and funerals carry on but are slightly altered to suit the health & safety measures in place. These works will enable the church to return to functioning normally and the Chancel be restored to its former glory.

Our support of this project to date, in addition to funding the removal of stalls mentioned above, includes our pledge to financially support the Ground Penetrating Radar survey which took place in December 2018 and provide matched funding where required to secure grant aid for the remedial action and reinstating of the choir stalls. We will also help cover any eventual shortfall and assist with any additional fundraising activity should our current resources fall short of needs.

At our January 2019 meeting we also pledged to support remedial repointing work identified in the last Church Quinquennial Inspection Report. This work to the Church exterior has been quoted at in excess of £11,000, so again a significant project.

We have spent considerable time auditing our practices and putting in place, procedures and policies to comply with General Data Protection Regulations in respect of the use and security of any personal details we hold in our records.

The Friends, administered by an elected committee, organise fundraising and social events. We welcome new members and joining is straightforward with a minimum annual subscription of £5. Our membership form can be downloaded at [www.allsaintsstaplehurst.co.uk/friends](http://www.allsaintsstaplehurst.co.uk/friends)

As a member, you will be supporting us in our objective of maintaining the fabric of All Saints Church for the community. You will receive regular newsletters, an invitation to the AGM and details of our events. Please contact me on 01580 891840 or by email [friends@allsaintsstaplehurst.co.uk](mailto:friends@allsaintsstaplehurst.co.uk)

Andrew Brady

Chairman & Membership Secretary

**Friends of All Saints Church Staplehurst**

Registered Charity No 1037964

## **McCabe Day Centre Report on Lunch Club**

The Lunch Clubs at McCabe Day Centre provide lunch for McCabe Day Centre residents and Staplehurst residents over the age of 60.

The Thursday Lunch Club meets at the McCabe Day Centre every week, except for a short break at Christmas and during August to mid-September.

We offer a freshly cooked two-course meal with tea and coffee for £3.50, which includes a raffle. In addition to enjoying the food it is a good opportunity for the members to meet and chat together.

Transport is available for those less able at a cost of £1.50, which goes towards the hire of the Weald Club for the Disabled minibus.

Once a month we also offer Sunday lunch, usually on the second Sunday of the month. This is always a roast dinner with all the trimmings plus dessert and tea and coffee for £4, which again includes a raffle.

We enjoy an annual coach outing to Eastbourne in the summer, usually on the last Thursday in July. This has become very popular, our members enjoy strolling along the promenade, doing a bit of shopping, often having a fish and chips lunch and even an ice cream! We arranged an outing by coach to Blackbrooks Garden Centre with cream tea at Hawkhurst Fish Farm in November, and a trip to the pantomime in Benenden in February, and all had a wonderful time. We also had a very enjoyable Christmas Party, with festive food, decorations and entertainment. We are extremely grateful to the Staplehurst Community Events Group and KCC Combined Member Grants Scheme for their contributions towards these extra social events.

Our Annual General Meeting is held in September and all people interested in the work of the Day Centre are welcome to attend. About 35 people attended the last one and, after the business meeting, enjoyed a talk by Anita Thompson on Lenham and the Dens, followed by a buffet lunch. This year our AGM will be held on Wednesday, 25<sup>th</sup> September, at 12 noon in the Day Centre.

All the cooks and helpers at our lunch clubs are volunteers and we aim to provide a happy, cheerful time for everyone.

We can accommodate up to 40 members, and numbers at the moment are almost up to this. For further information, please contact our Chairperson, Caroline Highwood on 892787.

## **The Friends of Staplehurst Health Centre**

During the 2018-9 year the Friends have published 4 newsletters in which we have publicised flu vaccinations, cervical screening, travel vaccinations and other health matters.

Patients have been reminded to respond to invitations to attend for annual medical reviews if they are diabetic, asthmatic or have COPD.

A patient survey was completed in 2018, covering 250 patients and this is being repeated in 2019 as a comparative.

Health Information Evenings have been held on the National Blood and Transplant Service, Kidney Disease, Cardiac Pulmonary Resuscitation and Involve Carers.

The Friends have spent £3861 on a new ECG machine and an Ankle Brachial Pressure Index machine, both of which will improve speed and accuracy of diagnosis for patients.

## **Staplehurst Community Hub Afternoon Tea Club “Chat Club”**

The “Chat Club” held on Monday afternoons from 2pm to 4pm at The McCabe Centre, has been running for over seven years now and is designed to give seniors men and women an afternoon of fun with quizzes, games, a raffle and afternoon tea with biscuits or cake.

Those that cannot get there under their own steam we have a wonderful team of young ladies in the village, Jennie and Julie, who collect and return them to the McCabe Centre free of charge. With some members of the club who can drive bringing along other members. Not forgetting Richard who makes sure the transport is available.

Being a seniors club we have had some sad times when we have lost one of our members and happy times when we have hired a coach and taken off for an afternoon perhaps for a fish and chip lunch at the seaside or a trip to a garden centre with afternoon tea.

We are self funding with our members donating just £1 per week and bringing a small raffle prize. Over the years we have had very kind donations from family members where we have sadly lost one of our ladies or gentlemen.

We hold a Christmas party with lunch, a free raffle and a present for everyone each year and over the last few years we have been most grateful to the Carnival and Fete committee for a welcome donation towards the party.

We could not keep going without the help of Joan, Margaret, Pauline, Ann, Barbara and Angela who keep things running smoothly.

We welcome new members if they would like to come along and give it a try. No need to let us know you are coming – just turn up at 2pm you would be most welcome and I am sure that you will know many other people there.

**Rita Game**

## **Churches Together in Staplehurst**

Churches Together in Staplehurst coordinates some joint activities between All Saints Parish Church, Staplehurst Free Church, Staplehurst United Reformed Church, and local Roman Catholics who worship at St Theodore’s, Cranbrook. As usual, we organised the distribution of cards to every house in Staplehurst at Christmas and Easter, listing the special services and events at our various churches. At our joint witness on The Parade on the morning of Good Friday we spoke to passers-by and handed out hot cross buns. The committee coordinated “fifth Sunday” combined Sunday evening services. We arranged for a World Day of Prayer service on Friday 1st March. For some years, we have held a service in Staplehurst to mark the international Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, and this year we decided to expand the scope and organised a service at St Dunstan’s, Cranbrook, with members of eight different churches in Cranbrook, Goudhurst, Hawkhurst and Staplehurst taking part. We organised a house-to-house collection for Christian Aid in Staplehurst in May 2018, which raised £3002, about £141 less than in 2017. The expenses of Churches Together in Staplehurst activities are mainly covered by contributions from the four member churches, but we raised additional funds by running a refreshment stall at the village Carnival and Fête.

## Staplehurst Horticultural Society

This is my first report as Chairman, having been elected to the post in December.

The Society has had a satisfactory year and held its usual programme of monthly talks on topics of interest, including those outside the realm of horticulture, and the spring, summer and autumn shows, as well as the renowned plant sale. Our stall at the village carnival was themed to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of the RAF and showcased what we can achieve. A very colourful stall, well received by the public! Last year we added a visit to a local private garden of interest and will be revisiting very soon to see that garden in a different season. There was also our (non-horticultural) quiz, which becomes ever more popular.

Reflecting upon our current membership and the financial position of the Society, and building upon the work of its predecessors, the current management committee is looking to increase the appeal of the Society to more of the village community, particularly younger people. It is a sad fact that a number of our members have passed on recently, most recently our much-respected President, Maurice Stevenson.

With a view to improving our appeal, we have been negotiating discounts with local nurseries for our members and are seeking to promote the Society in the new estates being developed. We are also putting on more visits, e.g. we are visiting RHS Wisley in a few weeks, at a very low cost.

We are also looking at how we can get more involved 'out and about', to achieve greater exposure, in particular with the Staplehurst "Parish in Bloom" project. Last year we received a Bronze award, frustratingly one point short of a Silver award. This was very much a scoping exercise. One major feature which was highlighted by the assessor was the deplorable condition of the planters at the shopping parade. Whilst appreciating that there are issues flowing from the ownership of the site, it remains an unavoidable carbuncle, so there seems little point in entering this year. Work will proceed in a couple of other projects, but until the blight at the heart of our settlement is dealt with, I fear that we can make little progress in either achieving better grading nor be seen to be making our village what it should be.

All in all, the Society has had a positive year and continues to be a valued contribution to the well-being of our community. It needs to be enjoyed by more, which we strive to achieve.

Alan Pett

Chairman  
Staplehurst Horticultural Society

## Staplehurst Scout Group

Last year, the Staplehurst Scout Group celebrated the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the commencement of scouting in Staplehurst with a fabulous fun day held at the Knoxbridge Inn. Our thanks to the Knoxbridge Inn for hosting us for the day and to Staplehurst Transits for carrying our vast amount of equipment to the field! We had a great turnout, fantastic weather and everyone had a great day out.

Every year, Staplehurst Scouts, accompanied by the Guides, turns out in large numbers to support the Remembrance Day parade and service in the village. This year, being the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Armistice, was a very special occasion of which we were very proud to be a part. Our group was very active in decorating the church with as many poppies as we could make and contributed to what everyone agreed was both a poignant and magnificent display.

The Scout Group continues to offer unique opportunities for boys and girls between the ages of 6 of 14. Unfortunately, we have had to close our Explorer's unit which covers ages 14 to 18 due to lack of Leaders. We hope that this is only temporary. We have 80 children attending scouting currently and 12 adult leaders, assistants, and helpers. We continue to look for more adult helpers to allow us to cut our waiting lists and allow more children to join.

The past year has seen another full programme of events with Beavers, Cubs and Scouts working towards a varied collection of badges ranging from the community badge through to activity and challenge badges. There have been too many visits and activities to list them all here, but these are some of the highlights:

The beast from the east may have been very unwelcome but it brought enough snow for the Scouts to build a 15-man igloo. The Scouts also went ice skating and did battle with another Scout Group at a Laser Combat event. We had a great Scout camp in May which included caving, climbing, shooting and a bit of archery. The Scouts helped build that pirate ship that made the fireworks event even better this year.

It fell upon our group to host the 2018 Weald District St Georges parade, involving Cubs and Beavers from all over the District. We all enjoyed having an indoor campfire, a good sing-song and lots of other games and activities. During the Summer term the Cubs completed two badges and held a doughnut evening which was enjoyed by all! They also ended the term at Angley woods playing games and having our first ever outdoor investiture.

The Cubs camped at the 4th Sevenoaks camp site which we had all to ourselves. Our theme was Survival and the activities included archery, rifle shooting, bouldering, slack line and axe throwing. The Cubs also had a go at playing Airplane golf, which is harder than it sounds. The Cubs had a go at soap carving which resulted in the Scout Centre smelling wonderful for once! We held a mini Bake-off competition in which the Cubs decorated a biscuit and a winner was chosen. A first for us was a cardboard maze which although small, the Cubs loved it and it has given them a taste for it, so we are currently collecting more cardboard boxes to make a larger maze. The new year has seen the Cubs making films on a subject that they are interested in, which counts towards their artist activity badge. This has also had the Cubs doing a still life drawing of an object they had bought in and making promotional posters for Scouting. We paid a visit to Forte music in Marden and the Cubs had a simply fantastic time learning new things and some showing off what they can do.

Our beaver colony has also been very active indeed. Thanks to Staplehurst Cricket Club we learnt some basic Cricket skills followed by a small game. We went to see the Odeon Cinema special

showing of Sherlock Gnomes, which was loads of laughs and we went on a rail trip to Paddock Wood Station to meet up with one of their education officers for a safety talk and a look around the station. We visited the Small Cats Protection Rehoming Centre at Notcutts Garden Centre, to learn about Cat welfare and the work that the Cats Protection Centre does. A big highlight in October was a trip to Wingham Wildlife Park. Once again, this year we attended JOTI (Jamboree on the Internet) / JOTA (Jamboree on the Airwaves) and October ended with a sting in the tail, bee night a visitor came into the meeting and spoke and showed us everything about bees, the facts we all found out were amazing. Everyone ended by making a bees wax candle to take home and had some runny honey along with honey cake and honey biscuits, food always goes down well. We held a meeting in Staplehurst Church to learn about the special art work that was being displayed in and around the Church this year. January ended on a high a very cold and snowy visit to Cranbrook School Observatory for a Star Gazing Night this is to round off the Space Badge.

Staplehurst Scouts continues to be totally dependent upon the subscriptions raised from parents and its own fund-raising initiatives. It is completely self-sufficient and not in receipt of any public funding. All adult helpers are volunteers and give up of their time freely to help make scouting a fantastic experience for all the boys and girls who attend. We are indebted to donations received this year from money raised at the Staplehurst fireworks event, from Made In Kent and from the Staplehurst Community Events Group. Serving the community continues to be a large part of scouting and this year has seen several examples of our own fund-raising activities and other community projects.

Our Scout Centre is as old as we are and in constant need of renovation and repair. We would like to refurbish our kitchen area and provide better lavatory/shower facilities, so anyone who can help with design or supply of any equipment would be a hero to us!

As I mentioned previously, we are always in need of finding new leaders and helpers so if you would like to get involved in any of our sections, even on a part-time basis, please get in touch by calling 893133 anytime. One constant theme for us at Staplehurst Scouts is that our waiting list of children wanting to join never gets any smaller - so please come and help and get involved in local scouting. To find out more please feel free to come along to our own AGM on Tuesday 11th June 2019 starting at 7:30pm in the Scout Hut in Nicolson Walk, off Crowther Close.

William Best

Chair, Staplehurst Scout Group. [chair@staplehurstscouts.org.uk](mailto:chair@staplehurstscouts.org.uk)

## Staplehurst Under 5s Playgroup

It has been a year of change at Staplehurst Under 5s as Mrs Melanie Riley retired after 28 years at the Playgroup, first as a key worker and then as a wonderful, caring manager. She will be fondly remembered by many children and their families as well as the staff who have been lucky enough to work with her.

Melanie is succeeded by Mrs Alison Hicks, an Early Years Professional, who started in September, greeting new and returning children to the Playgroup. Harvest was a big feature of the winter term, the children learning lots of songs which they then performed at their harvest Festival. After the singing, children offered donations of fresh and tinned foods whilst we sang our giving song. Children, parents and carers and staff all then enjoyed a delicious harvest lunch: soups made by Mrs Watts and Mrs Hicks, bread by Mrs Cole, and crumbles from Mrs Lineham and Miss Johnson, which all went down a treat. The items donated were given to Sobell Lodge and the McCabe Centre.

With the harvest celebrations over we moved our focus onto Halloween, Diwali, Fireworks and Christmas. We're still sweeping up the glitter! As well as many crafts we had a Christmas concert to prepare for and the children had a wonderful time learning their Christmas songs to perform for friends and families, followed by tea and mince pies. At the end of the week we celebrated the end of term with a Christmas party, including a surprise visit from Father Christmas.

January heralded our topic of winter and keeping warm. The children have been trying lots of different warming snacks like crumpets, mashed potato and pasta, and thinking about different ways we can keep warm when we're cold. The hall walls were beautifully decorated with hats, scarves, mittens and even a life-sized paper child splashing in puddles, all created by the children.

February half term has brought some beautifully warm days and we move now onto our topic of People Who Help Us. We have already been lucky enough to have a visit from Jackie at the library, who read us some lovely stories. In the coming weeks we hope to also welcome some paramedics and some firefighters to come and tell us about their jobs. In the meantime, there is plenty of emergency services role play going on and we are encouraging our children to think about how they can help their friends, families and neighbours too. We also have a visit to the farm to look forward to, as well as sharing books for Book Day, Easter and Mother's Day celebrations, and a Red Nose Day cake sale.

We are very much looking forward to welcoming several new arrivals in the Summer term, although this tips us gently towards the time when we will have to wave a sad, but proud, goodbye to all our lovely big children heading towards school in September. We know they will do us proud, but they will be missed!

## Poppy's Day Nursery & Poppy's Baby Care Unit 2019

Poppy's Day Nursery celebrated their **Tenth Birthday** in August and have provided care for over 300 local children during the last ten years.

To mark the occasion a party was held for past and present families which included twin boys who were the first ever pupils to attend the Nursery back in 2008 and our current twins who joined us recently.

The Mayor of Maidstone Councillor Dave Naghi attended the celebration for nearly two hours. He spoke with many families, there were photo opportunities and he cut a birthday cake giving a short speech as well.

We currently have **95** children 'on role' most of whom are from Staplehurst but includes some children from Headcorn following the closure of the Old School House Nursery.

We have **23** members of staff plus one Apprentice and a volunteer. We also have students throughout the year from Mid Kent College, West Kent College and Invicta Grammar who come to us for childcare experience within the nursery setting.

Our Headcorn Road Unit and the Baby Care Unit in the High Street both hold a "**Good**" rating by OFSTED. The findings can be viewed online at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

### **Nursery activities and fund raising**

During the last year we 'fund raised' for a Defibrillator which has now been fitted at the Nursery for the benefit of ourselves and the local community alike. Further to this we organised defibrillator training including basic first aid last October at the Free Church attended by 17 residents of the village.

Our fund raising over the last year has included Children in Need, and the Salvation Army Christmas present Toy collection.

Katherine Tunnicliffe, Nursery Director is now leading a Collaboration for five local settings which is a KCC incentive to encourage nurseries working together and exchanging ideas.

Last July **13** of our children left for Primary School so for our leaver's party we took the children by coach to the "Little Street" Children's Role Play area in Maidstone. This year **15** children will be leaving for Primary School.

For more information on Nursery care contact Katherine Tunnicliffe

Poppy's Day Nursery Tel: 01580 892600 Poppy's Baby Care Unit Tel: 01580 890480 Email: [poppysdaynursery@gmail.com](mailto:poppysdaynursery@gmail.com) Website: <http://www.poppysdaynursery.com>

## Staplehurst Monarchs Youth FC – Season 2018/19

This is our 48<sup>th</sup> season of providing football for young people in Staplehurst and the surrounding area. During the current season we have operated 14 teams ranging in ages from U8s to U18s, these include 3 girls' teams playing as U8s, U12s and U14s. We are also running 2 years of development known as Mini Monarchs for U6s and U7s.

The Mini Monarchs and U8 Girls have trained at Staplehurst School since September 2018 which has been judged to have been a success and helped the school raise much needed additional funding.

All other teams play matches at Jubilee Sports Field. They also train at Jubilee, light and weather permitting.

During the winter months our teams need to travel extensively to different venues in order to use suitable floodlit facilities. These include the YMCA (Maidstone), Bethany School, Marden Sports Club and Mascalls School.

The club is administered to by the following management committee:

- Eric Hotson (Chairman)
- John Stonebridge (Vice chairman)
- Lee Seal (Club secretary)
- John Bowen (Treasurer)
- Quentin Haywood (Welfare officer)
- Nicola Stonebridge (Assistant secretary)

We are ably assisted by a fine group of dedicated managers and assistants who all do their utmost to help the young people under their charge to enjoy the game and make the most of their talents.

Our teams play in the following local leagues:

- Maidstone Invicta Primary League
- Express Cabs Maidstone Boys Primary League
- Ashford and District Youth Football League
- Maidstone Minor-Junior Football League
- Kent Girls and Ladies Football League

During the current season we have had some encouraging results and performances and already two of our older teams have reached both a cup semi-final and final with hopefully more to come.

In order to improve goalkeeping standards, we operate weekly goalie training at Jubilee with a specialised goalkeeping coach.

During school holidays we work with a business called 'Football Five Star' who run holiday football courses at Jubilee for young people in our area, not necessarily players from within our club.

Our annual 'Presentation Day' will be held on Sunday 19 May. Weather permitting, this is usually a great event where all our teams gather to celebrate our achievements during the past season. Members of the Parish Council are most welcome to come along to see how we are progressing.

Looking forward to next season we are looking at operating at least 13 teams from September 2019 onwards.

The club has also been picked to run an 'FA Wildcats' centre in order to encourage girls' football in our area. This will start in the Spring and we will be licenced to run the centre for at least 2 years. This will help with the club's profile in the local area and encourage girls to join our teams.

As for the future, it would be great if a floodlit 3g pitch could be installed at Jubilee. This would save our teams having to travel so far for training and provide more options when games are postponed due to bad weather due to ongoing drainage problems at Jubilee. Drainage for 2 of our most badly affected pitches is something we are hoping to work on this summer.

We believe that we run a club that the village can be very proud of. We have provided sport for more than 200 young people in this area during the current season and we are widely respected locally not only for our football but by the sporting manner in which we play the game.

Weekly news update can be found at the following Facebook page:

[www.facebook.com/staplehurstmonarchs/](http://www.facebook.com/staplehurstmonarchs/)

Finally, we would give thanks to the excellent support we receive from parents, nans and grandads. Without this we would not have a club.

## **Village Golf Club**

For those of you who do not know – the Village Golf Club, situated on Clapper Lane, is a 9 hole mainly par 3 golf course that was established in the 1960's and subsequently left in Trust to the village.

The club is run and managed entirely by volunteers who are very pleased to report that it is going from strength to strength. The past year has been exceptionally successful with membership having increased significantly. Membership is open to all and is priced as low as possible in order to be affordable to everyone. It remains a facility that is appropriate for family membership, beginners or experienced players.

The committee are delighted to report that this year has seen a very successful programme of competitions that take place monthly on Sunday mornings and a very well attended programme of training for Junior players during the summer.

We have over the last year been able to make significant improvements to the course and these have included installing new security fencing around some tee bases and creating new leaf collection areas as well as the on- going task of clearing the course of both leaves and general debris during the Autumn.

During the course of the next year we hope to make even greater improvements by creating 3 new holes which will make better use of the old football field areas and also create some longer holes to further test the playing ability of our members!

The continued improvements and success of the club would not have been possible without community involvement and our sincere thanks for the sponsorship provided by David Williams, Jumeira Restaurant and The Kings Head.

However, a very special mention must go to the Community Pay Back Scheme who have provided us with many hours of labour and good company and who have made such a huge difference to what we have been able to achieve this year – we really could not have made these improvements without their help and we are extremely grateful to you all.

The Village Golf Club is a unique and valuable resource - so please help us to make sure it is there for future generations by supporting us today. For further information contact Jane on 07746623303.

## Staplehurst WI 2018-2019

It has been a very successful year for the WI with a growing membership of at least 60 ladies as we have welcomed many newcomers to the village.

So what do we put this down to?

- The friendliness of our welcome and our members
- The opportunity to really get involved in whatever your interests are
- To acquire new skills (We go Quizzing, have a Darts Team and go 10 pin bowling)
- A busy and interesting programme for the year with brilliant visits out
- A stunning Garden Party held in the summer
- A monthly opportunity to come out to lunch at reduced prices
- An annual Produce Show to showcase our skills
- Diversity in all things.

Our programme has included talks on PAT dogs, Lady Jean Mayhew's time in Northern Ireland, taking part in the Open University, understanding the intricate work of the Purple Foot Lady, and audience participation with us all wearing purple and white ribbons for our talk on The Suffragette Movement. We had a helpful talk on hearing impairment and a cookery demonstration of vegetarian foods.

### **We repeat our message from last year.**

We meet in the South Hall, which is now probably not big enough or safe enough to host our meetings. We use so many tables for our activities and guests plus we regularly welcome two wheelchair members from Sobell Lodge. There are only 45 chairs so it means that we have to sit on Playgroup tables. As the North Hall is also booked at the time of our meeting we have needed to look elsewhere for a venue. This makes us keen to discover when our new Village Hall facility will be ready and will it meet our needs? We have tried the refurbished North Hall, but the acoustics make it impossible to hold a satisfactory meeting. On two occasions the Staplehurst Free Church have been kind enough to host our meetings.

Staplehurst is now a fast-growing village/town so it can only be assumed that other groups will also grow in size and demands for hall space will escalate.

We look forward to another successful year with an open door for more new members, especially as we are about to start planning the activities for our 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2022.

## Staplehurst Free Church

This last year has for been an exciting time of change for us! Having been without a pastor for over a year, in June we appointed Revd. Dhenis Stafford as our new pastor. Dhenis has brought with him new approaches and challenges to the shape of our church with a focus on our upwards spiritual relationship with the Lord, our inwards relationships with one another, and our outward approach in showing and telling our community how much God loves them, which fits into our recently amended key mission statement, “**Enabling everyone to know Jesus and grow in a personal relationship with Him**”. So how have we sought to put this into practise?

Our relationships with the Lord and with one another are strengthened by our vibrant and challenging Sunday services, mid-week prayer meeting, and weekly Bible study groups in members’ homes, all of which are well attended. We have also continued to run a number of community-based activity groups on a regular basis including: -

- Our popular toddler group (Free Bees) is a great opportunity for educational play for children and for parents to get to know one another
- Care Free Families - for families with a wide variety of special needs
- A monthly Sing-a-long Club which enables a number of our local care homes for adults with learning difficulties to bring along their residents to an outside organisation and event in a safe setting
- Monthly services in three of our local nursing homes, Staplehurst Manor, Iden Manor and Abbotsleigh and also weekly services at Sobell Lodge
- We have recently launched a new monthly initiative “Friends Together” on the second Tuesday of the month designed to meet the needs of the older members of our community.
- Our men’s group provides a great opportunity for men in the church and community to connect with one another through weekly walks every Monday morning (weather permitting), ending up at a nearby café for coffee
- We continue to have 3 weekly badminton clubs (including a junior club) all organised and operated by the church in the main hall, all of which benefit from our professional standard badminton mat

In September we invited the community to participate with us in the World’s Biggest Coffee morning to raise funds in support of Macmillan. As in previous years we have continued to be a drop off point in the Weald for those who wish to support Samaritan’s Purse Christmas Shoe Box appeal and received 135 boxes to be sent to children less fortunate than our own.

We have also continued to support Churches Together in Staplehurst events. We also joined with the other churches and the wider community to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World both at All Saints in the morning and with the Lighting of the Beacon on Surrenden Field in the evening. In the case of the latter we would like to thank Staplehurst Parish Council, the uniformed organisations and councillor John Reardon in particular for all the work done to make it such a memorable event.

### Welcome

So, if at any point you would like to learn more about the amazing God we serve, or would like to speak to our pastor or would just like to see for yourselves what we do, then please either contact the church office, join us at a suitable regular activity or event or come along to our Sunday Services at 10:30am and 6:30pm where you can be sure of a warm welcome.

Maggie Martin (Church Administrator)

## Staplehurst Youth Club

Yet again the club seems very popular and although our numbers have dropped slightly due to age, we still have a healthy register of 45 members. They come from as far afield as Hawkhurst, Maidstone, Loose and Marden.

We have a cabinet full of popular board games, cards, crafting beads & accessories, together with copious amounts of oil paints & canvases to enable the group to be as creative as possible. within the realms of acceptability! The Pool table is 'extensively' used and often a week does not pass without a 'Matchplay' game. I often participate with the odd game of Pool myself, along with an energetic game of Table Tennis match, which often gets quite competitive! We also have the usual games consoles for the members to use.

Although the club caters for the 11-18 year age group, at present the vast majority are between 13-16 years. We are hopeful that a new wave of 'younglings' will venture in to see what goes on! On average we have between 15 - 25 members attend, at some point, during club nights.

Most of the time we find the young people are more than happy to just 'chill', whilst listening to music and chatting about school etc. They all identify that the club is a safe and independent base to meet and converse on a Tuesday evening.

As a Charity, the Trustees of Staplehurst Youth Club wish to express their thanks to Ken Collins, The Men's Shed, The Bridge Club and all those who have donated funds to the club over the past year. Thanks also goes to Staplehurst Parish Council for their grant funding to support this village amenity.

Paul Kelly  
**Chairman**  
STAPLEHURST YOUTH CLUB  
Registered Charity 297372

## STAPLEHURST CALENDAR 2019

The total profit following this year's sales amounted to £1,365.00. This has been shared equally between Staplehurst District Guides, Staplehurst Scout Group and Staplehurst Youth Club. Cheques for £455.00 have been sent to each of these organisations.

The total raised and distributed between village groups, charities and clubs over the 15 years of the Calendar is £22,350.00

Thank you to Staplehurst residents for purchasing copies every year, your support is greatly appreciated.

Without the help of our Advertisers, Hop Press Printers of Marden, Staplehurst organisations who find us a space for our stall at their Christmas events, and shops whose staff sell copies despite it being their busiest time of the year, none of this would be possible so a big THANK YOU to you all.

Ken Collins.

## Staplehurst Footpath Group

In April 2018 our annual Blossom Walk commenced from Linton Church heading east along the Greensand Ridge to Boughton Monchelsea Church where we enjoyed tea and cake. Our return route skirted the deer park before crossing Linton Park.

In May the group continued to explore the Greensand Ridge by walking west from Linton Church to Reason Hill and then down to Hunton, before returning via Snoad's Hall and Court Lodge Farm.

Our June walk of 6 miles began in Egerton and took in part of the Stour Valley Walk as far as Little Chart. We returned via Pluckley and Elvey Farm back to Egerton. Also, in June we had our "Longest Day Walk" which started from Goudhurst along the High Weald Way, then through Bockingfold Farm and the Ladham Estate.

In July the group completed a 6mile walk at High Halden which went out to St Michael's through Pond Wood, returning through Tiffenden Manor and Cuckold's Corner.

For our August walk we completed a 5mile circular route from Wadhurst through Long Wood to Bewl Water, where we enjoyed excellent views over the reservoir.

Our September walk commenced at Teston Country Park and after heading up into Barming Woods we enjoyed an interesting return along the riverbank from Barming Bridge to Teston. On completing the walk we all enjoyed ice creams!

In October we walked from Mereworth up into the chestnut woods before returning via the Yotes Court Estate.

A local walk of 4 miles was undertaken in November that traversed the southeast quarter of Staplehurst Parish, as far as Little Wad and Maplehurst. Our Christmas Walk was also local, this time exploring the northwest quarter of the Parish. Mince pies and mulled wine were enjoyed on completion!

Our 2019 New Year Walk commenced from All Saints Church and went out to Spillsill and Chickenden Farm, returning via the old golf course to Chapel Lane.

In February we completed another local walk of 4miles from South Bank, out along The Ridge and down to Brattle Farm. We walked on to Pristling Lane, returning to the village via Five Ash Lane and the Nature Reserve.

For our March walk we visited Cranbrook to view some of the historic buildings in the town centre. We then headed south out to Swattenden before returning through Comforts Wood, past the Pest House to the town centre.

Staplehurst Footpath Group was founded in 1976. Non-members are welcome to join our walks.

Membership subscriptions are £5 per family or £3 for individual membership.

The Group has just published a set of new walk cards entitled, 5 Short Local Walks Around Staplehurst. These are obtainable from Staplehurst Library.

Our programmed activities are published in the Parish Magazine and can also be viewed on the Parish Council website, as well as on our Facebook page.

Michael Gillam

Chairman Staplehurst Footpath Group

## Neighbourhood Watch

I was able to be very positive about Staplehurst Neighbourhood Watch this time last year. We were getting good co-operation from Maidstone police with regular updates from them regarding local crime, security advice etc.

However, 6 months ago the liaison officer in Maidstone police headquarters, who was tasked to maintain this link, left his post. Since then we have received no news from them which could be circulated to members. Meantime the Staplehurst Helping Page continues to perform a very useful task in keeping its nearly 3000 members promptly updated with all sorts of local information.

The good news is that within the last week a replacement has been interviewed and appointed. This should result in "normal service" resuming soon.

Relevant e-Watch updates are still being circulated to members but these tend to include rather outdated information.

On the positive side our membership continues to grow, following the very successful exhibition (Stay Safe Staplehurst) held in the Village Centre in February and organised by parish councillor Elaine Symes.

David Ralph Chairman