

Village Update

SUMMER 2020

www.staplehurst-pc.uk

FAREWELL MICK

At the end of September, it is with much sadness that Staplehurst Parish Council will wish farewell to Parish Clerk Mick Westwood, who has been the mainstay and an integral part of the Parish Council for eight and a half years. Mick is held in the highest esteem by Councillors, staff and members of the public alike. He has a wonderful working relationship with County Councillors, Borough Councillors and clerks from councils across Kent.

The extent of his duties seemed endless, yet he managed them with a calmness and assurance which made the job look easy. He often used the phrase that the job was like “spinning plates”. Mick offered his following thoughts:

‘Joining the Parish Office in 2012, after a long career in banking, was quite a change – being faced with a whole new subject matter, but happily going from commuting up to London to walking just a few minutes to work. There was a lot to learn, but learning was made easier by the kind help of my colleagues and parish councillors.

Tasks arrived from all directions and, to coin the term mentioned above, I soon became a full-time plate-spinner. Hopefully, the plates I dropped were only small ones! I think the largest ‘plate’ I spun was the Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan, as part of

the team that saw it through from its inception to its final ‘making’ in 2016. Perhaps it is fitting that I leave at a point when the first formal update of the plan has just been approved by Maidstone Borough Council.



Staplehurst has been an important part of my personal and professional life and I shall retain fond memories of my time living and working in the village. I would like to say ‘thank you’ to my colleagues, councillors and community contacts for all your support over the years – please stay safe, be kind.’

Mick was due to retire back in June 2020 but with his usual, total dedication to the job, agreed to stay on for a further three months to help the Parish Council and its staff through the trials which confronted them during the current pandemic. So, it has indeed been the long goodbye, but at the end of September the plates will cease to spin!

Mick will always be welcome in Staplehurst and in all aspects of our village life.

We offer our heartfelt thanks and appreciation for everything he has done. We wish him a long, happy, well deserved retirement with his lovely wife and we even hope that QPR win the FA Cup!



Staplehurst

Parish Council

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

It is an exciting time in Staplehurst at the moment. As we all look forward to the new Sainsbury's/Argos store, we will also welcome the new Morrisons satellite store situated at the service station at the southern end of the village. These will complement and add to the existing shops which have served us so well for so long.

Watch out for the new path names at the paths in the vicinity of the rail station, Dautrepoint Path & Ashdown Path, named after the pilot and the station clerk who were so sadly killed at the station in 1940.

New flowered planters and areas are cropping up around the village, notably at the corner of Market St and Station Road, more at the Parade and various wildflower areas around Staplehurst.

We welcome to Staplehurst many new members of the community, who are taking up residence at the new housing estates. We look forward to meeting them and helping them integrate into our community.

As a focal point, The Parade was the site for the VJ 75 commemoration day to remember the soldiers, sailors and airmen that served in the conflict with Japan and indeed to

celebrate the end of WW2. The brickwork is being replaced where it has been damaged for such a long time. It was not possible to get it redesigned, so we hope everyone takes care when parking, to avoid it being damaged again.

The PC are still carrying out our meetings remotely, which presents its own difficulties but gives us the opportunity to continue our work for the community.

The red telephone box at Church Green has been purchased by the Parish Council, from BT, and we welcome innovative ideas for what it can be used for after it has had a well-deserved spruce up and lick of paint.

Work continues with the Payback team at areas all around the village to enhance the whole area.

Many more projects and ideas are in the pipeline, so keep safe and let's all work to make our village the best it can be.



Best wishes
Paddy

NEW ROAD NAMES

Over the next few Updates we will be giving you the reasons for choosing the names that we have over the last 6 years. Our policy is to name every third road after a WW1



name taken from our war memorial, a past village worthy and a wild card choice which we are trying to name after the old field names on which the development is built.

Taylor Wimpey estate.

The Bartons is named after two brothers:

Rifleman Ronald Barton S14154 or S14454 DCM, 13th Battalion Rifle Brigade. Died 6th November 1918. Aged 23. Son of John and Ellen of 3 Willow Cottages. Buried in the Caudry British Cemetery. Grave ref. IV.F15. Awarded the DISTINGUISHED Conduct Medal for bravery in the field. This is a high-ranking decoration for other ranks just below the VC.

Lance Sergeant James Miles Barton 4066 MM. 2nd Battalion Rifle Brigade. Died 29th November 1917 aged 26. Buried in the Haringhe (Bandaghem) Cemetery, Belgium. Awarded the Military Medal for bravery in the field.

Skinner Close is named after one of our last three doctors before the new Health Centre opened, as is Davies Close. We cannot name roads after living people and the third doctor is happily still with us.

Bovis Estate.

Slade Drive after the first woman Chair of the Parish Council.

Tyler Road after the long-serving and very popular landlords of the South Eastern Hotel, now Dickens Court, opposite the Kebab Shop.

King Close after Private 10257 Ernest King 9th Battalion, Queens own Royal West Kent Regiment. Formerly Private 459393 of the 437th Agricultural Company, Labour Corp. Died 18th December 1918 aged 33. Buried East Sutton Churchyard.

Jull Close. Lt. Leslie Hubert Jull, Royal Flying Corp. Formerly North Staffs Regiment. Killed in a flying accident in England. Buried in our Churchyard.

Long Strakes.

Both the Bovis and the Redrow estates are built on the old Fishers Farmland that



in medieval times was a clothiers. It was an old field name taken from the tithe map. A strake was both a medieval bed covering and another name for 'stretch'. Most likely a field where the finished cloth was stretched after washing to avoid shrinking, (my guess) rather like tentering.

**More names will be on other developments and will be explained in the next two updates.*

SPEED WATCH

Along with the rest of the country, the Police shut down the Speed Watch scheme throughout Kent. As restrictions started to be lifted, each Parish Scheme was invited to choose one site to re-open. After consultation with the volunteers, Station Road was considered to be the site which best fitted the role of reminding passing motorists that we expect 30mph to be the maximum speed through the majority of the village.

There were many stipulations made, the main one for Staplehurst being the limitation to deploying only those volunteers who are under the age threshold of 70. The majority of our active volunteers are therefore not able to take part. Thankfully, two people have worked together on six occasions. They have recorded the details of 115 vehicles travelling from the Railway Bridge towards the traffic lights at 35mph or above and these are now recorded on the police database. 11 registered owners received letters from the police, including one which was delivered by a uniformed officer.

Our parish equipment is calibrated and checked for accuracy each time it is used. It shows the speed to the motorists and most do slow down with this reminder. However, the 50 mph plus drivers do seem to think that accidents only happen to others. Please drive safely.

If you would like to know more just type CSW into your computer search box and you will find the links. If you would like to join in there is on-line training. Let us try to keep Staplehurst safe for all.

GREENER STAPLEHURST GROUP

Despite the restrictions that Covid19 has necessitated, this has been a busy time for the Greener Staplehurst Group. We have been planting cultivated and wild flowers in various areas of the village. These areas include the wooden planters at the Shopping Centre, the High Street flower bed next to the pathway from Chestnut Avenue, the entrance to the Jubilee Fields and that at the end of Market Street.

Two further planters are to be constructed and placed on the Northern bed at the Shopping Centre for cultivation. In the Autumn, a number of large shrubs or trees will be planted between the existing beds on the Southern side of this area.

We are continuing our search for new places in which we can plant and in which we can experiment with different methods of cultivation to see which is most suitable for the local clay soils with which we are working. To this end, we have been in talks with the Maidstone Borough Council. Following the outcome, we will be creating a small flower meadow near the Marden Road, when time permits.

The GSG, with the invaluable help of the Payback Team, have recently turned their attention to improving the Wimpey Fields Nature Reserve by removing unwanted saplings and areas of bramble and ground ivy to open up the canopy in certain areas to encourage a more diverse range of plants to grow.

As soon as it is possible under current circumstances, we will reintroduce the very popular Bioblitz at the Reserve. Children of all ages will be able to learn more about the local wildlife whilst having a fun day out.

STAPLEHURST NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2031 was published by the Parish Council in December 2016. It is a living document which needs to be reviewed continually and this is the role of the Review Group, led by its Chairman, Margaret Arger. The group comprises a Borough Council Ward Member, parish councillors and members from amongst the residents. During non-Covid-19 times the Group meets monthly and when necessary makes comments and recommendations to the Parish Council.

Since the Plan was published the need for some small amendments, revisions and updates became obvious and these changes have now been completed and approved by Maidstone Borough Council without the need to go to public referendum. The Group will now await the publication of MBC's Local Plan following the borough's call for housing sites, to see how this affects Staplehurst. Similarly, it will be considering the Government's consultation document 'Planning for the Future' published on 6 August 2020.

Robin Oakley

**For the latest version of
Neighbourhood Plan,
scan this code:**



OUR NEW COUNCILLOR

Simon McNeill is our new Parish Councillor, replacing Councillor Caz Walsh who moved to a different part of the country due to work commitments and whom we thank for her numerous contributions and her commitment to Staplehurst. Councillor McNeill joined us on the 29th of June, since then he has taken part in several meetings.



He has lived in the area for a few years now and wanted to make an active contribution to the community. An active father of three, he enjoys his free time with family and friends, and hopes to be able to add value to committees and working groups with the perspective of a relative newcomer to the community alongside working knowledge gained in his day job. His first affiliations are with the Employment and the Finance & Strategy groups, which are within his areas of expertise as they link well with his job as a Regional Manager for a Cinema company.

At the time of writing these lines, there is another position for co-option replacing Councillor Mick Chapman. His contributions and expertise have always been very valued, and we also thank him for them. However, he is unable to continue with us due to increased work commitments.

SIDNEY ROBERT DAVIS

Sidney Robert Davis was a young man born and bred in Staplehurst. He is recorded on the roll of honour at All Saints Church Staplehurst.

He was born on 27th May 1893 and lived in Bligh Court Cottage, Chapel Lane with his twelve siblings, seven brothers & five sisters. He was killed in Flanders on 6th May 1916. His brother Edgar who also fought in WW1 and survived the War, married a local girl called Edith Clara Gurr. Edith's brother, Alfred John Gurr, was also killed in WW1 and is also commemorated on the roll of honour at All Saints Church, Staplehurst. Sidney was baptised at All Saints.

Sidney never married and it would seem that he has no living relatives in Staplehurst. As we already have a Davies Close, named after a well loved Doctor Davies, it is unlikely that Sidney will have a road named after him in the village. In my research into Sidney I found out that he was a house painter, as was his father and brother, Edgar; so it seems the boys went to work with their Dad. His Dad originated from Dorset but his mother, Elizabeth, was a Staplehurst girl. Edgar also fought in WW1 and returned home alive. He served as a special constable during World War II.

I have acquired Sidney's medals at an auction recently. It is wonderful to know that his medals are back in his home village and we are looking into where they may be displayed.

During my research into Sidney and finding out about his short life, knowing he walked the same village streets as we do, it is nice that I can envisage him as a person. Ironically at the very time he died, members of my own family were incarcerated in Kilmainham Gaol awaiting execution in Dublin

for the rebellion against the very forces that Sidney fought for. They received a stay of execution, one of whom died tragically only one year later.



I would like Sid, as I now call him, always to be remembered in Staplehurst and by acquiring his medals it will be going a long way to achieving that goal.

Lance-Corporal S. R. Davis, King's Royal Rifle Corps, who was killed in action on the Western Front on 6 May 1916 1914-15 Star (R-8471 Pte S. R. Davis. K.R. Rif: C.); British War and Victory Medals (E-8471 Pte. S. R. Davis. K.R. Rif: C).

Lance Corporal R/8471 9th battalion Kings Royal Rifle Corps died 6th May 1916 age 21. Born Staplehurst, enlisted Maidstone, resided Staplehurst son of Charles R and Elizabeth A Davis buried Agny military cemetery Pas de Calais, France grave C10

JUBILEE FIELD NEEDS YOU

The Jubilee Field Management Committee are looking for members who could join the team to help managing fund raising, improvements and day to day running of this important community facility. Please contact the Parish Office.

Parish Council Information

COUNCILLORS

Paddy Riordan (Chairman)
Colin Bowden
Joan Buller
José Castro
Susan Forward
David George
Sam Lain-Rose
Helen Miller
Simon McNeill
John Perry (Vice-Chairman)
Zara Rawlinson
Adele Sharp
Peter Spearink
Natasha Thomas

CLERK

Nicola Ideson

DEPUTY CLERK AND FINANCE OFFICER

Mrs Deborah Jenkins

PARISH SUPPORT OFFICER

Mrs Jean Terry

CARETAKER

Mr Paul Nyahwa

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Email: clerk@staplehurst-pc.uk

Tel: 01580 891761

At the moment the office is still closed. Members of the public are encouraged to phone or email if they want to contact us at the present time. This will be reviewed regularly.

SURGERIES AT THE LIBRARY

are subject to status of COVID-19 restrictions at present.

PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

At 7.00pm every third Monday, at the time of printing are held online via Zoom. Next meetings: 07th & 28th September, 19th October, 09th & 30th November, 14th December. Planning Committee meets the following day, Tuesday at 7.00pm.



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