

# **STAPLEHURST ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2022**



## **LOCAL GROUP REPORTS**

## **Staplehurst Bridge Club**

The Club resumed its Friday evening bridge sessions in September 2021 after the long lockdown, and we are delighted that so many of our members have returned.

Unfortunately, at Christmas we were advised that we could no longer meet at the Youth Hut and it was necessary to find an alternative venue immediately. Luckily, we heard that the West Hall of the Community Centre was available and we started meeting there on 7th January. This is a more comfortable venue for us and we hope that new members will be encouraged to join us.

We play social duplicate bridge; members are encouraged to join as individuals as we cut for partners and you are always guaranteed a game, irrespective of the numbers present.

We meet at the West Hall of the Community Centre at 6.45pm for 7pm on Friday evenings and new members will be most welcome.

Further information is available from Liz Mitchell on 01580 713856 or 07943 761573 or email [lizmitchell987@gmail.com](mailto:lizmitchell987@gmail.com)

## **Staplehurst Footpath Group**

A Brief Report on Group Activities for inclusion in Parish Council Annual Report May 2022.

Staplehurst Footpath Group suspended all its activities immediately following the first Covid lockdown in late March 2020. The last walk that the Group undertook before the lockdown was at Sutton Valence on Sunday 8th March.

The Group resumed its activities in October 2021, albeit on a tentative basis.

The long- term viability of the Group has been of concern over recent years, with a static membership level and declining attendance at organised walks.

Since October 2020 a regular programme of monthly walks has been achieved with mostly good levels of attendance. Whilst most walks were local to Staplehurst, we also walked at Linton and Sutton Valence.

Further walks are being planned for the summer period.

Following the resumption of our regular activities Staplehurst Footpath Group will be holding an Annual General Meeting on Friday May 5th at the URC Schoolroom.

At the AGM the viability of the Group will be reviewed. It is hoped that more members will volunteer to help in the running of the Group and in the organising of regular walks. Group officer roles are to be redefined and existing vacancies filled.

The Group officers anticipate that it will need to increase annual subscriptions to £6 per person.

The recruitment of new members will also be discussed. It is hoped that our Group can benefit from the new housing developments that are currently in progress in the village.

**Michael Gillam**  
**(SFG Chairman)**

## **Staplehurst Free Church – The Year in Review**

The Covid pandemic presented many challenges but also new opportunities. In-building activities were suspended during lockdowns but Sunday Services resumed regularly from April 2021. In the intervening period, online broadcasts and meetings were developed and events held outdoors including successful Christmas and Easter Trails. In the summer of 2021, a series of family friendly 'Summer Specials' were held in the Church with very good attendance and on other Sundays the Kids Church was re-instated. Online streaming still continues and enables those who are vulnerable, incapacitated or living further afield to remain connected to the Church community; we see this activity continuing for the foreseeable future.

The toddler group was suspended during the pandemic but we were concerned that parents with a newly born child were becoming particularly increasingly isolated with limited support from statutory services. The FreeBees team therefore changed approach to create a support group for these parents; this has become highly valued with around 40 parents on the register at any one time. Meaningful supportive relationships have developed both between parents and with staff enabling coaching, guidance and signposting to take place. The work of the FreeBees will remain focussed on this demographic of new parents in Staplehurst with one or more children under two years old.

All our other regular activities restarted in the autumn of 2021 including the weekly Prayer Meeting, Men's Walking Group, the SFC Choir and Badminton. The Staplehurst Interest Group also relocated its weekly meeting to the Church. A new informal group for people wishing to develop some sign language skills has also recently started. These groups are open to everyone and are repeatedly publicised and new people are always welcomed.

The other concern that arose during the pandemic was for people in our local community experiencing financial hardship and food insecurity. The Community Hub set up by the Parish Council played an invaluable role during the pandemic and we felt some sort of permanent food-based support services were required but not necessarily using the food bank model. In March 2021 the new 'Shepherd's Pantry' initiative was launched with four themes of support - Hug-in-a-Box, Pantry Parcels, a Community Fridge and an inexpensive Coffee Shop. The support for these projects has been overwhelming and much appreciated and we hope that grant funding and volunteer support will continue to make them sustainable.

A cornerstone activity of the Church is providing financial support for a variety of local, national and international charitable and missionary organisations and we sustain this activity through generous donations from our members and regular attendees. Speaking opportunities are also provided to representatives of these organisations which stimulates additional donations for them. The Church again supported and acted as a dropping off point for shoeboxes for the Samaritan Purse's Operation Christmas Child Appeal; 267 boxes were collected and passed on to the project organisers. Rent-free office space and funding support also continues to be provided to Staplehurst's Debt Advice Centre.

**Roy Laming**  
**Chair of Trustees**

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

Registered Charity no. 1037964

The Friends of All Saints Church Staplehurst was formed in 1993 and the objectives of the charity is to maintain, repair, restore, preserve, improve, beautify and reconstruct for the benefit of the public the fabric of the Church of All Saints Staplehurst.

The Friends have had yet another challenging year with the covid restrictions making it very difficult to plan social events. We now have over 100 members and their generosity throughout the last two years has been astonishing when our usual fund raising was at a standstill.

Our AGM is planned for May 18<sup>th</sup> 2022 in the Church, face to face for the first time in two years, which in its self is a very good reason to come. We will be looking for new members for the committee. It would be good to have larger committee to share the work and bring new ideas for fund raising events. If committee work is not quite your scene, we are always grateful for "lifters and shifters" "cooks and washer uppers" and members to sit at the entrance and welcome people.

We are hoping with the lifting of covid restrictions we can return to a full program of fund-raising events again.

**Val Wallis**  
**Chair**

## **Staplehurst Horticultural Society**

The Horticultural Society began to emerge from the enforced "Covid hibernation" with the limited holding of our annual Spring Show in a tent in a member's garden, essentially a display of daffodils with no visitors save for the judge alone. This was followed by our 2020 Christmas Party, held in July 2021 which was also used to celebrate the 80<sup>th</sup> birthday of the Victory Gardening Club Staplehurst which led to today's Society.

Faced with uncertainties as to permitted activities as we emerged from restrictions, the Society decided to hold its annual spring plant sale as a "Garden Safari", stalls being put up in members' drives etc. This proved so successful, both in terms of plants sold/money raised and in engaging with the public, so that new members were recruited. So successful that we repeated the format in 2022.

We were then able to resume our regular monthly meetings following the relaxation of Covid restrictions. I am pleased to report that we have managed to retain the vast majority of pre-pandemic membership and gained a few new members, so the Society remains in a healthy position. Further return to normality was evidenced by the return of our Autumn Show, open to the public, which had the usual level of entries and provided an impressive visual display.

Entries to the members garden competition were judged in the Spring and Autumn, each winner receiving an award. A most enjoyable and successful fund-raising Quiz Night was held in October.

Our final members' event for 2021 was our usual Christmas party, so two Christmas Parties in one year!

We were also able to make a couple of local visits, which included a trip to Rumwoods Garden Centre at Langley, who offered us a substantial discount on purchases. Most appreciated!

All in all, a remarkably successful year, notwithstanding the pandemic.

**Alan Pett**  
**Chairman**

## Interest Group

After a long break due to the pandemic, Staplehurst Interest Group has relocated to the Free Church and changed its morning from Thursdays to Fridays. This has suited some members more than others. Those attending are delighted with the warm welcoming atmosphere and those driving appreciate the easy parking.

Our programme has continued to be disrupted by health issues, but we are determined to continue to enjoy friendship and laughter whilst widening our many interests. There is an assured welcome for all, so come along and join us for a 10am start on any Friday morning you are free.

**Joan and Malcolm Buller**

## McCabe Day Centre Lunch Clubs

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 were unable to meet for about 18 months due to the Covid pandemic but our volunteers kept in contact with our members and regular newsletters and goodie bags were delivered. We started back in September 2021.

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 also had a very enjoyable Christmas Party, with festive food and decorations. We are extremely grateful to the Staplehurst Community Events Group and Paddock Wood & District Lions 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.

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 36 members, and we do have vacancies at the moment. For further information, please contact our Chairperson, **Caroline Highwood on 892787**.

## **Paddock Wood and District Lions**

Your local Lions Club has been busy supporting local charities, schools and individuals in the area including those in Staplehurst.

Staplehurst has been part of our club since its establishment forty years ago this year and we are proud that Staplehurst is still very much part of our Lions community.

We have continued to fundraise both during and since the pandemic and recently had the support of several Staplehurst venues in raising funds through our Easter Egg raffles. Of course the Santa sleigh continues to bring joy to several villages covered by our club, including here, an activity we undertake in Staplehurst with our friends from the Community Events Group..

Our organisation, although a charity itself, is not allied to any particular charitable cause which gives us the flexibility to respond to a broad range of local needs and requests for help. To make good use of the funds we raise we have been supporting local families and organisations in many ways including:

1. Providing £50 vouchers for families struggling with the cost of uniform when moving on to secondary school
2. Supporting local clubs to provide outings and entertainment for their residents during the pandemic including a donation to the McCabe Centre
3. Providing essential white goods and basics to families escaping domestic violence
4. Support local foodbanks and providing fresh vegetables over the Christmas holiday.
5. Liaising with local schools to support pupils to attend activities and outings when the cost has been prohibitive for parents.
6. A new project this year that is being piloted in Paddock Wood. People are invited to donate their winter fuel allowance to us and then we work with the local advice centre who administer grants to those who are struggling with fuel costs. Hopefully this might be something that we can extend to other areas.
7. We are currently investigating if and how we might help Ukrainian families who have moved into our area

We should point out that around 95% of the donations we make are for local causes, but we do donate a small amount to International crises, though Lions Clubs International.

Of course, we continue to have to raise money to fund these donations. Upcoming soon we have Paddock Wood Carnival, on Sunday July 10<sup>th</sup>, followed by our annual Duck race, and we'll be selling tickets through July and August for that, so watch out for us! , still being discussed is an inter village quiz night, with a decent prize for the champion village, and we expect to organise the Santa runs again in December..

This is just a quick insight into the work done by a small group of committed Lions. As with all service organisations, we are always looking for new members. If you'd like to know more do get in touch via our Facebook page, website, or speak to any member.

Thank you for listening, and I hope you'll continue to support us.

## **Staplehurst Monarchs Youth FC – Progress Report Season 2021/22**

During the current season we have had 20 teams ranging from U8s to U18s. These included 6 girls' teams at U8s/U9s/U11s/U13s/U15s and U16s. We have also continued to run a player development group 'Mini Monarchs' for younger children (U6s and U7s). We have approximately 300 young people registered to play for us up from about 200 in the previous season, something we are extremely proud of. This reflects the growth in the village population and the greater interest in organised sport following lockdown restrictions being eased.

During the summer we have operated 'Wildcats' for girls between the ages of 5 and 11 to try football in a fun environment. This has been very successful and led to girls registering to play for our younger teams. This has restarted in April. We will also be running something called 'Squad Girls' for older children. We added to our bank of referees by helping 4 players (2 boys/2 girls) to undertake the necessary training and nurturing their development thereafter.

We have also helped managers and coaches with their training and development. This is something we hope to expand upon in coming seasons.

During the season we improved links with the senior club as they moved to a higher playing level. Members of our hard working management committee helped them in various ways on 'home' match days. We have also provided a number of players to both their reserves and even 1<sup>st</sup> team. We thank the reserves management team of Jay and Dean Fuller for their encouragement of younger players.

Due to the increase in the number of teams we have found it necessary to source an additional pitch at Staplehurst School. We believe this has generally worked well and have agreed to use their pitch next season. Hiring the pitch helps to provide much needed additional income for the school. We would like to thank groundsman Dean Fuller who maintains all of our pitches, he's done a great job!

With the ongoing drainage problems at Jubilee Sports Field we often need to source additional pitches during the winter months. As in previous years, we hired pitches at The YMCA (Maidstone) and both South and Mote Park.

Winter training for our teams is a real issue due to the aforementioned drainage problems at Jubilee. Our teams have to travel 'far and wide' to such places as Maidstone, Loose, Hawkhurst and Tenterden to find suitable facilities at some expense. The proposed 3G artificial surface at Jubilee would make a massive difference to us and help boost the local economy.

### **Health Centre: Patients Participation Group**

The PPG provides an essential means for all members of our community to either request, or to suggest changes, to the way our Health Centre delivers its services to us – our individual requirements change over the years, the village population increases, technology moves on, while the NHS as a whole suffers the staffing shortages, we are all too well aware of.

Because the numbers attending the last PPG meetings were dwindling towards extinction, it was felt that an on-line approach might be more attractive to today's busy families, and asked for anyone interested in participating to email the surgery (see the most recent editions of the Village Update and the Parish Mag). Receiving just one reply, it is clear that on-line meetings are NOT the answer.

The next PPG meeting will be held on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> July at 6:00 for 6:30 in the Health Centre – when among the issues to be discussed will be the re-introduction of the popular 'Health Talks'. These used to be organised by the recently-defunct 'Friends' (no-one volunteered to take over from Robin Oakley, its secretary of long-standing). So, if you would like to have your say about the operation of our all-important Health Centre, please come along, to meet Gillian Osbourne, its new manager.

## Poppy's Day Nursery & Poppy's Baby Care Unit 2022

At Poppy's Day Nursery we are approaching our 14<sup>th</sup> year in August of providing 'full day' childcare for Staplehurst and the surrounding areas. At Headcorn Road we care for children aged 2-5yrs and our Baby Care Unit in the High Street cares for children aged 3 months-2yrs.

Both Settings hold a "**Good**" rating from OFSTED - view online at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

Despite the Covid pandemic of 2020/21 we have managed to stay open and continue to provide full day care for our children. We have seen a huge increase in the number of requests for childcare places at both settings and currently have a waiting list till **September 2023**. The new housing developments locally and a nursery that closed in Headcorn recently has increased demand for places at our settings. We are seeking ways to accommodate some more children and we have invested in a complete garden makeover at Headcorn Road with half the garden being converted to artificial grass and the other half a barked play area.

Currently we have **22** members of staff and do employ Apprentices under the "Apprentice Scheme in Childcare" supported via Parenta. We also have one volunteer.

Last September **24** children moved to Primary schools and this year **23** children will leave for Primary Schools. We currently have **75** children 'on role' from Staplehurst and surrounding area.

We access KCC courses to develop staff in all areas of nursery care; this includes Safeguarding and SENCO Courses. All staff are trained in Paediatric First Aid and some have recently undertaken a refresher course including the use of a defibrillator.

Our Headcorn Road Nursery has a Defibrillator fitted to an outside wall in a locked cabinet. In an emergency dial 999 and a code will be given to unlock the cabinet to access the device.

We continue to maintain links with the local Primary Schools, Pre-Schools, and Village Library.

Our activities have included the Butterfly room producing a Mother's Day video. The children performed a Christmas Nativity for their parents/carers via Zoom. This year Father Christmas did visit the children at the nursery.

For our fundraising we managed to raise **£100** for Red Nose Day, staff dressed up in 1980's clothing at Nursery for the day. For Children in Need the children did a sponsored walk in the village and raised a staggering **£500**.

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 Community Events Group (SCEG)**

Due to the pandemic, it has been a quieter year for events organised by SCEG. However, some did take place including Picnic in the Park and the 5/10k run in the middle of last year and the Father Christmas Sleigh in December, with the Lions. Through the year we produced 4 editions of the Stay Safe Staplehurst leaflet, which every house received alongside the Village Update. Sadly, due to lack of resource, we've stopped this initiative.

This year the group have been busy organising a Party in the Park to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and the party will take place on Surrenden Playing Field on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> June. The aim is to provide a free event, bring family, friends and the community together and celebrate a very important, unique date in British history. We've been very lucky to receive a significant donation from the National lottery for this event, and sponsorship from David Wilson Homes. Despite these contributions the event will still cost us several thousand pounds – we are lucky to have built sufficient funds, over the last few years to cover this.

Recently the SCEG team met on the Surrenden Playing Field to show Lorna Manning the new gate and plaque that the group had bought and had erected in memory of Lorna's late husband, Barrett Manning. Barrett was a great friend to SCEG as well as the SCEG Parish Council Representative, a former Parish Councillor and one of the founders of the Carnival Group. We were delighted that Lorna was very touched and appreciative of the kindness that the group had shown in memory of her dear late husband.

The next event, after Party in the Park, is the 5/10k run, sponsored by Whites Landscaping, which takes place on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> June. We still need marshals for this, by the way!

We have provisionally booked the popular French market to visit us again on November 27<sup>th</sup> and hope to have another visit from Santa in December.

However, for these events to take place, we need extra committee members and helpers, and with some of the existing members wishing to take a back seat, or retire, the group question where things will go from here.

These events do not happen overnight, they take time to plan, organise and then carry out and SCEG need extra help, and committee members. Without that help there is serious doubt we can carry on. So, if you can help or would like to find out more, please do take the time to find out. You can contact us via our Facebook page, or speak to one of the committee at the Jubilee event.

It'll be a great shame if we decide we can't carry on, so please think about it.

Thanks for listening, and we wait to hear from you!

# Staplehurst School

Staplehurst School is a good school (Ofsted Jan 2022).

The school has made significant improvements during the last 2 and a half years to ensure a 'good' outcome from our recent Ofsted inspection. Some areas that got particular recognition were:

- Leadership *'Leaders have successfully brought about much-needed change. They have raised standards and expectations in all areas.'*
- Inclusivity *'The school is highly Inclusive ...Staff work tirelessly to make sure that this group of pupils (SEN) are able to access their learning alongside their peers.'*
- High quality of essay writing that is produced by children termly to assess their knowledge in humanities subjects. *'Pupils impressively demonstrate the knowledge that they have learned and remembered in their written work.'*

Staplehurst school currently has 372 children in role, in 14 classes with 2 classes per each academic year. The school has a substantial EYFS area with space for children to develop their learning inside and outside, as well as large role play and construction areas. Children visit our well stocked library (set up by an ex-parent) every 2 weeks with their class. They are also able to visit during lunch times and afterschool. Children are able to borrow books to take home. Over recent years there have been significant curriculum developments within the school, we offer a knowledge-based curriculum with a strong emphasis on History and Geography.

Staplehurst School offers a wide range of clubs to children from years 1 to 6 including skipping, story, music, choir, board games, rounders, football and dance run by teachers. We also have clubs run by experts visiting the school, these are: gardening boxing, tennis and netball. Year 6 have just started weekly swimming lessons at the Weald Sports Centre.

We as a school are actively seeking further links with the local community and would welcome a meeting with local leaders to facilitate this. Currently:

- We are visited weekly by Silke from All Saints or Andrew from Staplehurst Free church to take assemblies.
- The school is already used for Karate training,
- Children who attend Beavers, Cubs or Scouts have access to the school field during meetings
- Key stage 2 children in the process of creating art work for the Eco Day at the church on the 14<sup>th</sup> of May.
- Louise Pettifer, a local artist and art teacher, an ex-pupil and parent of the school has been working closely with our Art lead to produce an Art Curriculum unique to Staplehurst School.
- Developing links with our local traveller community, we held a Traveller History Month day earlier this year and year 1, whilst studying the history of transport invited in a parent with their horse so children could learn about the first type of transport.

After 2 disrupted years with lockdowns and home learning, we are delighted to have had a relatively normal year with learning staying in school for the majority of children. We have struggled with staff absences, but the team has pulled together to ensure the smooth running of the school. Lucy Davenport with the Senior Leadership Team, work with the rest of the staff to ensure the very best for our local children.

## **Staplehurst Scout Group**

We are finally emerging from the Covid dark clouds and starting to get back normal. Like everyone else, the period of covid restrictions has been tough for us and although we managed to keep some meetings going with the help of Zoom, there is nothing quite like getting out and about and doing things together, which is what Scouting is all about.

So, for the first time in a few years we can have a summer camp for cubs and scouts, the highlight of the scouting year. Our Beaver colony has been forging ahead and has done a number of visits recently including one to Headcorn fire station and recently completed a sleep-over event. The Beavers have also started to create a wildlife haven in the grounds of the Scout Centre which is proving to be very popular.

Having completed an upgrade to our toilets with the help of lots of local firms and volunteers (see last year's report for details) we are now looking to upgrade our kitchen facility. We are on the lookout for volunteers to help with this refurbishment, so beware!

Whilst the old youth centre, soon to be the new youth centre, has been changing ownership and undergoing some repairs, we have had the pleasure of hosting the Men's Shed in the Scout Centre and we are very thankful to them for helping us with some odd-jobs to keep the Scout Centre up to scratch.

And to finish, 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 481733 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 21<sup>st</sup> June starting at 7:30pm in the Scout Centre in Nicolson Walk, off Crowther Close.

William Best

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



It's been a good year for us here at Staplehurst Under 5 Playgroup. We have been so pleased that the more recent lockdowns didn't affect us, so we were able to continue working with the children and their families at a time when there was a lot of worry and uncertainty in the world. We were also able to reintroduce our popular Harvest Festival and Christmas Concert, bringing all our families together again. These small moments mean a lot to us, seeing the children's confidence grow and helping them to recognise and feel pride in their achievements.

Mrs Spong has left us and we are joined now by Mrs Tarling as our new key worker. The afternoon sessions we had just started as I wrote my report last year have continued to grow in popularity so that we are now looking at opening for another afternoon as well. We've had delicious fruit courtesy of Lennards Farm deliveries, and our fence and garden have had a revamp and look lovely thanks to our wonderful committee secretary Kelly McLean. Our committee have been busy as usual organising events for the community to join in – the Christmas Raffle, Easter Trail, and Garage Sale Safari (9<sup>th</sup> July, save the date!) as well as a Jubilee window dressing competition for the upcoming May half term.

The Summer term is always a bit sad as children, some of whom we have known for years, go on to 'big school'. This term we run separate sessions for the older children to help them with the skills they will need as they leave us – sitting, listening, taking turns, personal hygiene, being able to put on a coat and much much more. We're lucky to have an excellent relationship with Staplehurst Primary, the school most of our children move on to, and we are always very proud of the wonderful children we send to their new schools. This is all alongside the weekly and termly topics we explore with all the children. Lots of learning through play, fun and exploration.

And the Summer term is a very happy one despite the imminent departures. At the time of writing, I'm just home from a morning spent in our two gardens with the children. Children free flow throughout the day between our inside and outside areas but the garden has definitely been most popular today. As I left, many of the afternoon children were sat in the shade of the gazebo chalking and chatting. We have long sunny days of water and sand play, bikes and balancing, role play, small world play, construction.... The list goes on! We will make sure that plenty of great memories are made before we break up for the summer holidays. And we will make sure that we throw our leavers a wonderful party to mark the end of their time with us!

## **The Village Golf Club 2022**

The last year has been very exciting for the Village Golf Club. We have been able to benefit from the 3 new holes on the extended course and some significant work on the greens. The course looks fantastic and really deserves its reputation as Staplehurst's best kept secret. The course now boasts 12 holes and is open from dawn to dusk. Membership has increased significantly over the last two years and we finished 2021 with over 400 members, thus making the club a significant leisure facility for the Village of Staplehurst.

Our membership comprises of children and families, adults of all ages with an increasing number of more senior members and players with a range of disabilities as well as beginners and experienced players. Village Golf provides an outdoor activity in a friendly and relaxed environment. Membership fees have been maintained at less than £2.50 per week for unlimited golf 7 days a week and junior membership only £60 for the year. The aim of the club is to be affordable and accessible to all and this is achieved by the significant amount of voluntary work that takes place added to the excellent support that has been provided by the community pay back teams at various times throughout the year.

In order to safeguard this facility as a forever resource for the community we are currently striving to improve the infrastructure such as course drainage, car parking, toilet facilities and installing electricity which are crucial for the future and we would be pleased to hear from anyone who would be able to assist us in securing support for these projects.

Annette Scott  
Chairman

## WI

There is building excitement in the WI, as 2022 represents our centenary year – we were founded on 14 June 1922. We are arranging various ways to celebrate, starting from June this year. More of that in next year's report.

Meanwhile the past year has seen an initially cautious post-lockdown return to regular activities. We began in June 2021 with a picnic on the Surrenden Road Playing Field, courtesy of the Parish Council. Then in July, we had a garden party, in the garden of one of our members. We only started to meet under cover with a craft social afternoon in August, in the North Hall, so we could still maintain a good distance from each other.

Our Produce Show was in September in the Free Church, again allowing plenty of room to maintain our distances. This normally annual event allowed our members to show off their talents: we had entries for cooking, fruit, vegetables and flowers, and for crafts. Many members entered for at least one or two classes; and those of us who didn't were inspired by the skills demonstrated – maybe next year we'll have a go!

By October we had begun to develop our confidence, enough to attend regular meetings in the South Hall. We made sure that people sanitised their hands regularly, and we ensured that windows and doors were open, to ensure a good flow of air. We also re-started some of our regular engagements, such as the monthly pub lunches, the darts team practices in the Kings Head, ten pin bowling in Tunbridge Wells, and even theatre and other visits. Every additional venture being undertaken with great care.

Our meetings have encompassed such varied topics as MGM musicals, "a schoolgirl's war", travels to fund raise for charity, domestic abuse, "my life in music", a demonstration of candle-making, and, of course, our Christmas party. Members have quickly become used to the necessary added precautions, and have been very good in supporting both regular meetings and our other activities.

Beyond our own meetings, we also volunteered to serve the refreshments for the village's autumn clean up, we have sent teams to fund-raising quizzes run by other village organisations (the Horticultural Society and the Friends of All Saints); we have collected jewellery, gadgets etc to support the ACWW (a charity promoted by the WI for rural women worldwide); we have collected food and toiletries for local food banks; and some of us have attended craft days or workshops organised by the wider WI.

To sum up, we are a friendly, lively and fun-loving group who enjoy getting together, and getting involved, whether with our own club, or more widely. We are always happy to meet and greet new members.