

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Staplehurst Parish Council has continued to campaign actively to keep the annual Concurrent Functions grant received from Maidstone Borough Council (MBC). MBC originally proposed cutting the grant by 50% for financial year 2011/12, then phasing it out altogether over the following two years. This grant represents payment for work undertaken by parishes which in the town areas would be undertaken by MBC. The parishes have succeeded in reducing the reduction from 50% to 30%. A full review will take place regarding the future of the grant. SPC hopes to be closely involved in these consultations. Nevertheless, this is a loss of nearly £9,000 in grant money for next year and is one of the main reasons why the precept requirement has increased from £70,000 to £82,500. The additional costs in running the Bell Lane

public toilets, which we took over from MBC last year, have been kept to a minimum in maintaining this important facility. The annual precept for a Band D property will increase from £29.95 to £35.13; an overall cost of less than 68 pence week per property and an incremental increase of less than 10 pence per week. We are continuing our search for a suitable site for allotments: an important issue for many in our community. We are working closely with Trading Standards, the Community Safety Unit at MBC and the Police in considering an alcohol control zone in the Parish to help combat under-age alcohol consumption and anti-social behaviour. There is a report on the Rural Settlement Group and the Staplehurst Housing Survey elsewhere in this issue.

John Perry

STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

Monday 21 February	Monday 18 July
Monday 07 March	Monday 01 August
Monday 21 March	Monday 15 August
Monday 04 April	Monday 05 September
Monday 18 April	Monday 19 September
Tuesday 03 May	Monday 03 October
Monday 16 May – Annual Council Meeting	Monday 17 October
Monday 06 June	Monday 07 November
Monday 20 June	Monday 21 November
Monday 04 July	Monday 05 December
	Monday 19 December

Local electors and the press have a right to listen to Parish Council Meetings, but not to take part. At the beginning and after the closure of the Parish Council Meeting, the Chairman will invite members of the public to speak for a maximum of 3 minutes each relating to issues on the Agenda or about issues of local concern. You are requested to state your name and address prior to speaking. The Parish Council as a planning consultee makes recommendations to Maidstone Borough Council, which makes the decision. All meetings are held in the South Hall, Village Centre.

Planning Committee 7 p.m. Full Council 8 p.m. (or earlier if Planning Agenda is short) on first and third Mondays monthly unless a Bank Holiday. Contact The Clerk for details.

Parish Council Information

COUNCILLORS

John Perry (Chairman)
Tom Burnham (Vice Chairman)
Margaret Arger (Chairman of Planning)
Bill Best
Joan Buller
Paul Butcher
Jenny Fairfax
Jim Frodsham
John Kelly
Paul Kelly
Roger Munn
John Reardon
Matt Sankey
Rory Silkin
Peter Spearink

CLERK

Mrs Sue Bassett

ASSISTANT to CLERK

Mrs Deborah Jenkins

Address:

The Parish Office, Village Centre,
High Street. Staplehurst TN12 0BJ
Email: clerk@staplehurstvillage.org.uk
Tel: 01580 891761
Opening hours: 9am to 1pm Mondays
to Fridays, except on Thursdays when
it is by appointment.

COUNCIL AND POLICE

SURGERIES AT THE LIBRARY
Borough Councillor Lusty holds a
Council Surgery at the Library on
the last Saturday of each month from
10am to 12pm.
Police Community Support Officer
Pete Gardner will be attending
Surgeries at Staplehurst library on
the following dates throughout the
year. Any Police related issues or
concerns can be discussed with
him in confidence on these dates.

Saturday 12th March 2011
12 noon to 13:00 hrs
Saturday 23rd April 2011
12 noon to 13:00 hrs
Saturday 28th May 2011
10am to 12 noon
Saturday 25th June 2011
10am to 12 noon
Saturday 30th July 2011
10am to 12 noon
Saturday 3rd September 2011
12 noon to 13:00 hrs
Saturday 8th October 2011
12 noon to 13:00 hrs
Saturday 19th November 2011
12 noon to 13:00 hrs

You are welcome to talk through
any local problems or ask questions
about local issues with any or all
of these Councillors and officers.

Village Update

SPRING 2011

www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk

JOIN THE PARISH COUNCIL

Elections will take place on Thursday 5th May 2011 unless the Government selects an alternative date.

COME AND FIND OUT WHAT MIGHT BE INVOLVED AT THE ELECTION INFORMATION EVENING

on Monday 28th February, 7.30pm, South Hall,
Staplehurst Village Centre

ARE YOU SOMEBODY THAT CARES ABOUT THE COMMUNITY YOU LIVE IN?

THE PARISH COUNCIL IS AN EFFECTIVE WAY TO GET INVOLVED IN COMMUNITY LIFE.

IT DEALS WITH LOCAL PEOPLE AND MATTERS ON A DAY-TO-DAY BASIS.

BY JOINING STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL YOU WILL BE HELPING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO THE PARISH AND THE LIVES OF THE RESIDENTS THROUGH THE SERVICES THAT IT PROVIDES.

ALL 15 SEATS ON THE PARISH COUNCIL WILL BE CONTESTED AND DETAILS OF QUALIFICATION AND HOW TO APPLY WILL BE EXPLAINED AT THE ELECTION INFORMATION EVENING OR CAN BE FOUND ON THE COUNCIL WEBSITE
www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk

For any further details or queries, please contact the Parish Clerk by telephone: 01580 891761 or
Email: clerk@staplehurstvillage.org.uk

To enable Staplehurst Parish Council to regain its Quality Parish status, an election will be required. You may have fresh skills and ideas about our community, or many years of valuable local experience to bring to the Council.

Speak to an existing Councillor to understand how committed they are to making Staplehurst a better place in which to live. You may feel strongly yourself about a local issue of concern and that can be the catalyst that gets people interested to stand for the position of Parish Councillor.

Housing and infrastructure (or lack of it) are of great concern and the Rural Settlement Group has been set up to concentrate on these. The provision of allotments is another important area. Where could you fit in to help drive forward the necessary work to ensure Staplehurst residents get the facilities they need?

Staplehurst Parish Council provides a great deal of information on its website, which can also be requested from the parish office, to explain the work of a real parish council and the commitment needed from a successful election candidate.

Could you help make Staplehurst Parish Council a Quality Parish once more? Come along on 28th February and find out everything you need to make up your own mind.

Staplehurst

Parish Council

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK AND CORE STRATEGY

The Staplehurst Rural Settlement Group continues to meet and monitors developments in this area, reporting to Staplehurst Parish Council. For details of meeting see: http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/staplehurst_partnership.aspx Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) originally planned to report in Autumn 2010. Following a number of deferrals, information on the next stage of the Core Strategy consultation went before MBC Cabinet on 9th February 2011. The report to Cabinet proposes a preferred development target and distribution. Public consultation on the Core Strategy will take place in due course. The Local Development Framework (LDF) is the set of policies that determines where and how development takes place in and around Maidstone. While the policies in the South East Plan 2009 are still in force, the Coalition Government intends to revoke them. The Core Strategy will confirm the numerical Gypsy pitch target, set out

the broad strategy for pitch provision and detail the criteria against which future Gypsy and Traveller planning applications will be assessed. The Gypsy and Traveller Sites Development Plan Document (DPD) will allocate specific sites for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation. The timetable for the preparation of the DPD will now need to be linked to that of the Core Strategy, as the latter document will confirm the number of pitches that the DPD will need to identify. The Land Allocations DPD will allocate the specific sites for residential and non-residential development, as well as dealing with landscape designations and village boundaries. Work on this DPD will follow the adoption of the Core Strategy, which is intended for mid-2012. For further updates see: http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/environment_and_planning/planning/local_development_framework.aspx

BUS SHELTERS

The Parish Council decided to upgrade two of their bus shelters - one near Pinnock Lane and the other at Chestnut Avenue - by having sides fitted to them. This has been well received and much appreciated by parishioners, especially on these cold winter days. The bus shelters will also be repainted in the spring when the weather is suitable for such outdoor work. KCC awarded Staplehurst Parish Council a 50% grant towards this project and our thanks go the Mayor, Councillor Eric Hotson, for a contribution out of his Borough Member's fund.



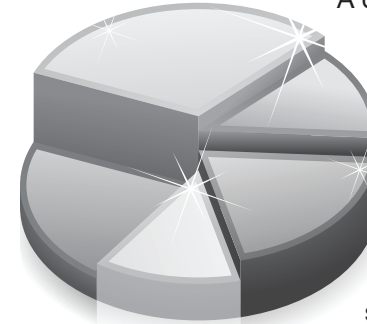
RESPECT OUR SEWERS

Chairman Councillor John Perry and Councillor Joan Buller recently visited Tonbridge Waste Treatment Works. Councillors took the opportunity to highlight Staplehurst's issues with flooding and pumping stations. Southern Water staff gave an excellent guided tour, while explaining the difficulties caused by items wrongly deposited in the sewerage system. These include ladders, bicycles and builders' rubble. Such

fly-tipping contributes to a back-up of sewerage when there is a deluge of rain. Tipping fat down household drains also causes major problems as it solidifies and blocks the pipes. Use your fat instead to feed the birds! Cotton buds trap and collect other solid matter to form a dam in the system. Toilet paper is the only item besides bodily waste and water that should be flushed away.

STAPLEHURST HOUSING SURVEY REPORT (2010)

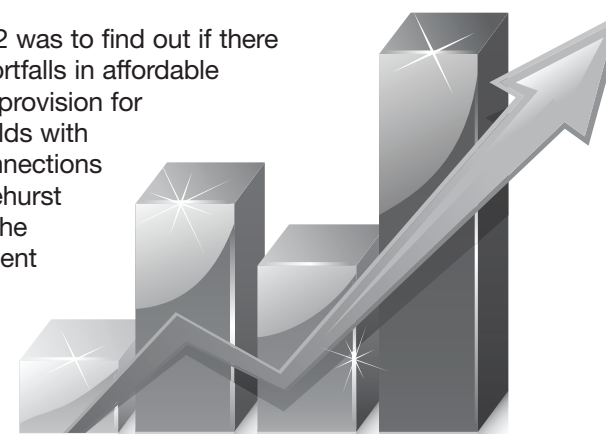
The Staplehurst Housing Survey Report 2010 ('Survey') was endorsed by the Parish Council on Monday 7th February 2011. Residents will recall that the Survey was a joint effort between the Rural Housing Enabler (RHE), Staplehurst Parish Council (SPC), Staplehurst Rural Settlement Group (SRSG) and Maidstone Borough Council (MBC). The Survey was in two sections; the aim of Section 1 was to gain the views of the community relating to future plans for housing development in the Staplehurst area, likely to arise from MBC's Local Development Framework. The SRSG wanted to ensure it could represent the community's views in responding to any future proposals for development.



Analysis of Section 1 has found that:

- 454 (65%) respondents indicated that they would not support more housing development in Staplehurst.
- From respondents who would support more development, 157 (22%) felt that affordable housing for people with a connection to the parish was needed.
- 601 (85%) respondents felt that the current infrastructure would not support more housing.
- The most frequent comments on infrastructure related to transport and shops.
- 258 (36%) respondents indicated that they would be seeking to move home within the next 3 – 10 years.
- The most frequently given reasons for seeking to move were due to retirement, needing a larger home and needing a smaller home.
- 215 (84%) respondents who are seeking to move wanted to buy on the open market.

Section 2 was to find out if there were shortfalls in affordable housing provision for households with local connections to Staplehurst parish. The assessment of



housing need shows that for a first time buyer to be able to afford entry level market housing, an income of over £29,000 would be needed to buy a small 1 bedroom terraced house in Staplehurst. An income of over £33,000 would be needed to buy a 2 bedroom apartment. A deposit of at least 15% would also be required in order to obtain a mortgage. To rent a 2 bedroom terraced house, an income of over £42,000 would be required.

Analysis of Section 2 also found that:-

- The need for affordable housing was fairly evenly spread between single people, couples and families.
- The majority of people in housing need wanted shared ownership.
- The largest group of people in housing need (49%) were in the age group 25-44.

A need for up to 48 affordable homes was identified by the Survey, for the following local households:-

- 17 single people
- 15 couples without children
- 16 families

The Survey provides useful information for SPC and MBC, as we await the decision on preferred options relating to Housing Targets and Spatial Distribution. SPC thanks all those Residents who took part in the Survey. The full Survey will be published on the Parish Council Website and hard copies will be available for reference in the Parish Office and Staplehurst Library.

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

11th April 2011 – 8 p.m. South Hall, Staplehurst Village Centre. Although hosted by the Parish Council, this is the annual meeting for electors of this Parish. The Parish Council will report its activities alongside local residents and groups who are encouraged and invited to contribute their reports. If you have a specific subject that you wish to bring out for public discussion, this is the meeting at which you can raise it. Please contact the Parish Clerk before 31st March if you wish an item added to the Agenda. All prospective candidates standing in the May Parish Elections will be invited to attend this meeting. If you are not sure who to vote for in May, come along and get to know them in person at this meeting.

VILLAGE UPDATE POSTAL COSTS

Staplehurst Parish Council arranges delivery of over 2,300 Village Updates to each household, shop and business within the parish every quarter. Most are delivered free by volunteers who save a great deal of expense. In outlying areas, however, the Updates are sent out by post. Cutting costs and

saving money are important so **if your update is posted to you** and you have an email account, would you like to receive it in future by email with .pdf attachment? If so, please email The Clerk giving your postal and email addresses to clerk@staplehurstvillage.org.uk