

## **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. We again 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 evening services and arranged for services to mark the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and the Women's World Day of Prayer (although the WWDP service had to be cancelled because of extreme weather; it is hoped to rearrange it later). We organised the house-to-house collection for Christian Aid in Staplehurst, which raised £3143, about £70 less than in 2016. 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, and we should also like to acknowledge a generous donation from last year's Maplehurst Bluebell Walk.

## **COMMUNITY CENTRE FOR DEBT ADVICE – STAPLEHURST**

The Community Centre for Debt Advice in Staplehurst has had a busy year supporting existing and new clients. Some clients have straightforward situations and for others the difficulties have gone on for some years and getting the full picture has required a lot of detective work.

In August 2017 we were delighted to see one of our earliest clients become debt free. He originally came to us depressed and facing repaying over £20,000 of debt, following the recent breakdown of a long-term relationship. It was a joy to see him becoming free from his burden and to receive a lovely thank you gift. Also, in 2017 we were able to support another client in applying for a debt relief order. This meant that the debt that accumulated due to ill health and inability to work was completely wiped. The client is now able to sleep better without the worry of how to pay her creditors.

The Debt Advice Centre began 2017 with some concerns over our own finances, as we only had enough money to keep the centre going for another year's worth of payments. However, some generous donations as well as some successful grant applications have ensured that we will continue to be able to support local people in debt for some years to come

Alongside the challenge of advising others on debt solutions, we are currently working towards being compliant with the new GDPR regulations. Changes to policy wording, production of new permission forms and added security measures will ensure our clients continue to receive the best in confidentiality and transparency.

Anyone needing help or support can contact the centre via phone or email, details below:

Phone 01580 893583

Email: [debtadvice@ccdas.org.uk](mailto:debtadvice@ccdas.org.uk)

## **COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH IN STAPLEHURST**

Since individual parish schemes were linked via the police computer, more parts of Kent have joined in the effort to reduce the anti-social speeding of motorists through our villages. Any vehicle recorded at 35mph or over in the built-up area will have its details recorded and a second offence anywhere will result in a reminder letter from Kent Police. The vast majority of drivers are not recorded more than once, but of those receiving a letter, only a tiny percentage offend again within the twelve-month period.

Our small team of volunteers would like to get out more often, but we need more parishioners to join us. An initial training on computer is followed by a roadside session with Staplehurst's Team Leader and then you will be able to offer as much or little time as you can. We do make a big difference, as witnessed by the way that cars slow when they see us.

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The few motorists who speed excessively can expect a severely-worded letter, as can any persistent offender. That can be hand-delivered by a uniformed officer which often intrigues neighbours and makes the point very forcefully. All evidence gained also helps us to keep the Parish Council informed where there are significant speeding problems.

### **FRIENDS OF ALL SAINTS CHURCH STAPLEHURST**

The Friends of All Saints Church Staplehurst is a registered charity created in 1994 with the sole objective of 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 2017/2018 we were able to reimburse All Saints PCC £4992.32 to cover the cost of various routine and general maintenance works including organ tuning, central heating system repairs and servicing, and several repairs to the roof including that following the theft of lead.

Events run in the past year included our ever-popular Brain Game, The Shepherd's Market for all those unique Christmas presents, a BBQ and auction, the August Bank Holiday walk, a Charity Lunch at the London Beach Hotel and a concert by The Staplehurst Community Choir and pianist Lee Scott Newcombe. 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.

This year the proceeds of The Staplehurst 2018 Calendar, which is created and sold by Ken Collins, was donated to The Friends for which we are hugely grateful. Ken requested that this donation be earmarked for the planned work to 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. So, in this regard, we have given our full support to this project so that it can proceed as soon as all approvals are in place. This includes pledging to meet the cost of removing and reinstating the choir stalls, providing matched funding where grant aid requires, helping cover any eventual shortfall and assisting with any additional fundraising activity should our current resources fall short of needs.

We have considered the implications of the impending General Data Protection Regulations in respect of the use and security of any personal details we hold in our records and have acted as we see fit to secure the necessary sanction from those affected.

The Friends, administered by an elected committee, continue to organise fundraising and social events. We welcome new members and joining is straightforward with a simple membership form and a minimum subscription of £5. Our membership form can be downloaded from our website <http://allsaintsstaplehurst.co.uk/friends>

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

Andrew Brady  
Chairman & Membership Secretary  
**Friends of All Saints Church Staplehurst**  
Registered Charity No 1037964

### **FRIENDS OF STAPLEHURST HEALTH CENTRE**

The Friends have continued their role of supporting the clinical and administration team at the Health Centre. As usual the Friends organised the influenza vaccination sessions in the Autumn and published three very informative newsletters which were circulated throughout the village as an insert in the Parish

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Council's Village Update. The Friends have run their usual Christmas Draw which is their main source of income and have purchased various items of equipment for the Health Centre. The Friends had a stall at the Village Carnival and have held Health Information evenings throughout the year on subjects including Diabetes, Preparation of the Medicine Cabinet for Winter with 'Over the Counter' medicines and the work of Chiropractors.

### **INVOLVE**

#### **New services from Involve**

- **Involve Cleaning Service**
- **Carers' Hospital Discharge Service**
- **The Involve Shop** – a shop and workshop space, open to the public and offering a wide range of locally produced arts and crafts. Workshops take place 4 days of the week with a focus on creative activities. The shop also acts as a space for those with mental health concerns to drop in and access services.

**Involve Carers** This year 885 new Carers were referred into our service. We continued to develop our telephone assessment service ensuring that all new Carers had any initial needs identified quickly at first contact using a proportionate wellbeing assessment.

Initial Funding and equipment obtained through Kent Sport enabled us to offer Carers and the person they support the opportunity to play short mat bowls and table tennis together. A real need has been identified in our work with Carers for more activities together rather than the traditional Carer short break of leaving the person you care for with a support worker.

#### **Involve Older People**

We offer a wide range of services and support for older people, improving their wellbeing, independence and community connections. This includes befriending, information and advice, practical support such as shopping, social groups, health activities and the Older Person's Forum. We are regularly supporting around 1000 older people across the Maidstone borough. Our ethos is to enable and empower older people to work together; as peers, volunteers, friends and neighbours to support each other.

#### **Community Transport**

Our long-standing volunteer transport service provides a reliable, friendly, supportive low-cost option for people who cannot manage on public transport, to attend health and social appointments. This year 170 volunteers have contributed to the service, helping 673 isolated people remain independent, reducing their worry about attending appointments and providing a supportive and caring experience. They undertook 7,000 trips including 242 GP appointments and 970 hospital visits.

#### **Falls Prevention**

Our holistic fall prevention programme is based on Postural Stability exercise classes for older people and helps build confidence, strength and balance. This year programmes continued to run across West Kent supporting 125 older people, and there is a strong focus on wellbeing, support to access other services and progression. Transport is provided for the most isolated ensuring everyone who needs to can benefit.

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### **Get Involved DIY and Involve Shed**

The health and wellbeing of over 40 isolated and disadvantaged volunteers and 120 elderly beneficiaries improved either through learning new skills, training or from having tasks completed in their own homes and being relieved of the stress associated.

28 volunteers took part in 360 sessions and completed 219 separate, wide ranging tasks for elderly and/or disabled people living on low incomes within the Borough. The Involve Shed also thrived, with a second group opening. The Shed is open to people who maybe have mental health problems, learning difficulties, feeling isolated or lonely, out of work, retired and gives them an opportunity to make items using woodwork.

### **MCCABE DAY CENTRE**

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, with a 50p raffle to boost the funds. 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 £3.50, again with a 50p 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 arrange a trip to the pantomime in the winter, this year we went to the pantomime in Benenden again, taking 2 minibuses and cars to transport the members, and all had a wonderful time. We also had a very enjoyable Christmas Party, with festive food, decorations and entertainment.

We had two outings by minibus (Wealden Wheels), one to Rye in August and the other to Hawkhurst Fish Farm and Blackbrooks Garden Centre in October.

Our Annual General Meeting is held in September and all people interested in the work of the Day Centre are welcome to attend. About 45 people attended the last one and, after the business meeting, enjoyed a talk by the Kent Surrey Sussex Air Ambulance Service and then a buffet lunch. This year our AGM will be held on Wednesday, 19<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 Elaine Martin on 892033.

### **STAPLEHURST BRIDGE CLUB**

The Bridge Club had a roller coaster type of year in 2017. We were happily playing bridge on Friday evenings in the upstairs room at Sobell Lodge. Early in the summer we were advised that the Lodge was to carry out some imminent renovations which would involve the removal of our room. Consequently, we had to find yet another new home.

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Fortunately, the Youth Hut, next door to the Village Centre, was identified as being available on Friday evenings, and in May 2017 we started to meet there. This has proved a successful venue for us – the Hut is a very comfortable place for us to play bridge, and over the past few months our membership has shown a slight increase and a stabilisation of numbers of members attending. Most of our members travel from outside the village, from Loose, Maidstone, Cranbrook and even Bodiam and Tunbridge Wells, but it would be extremely satisfying if a bigger attendance from the village could be developed.

We would like to thank Paul Kelly for his help during our move to the Hut, and our lady members who have made and put up some curtains to help keep the Hut warm during the recent cold weather.

New members will be very welcome to the Club – Friday evenings at approximately 6.50pm. We are a very friendly group of people and you do not need to come with a partner – you are always guaranteed a game. Why not give us a try?



### “GOODBYE” STAPLEHURST CARNIVAL AND FETE



### “HELLO” STAPLEHURST COMMUNITY EVENTS GROUP

For over 50 years The Staplehurst Carnival & Fete Committee has hosted an amazing array of community events including the annual Summer Fete, The Queen’s Jubilee Celebration Weekend in 2012, the annual 10K run, the Christmas Fair / French Market and Santa’s Sleigh around the village in December.

We have felt for a while that, as the village no longer has a carnival procession, the time was right for us to change our name to something that better reflects what we do today. We are still the same small friendly, hardworking team and our aims and ethos have not changed. We continue to raise funds for other groups and good causes within the village and in the past 18 months or so have granted about £8500 in donations.

In 2017 we held four successful events:

**The 10K run** attracted over 400 runners who ran the established village circuit in very warm conditions and were supported along the way by friends, families and volunteer marshalls. All finishers received a special die-cast medal depicting the Staplehurst village sign. Many thanks to Petsworld for sponsoring this event.

**The Summer Fete** kicked off with an uplifting session from Headcorn Ukele Group and was followed with an inspiring display from the Staplehurst Young Performers Stage & Dance School and later Lynwood Academy of Dance. We also had a huge array of stalls from local groups and businesses, plus of course Shayler’s Funfair which is always great fun. We received some very appreciative feedback saying what an enjoyable event it was. Unfortunately, we were unable to continue with the live music into the evening as we just didn’t have the manpower or volunteers to assist.

Our 10<sup>th</sup> **French Market / Christmas Fair** was also well supported & in addition to our French friends selling their products and delicious smelling food, we had a lovely array of local trades people selling beautiful items and ideas for the festive season. This year’s event will be held on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> November.

**Santa’s Sleigh** toured the village on three extremely cold evenings in December but this didn’t deter Father Christmas or his Elves. He saw many excited children who received a small present and a cheery wave. The bucket money we collect on these evenings is shared with The Paddock Wood and District Lions, who we

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jointly organise the event with. Our thanks to Staplehurst Tyres for sponsoring the sleigh, Laineys Farm for supplying the vehicle and Toby Marsh as Rudolph the driver.

We always need willing volunteers and helpers on event days so if you would like to get involved, please either contact us via our Facebook page or email us: [staplehursteventsgroup@gmail.com](mailto:staplehursteventsgroup@gmail.com)

*Thank you all for your continued support and we look forward to seeing you at our next event.*

### **STAPLEHURST EMERGENCY HELP TEAM (SEHT)**

In 2010 the Post Office fire triggered the creation of SEHT, when the evacuees from the neighbouring buildings needed somewhere to 'shelter', to have a cup of tea while getting their thoughts together to decide on their immediate future. Residents lost no time in providing temporary accommodation and refreshments; but the experience begged the question "Are we set up to deal with unforeseen emergencies?" Answer: "No, but we should be".

This decision coincided with the new Civil Contingencies Act, which replaced the outmoded Civil Defence, which KCC were addressing through the creation of the Kent Resilience Team – a framework of the emergency services (Police, Ambulance, Fire Brigade etc) who would need local knowledge and manpower in the event of serious incident, such as a rail crash, a petrol spillage on the A229, a gas main rupture, a prolonged power cut.

Our emergency plan includes the calling out of local volunteers, the setting up of a shelter in one or more of the village's community centres, and the provision of warmth, food, and drink. In extreme circumstances the centre might have to be manned for 24-hours, which would require dozens of volunteers – no volunteer should be expected to remain in place for more than three hours.

So we are constantly on the lookout for new would-be volunteers. If you are interested you can contact the Team either via the Parish Office, or at [staplehurst.report@btinternet.com](mailto:staplehurst.report@btinternet.com). Attendance at meetings (quarterly) and (lively) training sessions is optional. As SEHT is sponsored by the Parish Council, while acting on behalf of SEHT, volunteers would be covered by the Parish's insurance policy.

Note: SEHT volunteers are never expected to undertake the professional duties of the emergency services and, while we would encourage 'good neighbourliness' in the event of house fires, vulnerable residents during a big freeze etc, we are NOT set up to provide any service on an A&E-type basis. We respond only to calls from the Kent Resilience Team.

### **STAPLEHURST HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY**

The Society had another good year with a variety of illustrated talks, three shows, a plant sale, quiz night and a stand at the Staplehurst Carnival.

We held our annual Spring, Autumn and Summer Rose and Sweet Pea shows. The weather affects what is able to be shown, but as the dates are already booked, exhibitors have to make the best of it. Both the number and standard of entries was encouraging. The rose and sweet pea show had lots of colour and scent and was followed by tea, coffee, and homemade cakes.

The success of our shows owes a great deal to our Show Secretary Sue de St. Jorre and her helpers.

Ken Read again organised our Plant Sale at the Village Centre. Nearly everything was sold, the Members' Plants offering some unusual varieties. This year it will again be in The Village Centre North Hall on Saturday 5th May from 9.00am to 12.00 noon.

Margaret Donnelly organised our Quiz Night at the School Hall which was popular. This year the Quiz will be on Friday 12th October in the Primary School Hall at 7.00 pm.

We are very pleased and grateful that Rumwood Nurseries of Langley kindly continue to support us.

Our monthly meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month in the Village Centre South Hall at 8.00pm, except for the December meeting which is on the first Friday. This is our AGM and starts at 7.45pm and is usually an evening of entertainment, and a buffet provided by the members. All are welcome to our meetings, please try us out.

### **STAPLEHURST INTEREST GROUP**

Our Thursday morning meetings continue to be well attended and we never cease to be amazed when we hear about the lives of a variety of speakers or the activities they do. We even get to try some of them ourselves, often with hilarious results.

Speakers regularly delve into history and have included Staplehurst's appearances in print, life in Parliament producing Hansard, the role of the Speaker of the Commons, Neighbourhood Watch, Flags in Britain, how flags controlled the Battle of Trafalgar, the Cutty Sark, Namibia, Colombia and escaping from Poland as well as members giving history snippets from their own or favourite lives. Old film clips certainly reminded us of a gentler age.

We decorated flower pots, added a plant and sold them at the Fete. We strolled around Staplehurst, Shorne Country Park and marvelled at the exhibits in Brattle Farm Museum. We played Countdown, Calling All Bluffers, Short Mat Bowls, dominoes, learnt Nomination Whist and how to drive beetles. We talked about our favourite place in Britain, our toys and mementoes, and made up stories to illustrate a famous saying. Our creations for Easter were many and varied; using pressed flowers to produce cards and gift tags was very successful and helped make our stall at the Shepherd's Market a great success. Favourite play readings, poetry and music also continue to bring much merriment.

New members are always welcome, as are people offering to talk. We've been meeting most Thursday mornings since 2002, now in the Schoolroom behind the United Reformed Church. Come and join us.

### **STAPLEHURST NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW GROUP**

The Group is comprised of residents and parish councillors and working within the terms of reference agreed with the Parish Council in 2017, the Group has met regularly throughout the year, monitoring and reviewing the Neighbourhood Plan and highlighting instances where it has been ignored by those submitting planning applications and by those at the Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) who deal with and decide on the applications. The Group challenged the inclusion of land North of Henhurst Farm in the Maidstone Local Plan. It has also noted the lack of consistency from MBC with regard to gypsy and traveller site planning applications. In support of the Parish Council's Planning Committee, the Group has highlighted various issues in developers' planning applications.

### **STAPLEHURST NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH**

Staplehurst NhW in its present form has been in existence for about 12 years although groups have formed and disbanded over the last 40 years.

NhW, to quote Kent Police "is a partnership between the police and local communities supported by other partners including KCC Community Wardens, Police Community Support Officers, Kent Trading Standards and others."

NhW is FREE thanks to support from the Parish Council and from a local County Councillor. One of our Parish Councillors has been associated with NhW for 30+ years and a second one has just joined us.

Various methods have been used to broaden membership but this is still limited to about 60 people. Last year leaflets advertising NhW were delivered to about 40 houses on a new estate to test their effectiveness. No new members came forward. In November 2017, after a spike in local crime there was pressure from a number of residents for something to be done. Some people called for more police patrols and others called for local people to form their own street patrols 24/7. NhW arranged a public meeting to discuss the situation. Several proposals came forward including every house being visited and leaflets being delivered throughout the village. It was decided to produce a full-page advertisement for NhW and distribute it with the Village Update. This was done. Membership is slowly growing – 8 new members have joined in the last week.

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We receive and circulate home security advice and information from Maidstone police and others by email. Local crime is at a relatively low level which might help to explain why NhW is a minority interest.

We recently started co-operating with local rural group “Fields of Vision” and circulate appropriate security messages that we receive from them. “Fields of Vision Rural Intelligence Group” has been set up by people living outside the village envelope with the aim of reducing crime in their area by posting alerts to all members when suspicious characters are seen and where local crime occurs. See their activities via the Staplehurst Helping Page.

Staplehurst Helping Page often has details of local crimes and other issues. We could use this as an alternative means of communication and have done occasionally but many of our messages are too long for that platform.

We meet in the McCabe Centre in Bell Lane at 5.30 pm 6 times a year. The time is unsuitable for many villagers and we will be considering holding them occasionally at a later time. Our next meeting is on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> May at 5.30pm.

David Ralph, Chairman

### **STAPLEHURST SCOUT GROUP**

The big news from the Staplehurst Scout group is that this year marks the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the commencement of scouting in Staplehurst. We are commemorating this with a number of events during the year culminating in a fun day on Sept 21<sup>st</sup>.

The Staplehurst Scout group continues to offer unique opportunities for boys and girls between the ages of 6 of 14. The scout group does now also run an Explorer’s unit which covers ages 14 to 18 bringing our number of sections up to four including beavers, cubs, and scouts. 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. Easing the burden of regulation for adult helpers would be the most positive thing that could happen to help the scouting movement in general.

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 here but some of the highlights included night hikes (in all weathers!), climbing, and outdoor cooking and of course map reading.

Serving the community continues to be a large part of scouting and this year has seen a number of fund raising activities and other community projects. We are raising money through various fundraising activities to buy a community defibrillator and we hope to have this available by the summer. We are looking for suggestions on the best place to house the defibrillator, so all suggestions are welcome.

The scouts spent another night sleeping rough in cardboard boxes which raised significant sum for homeless charities. We have supported the Village 10k fun run and will do so again this year. We have also been trying to do our bit to create the new village nature park.

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 and from the Staplehurst Community Events Group

Our Scout Centre is as old as we are and in constant need of renovation and repair. Last year we made significant improvements to the centre which improved accessibility. We would like to refurbish our kitchen



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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 June 13<sup>th</sup> starting at 7:30pm in the Scout Hut in Nicolson Walk, off Crowther Close.

William Best

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

### **STAPLEHURST UNITED REFORMED CHURCH**

On 1 April 2017 we welcomed Revd Andrew Royal as our new minister. Andrew divides his time between Maidstone URC (75%) and Staplehurst (25%) but is often in the village and has taken his share of school assemblies. Our Sunday morning services are led by Andrew, by visiting preachers or by members of our own congregation. We continue to run the Noah's Ark parent and toddler group on Tuesday mornings, and Messy Church is usually on the afternoon of the first Saturday in the month, from October to July. We have held two coffee mornings and craft sales; one just before Christmas raised £800 for a development project at Lainey's Farm, in Staplehurst, and the other in March raised £600 for Maidstone Street Pastors.

### **STAPLEHURST WI**

It has been a very productive year for the WI with a membership of well over 50 ladies being at an all-time high.

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 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 August
- 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 Chilli growing, Safe Anaesthesia Worldwide, Pat Dogs, Oil Seed Rape, Almshouses and audience participation with "Call My Bluff". Our most memorable evening was a presentation by the U13 Jack Davidson Dancers who are achieving National recognition for their ballroom dancing.

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 at times. As the North Hall is also booked at the time of our meeting we may need 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?

There is no doubt that Staplehurst is a fast-growing village/town so it can only be assumed that other groups will also grow in size and demands.

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 YOUTH CLUB**

This year the Youth Club seems to have grown, with its popularity spanning a diverse group of young individuals. Our register totals some 50 members at present, coming from as far afield as Marden, Loose and Maidstone on occasions!

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 I often participate with a game of Pool myself, along with the odd Table Tennis match, which often gets quite competitive! We also have the usual games consoles for the members to use.

We seem to have three distinct groups that the Youth Club caters for... the younger members (11-13yrs), the older members (13-15yrs) and on occasions a rather large group from the settled traveller community. On an 'average' club evening we regularly have around 15 - 20 attendees and the odd occasion the numbers have hit 40.

We had our second outing to 'Hollywood Bowl' in Maidstone, just before the Easter break. This time we had around 15 members, all having great fun with bowling and food to end the evening.

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

The Trustees greatly thank Staplehurst Parish Council for their contribution to the club, as without such support this village amenity would likely close.

### **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.

Due to some very generous sponsorship and support we have been able to make significant improvements to both the course and the general facilities. These have included installing new tee mats, repairing and improving the toilet facilities, demolishing the old pavilion, re-establishing the driving range area, creating new leaf collection areas and clearing the course of both leaf and general debris during the Autumn.

These improvements would not have been possible without community involvement and our sincere thanks go to Maidstone Leisure Trust, Kent Playing Fields Association, David Williams, the Newlyn Trust, Jumeira Restaurant, The Kings Head and P&P Signs. Our special thanks 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.

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 07746623303.