

# *Village Update*

AUTUMN 2016

[www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk)

## **Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan**

# **REFERENDUM**

**Great news!** – The Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan (Staplehurst NP) passed its recent Examination and was recommended to proceed to Referendum.

Maidstone Borough Council subsequently agreed that the Referendum will take place at the Village Centre between 0700 hrs and 2200 hrs on **Thursday 3rd November 2016**.

The Referendum arrangements will be conducted by MBC and residents will have already received their polling cards.

The Staplehurst NP is the outcome of years of local discussion and consultation with residents.

It sets out a vision for the Parish until 2031 with a number of specific planning policies and objectives, all grouped under six policy themes.

If the Staplehurst NP is passed at this Referendum then it will legally have to be taken into account both by developers and MBC alike, during any future planning applications.

The final Staplehurst NP can be viewed at [www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk) and hard copies are also available for viewing at the Library and the Parish Office.

Please turn out and vote on the 3rd November 2016 as it is your Staplehurst NP.

# **VOTE**

## **Thursday 3rd November**

# **Staplehurst**

*Parish Council*

## PLANNING NOTES

The promoters of the three larger housing projects in Headcorn Road – Bovis and Redrow on the north side and Countryside Properties on the south side (the latter not in the draft MBC Local or Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plans) had submitted a proposal for remodelling the crossroads with the A229 at Cuckolds Corner to offset the congestion predicted to result from the new housing. The Parish Council considered the proposals at a meeting which was attended by many residents and concluded that they would be bad for pedestrians, would be unsafe and would probably not achieve the required improvement in traffic flow.

Planning and listed building applications (16/505966 and 16/505967) have been submitted for the Grade II listed Railway Tavern. The SPC Planning Committee considered that (while many residents would regret the loss of the pub) the plans for re-conversion to a house were sympathetic to its 17th century origins. However, the proposal to build a terrace of three houses on the car park was considered over-intensive and would add to the parking and road safety problems in the area. Inadequate attention had been given to surface water drainage. MBC has refused the outline application for 33 dwellings at The Grange, George Street (16/504201) agreeing with the Parish Council. Network Rail has obtained planning permission (16/505596) for a 206-space extension to the car park at Staplehurst Station. Commenting on the proposal, the SPC Planning Committee said it had no objection to enlarging the car park in principle, but noted that it would increase traffic on the A229 and that the plans as submitted were poorly integrated with the other station car parks and showed poor landscaping. These points were taken up by MBC, who in an informative have invited NetworkRail to reconsider the detailed layout. Some residents have received a leaflet giving details of a proposed housing development south of Marden Road, immediately west of the track leading to Aydhurst Farm. No planning application had been submitted to MBC at the time of writing. The Parish Council continues to liaise with Sainsbury's and their spokesperson said, "We remain interested in opening a new store in Staplehurst and are continuing to develop our plans for the area. In the meantime, we are looking at options to improve the appearance of the petrol station site. We will continue to keep the local community updated." Finally, the Planning Inspector will be holding a public hearing on 30th November into the appeal against MBC's refusal of planning permission for the photovoltaic solar energy array at Great Pagehurst Farm (13/1456).

## CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

Last year the Parish Council tried out some LED lights on our existing motifs. Although much cheaper to run, the results were not as interesting as we had hoped so this year we have purchased 24 new motifs which should provide a more festive display. The lights will be installed at the beginning of December focusing on the Parade and village centre areas rather than being thinly spread throughout the village. We hope you enjoy the display and look forward to any feedback you can offer after Christmas.

## ANTI-SOCIAL PARKING

Whilst we all know that there is very little parking space available in the village please try to avoid parking in front of the Post Office and on the pavement by Central Garage. Doing so even for a few minutes can force parents with buggies to use the road. More so, it makes it impossible for wheelchair users to pass at all. Please also make sure that your front bumper is not overhanging the path in the Health Centre car park for the same reason.

## POTHOLE BLITZ

Kent County Council's pothole blitz has been going on this summer and they still need us to help by reporting any potholes that may remain unattended, although these may already be in the planned workload. The quickest and easiest way to alert KCC is to report on-line at [www.kent.gov.uk/potholeblitz](http://www.kent.gov.uk/potholeblitz). We look forward to Staplehurst being pothole free!

## YOUTH PARISH COUNCIL

Following the last update, Cllr. Lain-Rose has had some feedback from young people interested in joining a Youth Parish Council. However, due to this being over the busy summer period, the date for young people to come forward is extended to 30th November 2016. Please email [cllrsamlain-rose@staplehurstparish.uk](mailto:cllrsamlain-rose@staplehurstparish.uk). We are looking forward to seeing younger people's valuable, positive and enthusiastic contributions. They can make a real difference to the village of Staplehurst.

## THE BIG CLEAN SEPT '16

After the success of previous years it was decided to hold a second event this year. The Parish Council would like to thank the 36 parishioners who attended this event. Over 50 bags of litter were collected from our streets and it was noted that a number of young families attended. We hope you saw an improvement and hope for a good turnout at the next Big Clean event which should be in March. Our thanks go to Councillors Joan Buller and Tom Burnham for arranging the event, the WI for providing refreshments and the Youth Club Committee for providing the location to stage our Big Clean HQ. Thank you to the Environmental team from MBC who provided equipment, insured us and collected the sacks of rubbish.



## PAUL BUTCHER

It was with great sadness that we heard of the death of Councillor Paul Butcher after a long illness.

It is rare in life to meet and work with someone who was one of the true pillars of the community they lived in; but Paul was one of these persons. It is sometimes easy to lose count of the many activities he carried out in support of Staplehurst. It was largely down to Paul that Staplehurst continues to have a thriving youth club and Paul was also a founder trustee of Jubilee Field and a significant contributor to its management. However, it was as a member of Staplehurst Parish Council and in particular his chairing of its Planning Committee that some of his most important work on behalf of the community was carried out. For many years he represented Staplehurst on the Maidstone Area Committee of the Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) and was a former Vice-Chairman of this Committee. He also sat as a Parish Representative on MBC's Audit, Governance and Standards Committee. Paul was a major contributor to the work of both Staplehurst Parish Council and KALC; he always had something interesting to contribute. Paul was always very kind and supportive to new members of the Council. He will be very much missed and our thoughts are with his family at this sad time.



## OUR COMMUNITY LAND

During the last few years the Parish Council has been approached by various land owners to see if it would like to be gifted several parcels of land. We recognise the importance of keeping areas green so the Parish Council has acquired ownership of three new areas of land.

Their locations are:-

**Marden Road** – The grass area at the junction of Thatcher Road running west for approximately 120 metres.

**High Street** – The grass area between the traffic lights from the junction with Marden Road, running south for approximately 145 metres to the east of the hedge.

This land contains the Horse Chestnut trees.

**Oliver Road** – A large area south of the new estate will be designated as a Nature Reserve. This will be the subject of regular updates by the group responsible for this new area. It also owns land at:

**Bell Lane** – A small parcel of land at the western end of Bell Lane. Whilst this is not a large area it is of value to the Parish as it handles the drainage of the footpath and an area of Bathurst Road/Offens Drive.

**Jubilee Field** – The Parish Council owns the whole site. It has a lease/purchase on the Youth Club land. It leases Surrenden Field from MBC

## DOG MESS

It seems our Updates always include a note about footpath fouling. In the eyes of the public this is getting worse. We suspect it is being noticed a lot more as it's becoming less publicly acceptable. This summer has seen a delay in emptying the specific dog waste bins, but



MBC dealt with the complaints. It was unacceptable that dog owners simply hung their waste bags on the side of the overflowing bins or placed them on the ground next to them. All responsible dog owners know they can take their dog's waste home and place it in their black wheelie bins. There is an MBC project underway to remove every dog waste bin and replace some with standard bins. The Parish Council will be liaising with MBC.

## COMMUNITY SPEED WATCH

Following the purchase of the new Suresight detection equipment volunteers have recorded far more speeding motorists. 52 miles per hour in Station Road resulted in an immediate warning letter from Kent Police, along with three others who were above 45mph within the same half hour period. Add to that the other 24 vehicles recorded at 35mph and above meant that the County Database had 28 more records.

New developments have seen Kent joining forces with Sussex Police so repeat offenders across either county will trigger police letters. This amalgamation of systems has allowed the training of new recruits to be firstly carried out on-line. The second part is roadside training in Staplehurst.

So if you agree that speeding in Staplehurst needs action, get trained and join us.



## PLAY SCHEME

The 2016 play scheme showed higher attendance numbers than the previous year. Afternoon sessions were run in week two in addition to the three weeks of mornings. Parental feedback has been very positive especially about the care shown by the staff and the excellent school venue. We would like to thank the Primary School for the use of their amazing facilities and the Play Place staff for delivering a safe and interesting scheme. We also thank MBC for their grant to help towards the scheme which was funded by the Parish Council and parental contributions.



