



STAPLEHURST

PARISH COUNCIL

VILLAGE
UPDATE
AUTUMN
2024

STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL UNVEILS NEW LOGO

INSPIRED BY VIKING DOOR AT ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

Staplehurst Parish Council is excited to announce the adoption of a new logo, a decision that has been long-awaited. In an effort to create a distinctive and representative emblem, the Council embarked on a journey to find a symbol that truly embodies the spirit and history of Staplehurst. After extensive consultations with residents and local artists, the inspiration for the logo was found in an unexpected yet deeply significant place: the Viking door at All Saints' Church.



The chosen design is derived from the 11th-century south door of All Saints' Church, which is renowned for its intricate depiction of the Norse legend of Ragnarök. This ancient myth, representing the Norse Day of Judgement, features prominently on the door, with a particular focus on the sunwheel motif. The sunwheel symbolizes metamorphosis and renewal, themes that resonate strongly with the Parish Council's vision for the community.

The Viking door itself is a historical treasure. Dating back to around 1100 AD, it tells the story of Ragnarök with remarkable detail, alongside Christian elements such as a small cross, indicating a fusion of pagan and Christian beliefs during the era.

The Parish Council has approved a black and white version of the logo to avoid any political interpretations, with an alternate white version for dark backgrounds. This decision underscores the Council's commitment to unity and inclusivity.

The selection of this logo not only pays homage to the rich historical tapestry of Staplehurst but also signifies a new chapter of growth and transformation for the community. It is a powerful reminder of our shared heritage and a symbol of resilience and renewal.

For those interested in exploring more about the Viking door and its significance, additional information can be found on the Great English Churches website and in the All Saints' Church guide. The Parish Council encourages residents to take pride in this unique emblem, which beautifully encapsulates the essence of Staplehurst.



www.staplehurst-pc.uk

Published by Staplehurst Parish Council, Community Centre, High Street, Staplehurst, Kent TN12 0BJ

Tel: 01580 891761 Email: clerk@staplehurst-pc.uk

3G MULTI-SPORT WORKING GROUP

After years of hard work by many people, a planning application has now been submitted to Maidstone Borough Council in relation to the Parish Council's hope of installing a Multi-Sport pitch at the Jubilee Field.

There is a certain procedure that we have to comply with in order to acquire significant funding from the Football Foundation, which the Parish Council has followed to the letter.

We have also asked the design consultants to provide diagrams of additional eco-friendly parking spaces at the facility. This will then go before the Football Foundation, and if all matters are approved, it is hoped that the pitch will be completed in 2025.

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Our last meeting was well attended by parishioners as we had a busy agenda.

There is a planning application for a solar farm which has caused some concern. Staplehurst Parish Council (SPC), we encourage renewable energy in general but would prefer to see solar panels on new builds or existing roofs where appropriate. The proposed site raised concerns due to ancient woodland, old tar pits, and a public right of way through the middle of it, as well as the potential harm to the countryside and views.

There was also an application from Fridays/Oasters to convert their chicken sheds to storage, and the senior football club's application for a clubhouse.

As a formal consultee, SPC gives recommendations to Maidstone Borough Councils Planning Officers. Anyone can upload their comments on Maidstone's planning portal. This is the best way to ensure MBC officers and councillors receive as much information as possible.

How do you find out about planning applications? Although SPC is under no obligation to do so, we try to post a notification to the neighbours of planning applications to enable parishioners to comment. You can also check MBC's planning portal (<https://maidstone.gov.uk/home/primary-services/planning-and-building/planning/search-for-a-planning-application>)

We always consider planning conditions that provide guidelines on what is considered acceptable and what isn't. MBC then considers the application at their planning meeting, where applicants and other interested parties can speak for three minutes about their views on the application. MBC also provides pre-planning advice for applicants.

CHURCHYARD LIAISON GROUP

We are fortunate in our village to still have an open burial ground. Many village churchyards are full, leading to closures.

In the 1970s, the then Rector and Staplehurst Parish Council made a formal agreement. The Parochial Church Council would provide land for a churchyard extension, manage burials, and receive a maintenance grant from the Parish Council for grass cutting, hedge trimming, and tree work.

Last year was challenging when our long-time churchyard caretaker, Graham Smith, retired. Under his care, a more environmentally friendly approach had been adopted, meaning that areas of wildflowers and spring bulbs were cut less frequently. After a thorough selection process, Living Forest was approved by the Parish Council as the new contractor, and they are continuing Graham's initiative. This has resulted in a beautiful display of primroses, primulas, and daffodils in spring, with the north side of the churchyard boasting stunning white oxeye daisies, now left uncut for a while by Living Forest, to maintain the natural beauty. Biodiversity is already increasing with the appearance of orchids and greater numbers of bees and butterflies in this area.

Currently, Living Forest maintains the churchyard monthly, keeping the extension and eastern boundary neat. The grass growth has been rapid this spring, prompting consideration to adjust the cutting schedule for optimal maintenance. As summer approaches, areas with wildflowers will be tended without affecting next year's blooms. It's important to note that contractors do not cut anything within individual grave plots.

Volunteers play a significant role in churchyard upkeep, and we are now addressing the way rubbish is cleared.

While adapting to these changes and a new contractor, we appreciate your understanding and patience. Achieving a tidy churchyard within budget may take time, but we are committed to working together towards this goal.

All Saints' Parochial Church Council



STAPLEHURST COMMUNITY NEIGHBOURHOOD ENHANCEMENT IMPROVEMENT GROUP (SCENIC)

We were all very pleased to be able to reopen the Youth Club Hut and welcome back the Men's Shed to their regular Thursday 10-12 slot. They are a welcoming group for ages 50–80+ if you fancy a chat and a cuppa!

The old telephone box on Church Green will soon have a new defibrillator installed, in addition to the ones at the Library, Kathy Lamb Centre, and Sobell Lodge. This new one will have a special setting for young people.

The village planters are looking lovely, courtesy of Growing Concern.

We are making progress with replacing the Surrenden Field pavilion with an improved building, in liaison with MBC.

The sun and rain combined have made everything grow wonderfully... including the weeds and hedges! If you are

out and about walking the footpath routes and find them overgrown, please report this to KCC. Some of them are currently a bit like hacking your way through the jungle, so you might want to take your secateurs! As nesting season ends, we can all finally cut our hedges back. If you receive a letter from us in September asking you to trim your hedge back to your boundary, it's in the interest of everyone, including pushchair and wheelchair users, being able to use the pavements safely.

And a big thank you to those who helped at the Parade Planters and made the area look lovely.

If you have an idea for making Staplehurst look even nicer, please email SPC and let us know.



JUBILEE FIELD WORKING GROUP

By the time you read this, we will have had our skate jam celebration. The skate park continues to be a popular spot for both young and older skateboarders. There will be some annual maintenance work carried out to ensure it's in good condition—hopefully, it won't stop the fun for too long!

The football season has ended, and there's barely enough time to do some maintenance work before it starts all over again! The youth group has lots of young players and seems to go from strength to strength. Training for the new season has already begun. The seniors are doing really well too, narrowly missing promotion in the league by one goal!

The Guides at the Kathie Lamb Centre are always keen to welcome new girls and have lots of fun activities planned for the coming months. If you know a young person who is looking to have fun, why not give them a call? And of course, we have walkers and runners who like to visit the field for recreational purposes.

The application for the 3G pitch has been submitted, and we await a decision from MBC.



ROAD SAFETY GROUP

Finally, the white lines have been repainted at the crossroads, although not at the Sainsbury's roundabout, but we are chasing this up.



We continue to lobby

Kent Highways for several items, with the main focus being improvements on the A229 near the Quarter/garage. We hope that Kent Highways will be surveying the area soon.

As Kent Highways are currently financially constrained, we have faced significant pushbacks on a number of requested improvements, such as extending double yellow lines on the High Street, single yellow lines elsewhere, and more. Unless Kent Highways considers a situation hazardous, they won't add it to the works list, no matter how hard we argue the case.

We have reached an impasse regarding the Hawkenbury Bridge, as it is Grade II listed and comprises three separate structures, each listed in their own right. Realistically, any work would require vast amounts of money, permission to remove and replace the bridge, as well as addressing land ownership and Environment Agency issues.

Please do park responsibly if parking on the road and remember not to park on pathways, blocking access for pushchairs and wheelchairs.

If you would like to train and become one of the Speedwatch volunteers, please contact us.

If you know of any road traffic accidents (RTAs), let us know via staplehurstroadinfo@gmail.com. Use kent.gov.uk to report potholes and SE Water's online report a leak for 'non-emergency' leaks.

Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan Review Group

The group of residents and parish councillors are continuing to work towards a successful completion of the review process with the excellent assistance of our consultant to make sure we cross the T's and dot the I's! The public consultation held July 6 gave further feedback to support the recent Residents Survey. The Footpath Group have been approached to give pictorial evidence on our footpaths, both conditions and views to preserve. The Staplehurst Society have also given valuable information on the history of Staplehurst.

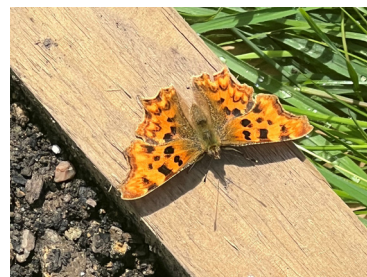
We are grateful to both for their input.

With the recent political changes both at Maidstone and Westminster OUR Neighbourhood Plan becomes even more important as the push for more housing grows.

GREENER STAPLEHURST GROUP

This summer seems to have snuck up on us, following what felt like an endlessly wet and chilly spring where nothing seemed to grow (except the weeds). The team have remained dedicated to progressing and maintaining key areas, enhancing the Jubilee entrance bed, the village signposts, and the planters outside the kebab shop and Spar. We have had many sessions at the parade trying to keep weeds at bay and finally called in extra help. We thank everyone across the village for supporting us in clearing the weeds ahead of adding a further layer of protection and woodchip to create a more sustainable surface.

As usual, we thank our team, village supporters, and the businesses who help us with plants, advice, and encouraging words when we're out making the village look better. We have already planned some key projects across the village and are starting to plan for spring bulbs! Enjoy the sun, and please volunteer to help us further our work!



STAPLEHURST SCOUT GROUP

The good news: the recovery in young people joining Scouting continues following lockdown. The bad news is that we have waiting lists for both Squirrels and Beavers due to the required ratio between leaders and children. There is nothing we dislike more than waiting lists! We need to solve this problem, and you can help. Quite simply, we need new leaders to come and join us. The best way to do this is to take up our four-week challenge. Don't let the word 'challenge' put you off. It's fun to do and requires no commitment. If you like it, carry on; if it's not for you, we understand.

You don't need to have a child in Scouting to do the four-week challenge or to join our new 'volunteer army', which we are recruiting to help with all sorts of necessary behind-the-scenes activities like repairs to the Scout centre, gardening, painting, equipment checks, webmaster duties, and cleaning. You name it, it's on our list.

As well as fulfilling a really packed programme of badges, meetings, events, and all the fun stuff we like to do at Scouts, we are also very proud of the community support we provide. This includes raising money for good causes. Our recent cake sale and walkathon raised £1,400 for Make-A-Wish. Added to the money we have also raised for Yellow, Porchlight, and the KSS Air Ambulance, we have raised over £2,000 in the last 18 months. Our thanks go to all the people of Staplehurst who supported us and donated, and to the great work done by our teams in organising these events.

Find out more and get in touch at our website www.staplehurstscouts.org.uk or on any of our section's Facebook pages.



Scout & Cub Summer Camp 2024



Squirrel & Beaver 'Badgefest'

Bill Best, Chair

LOCAL BROWNIE WINS NATIONAL GUIDING STAR AWARD



Huge congratulations to 10-year-old Eliana Farragher, who has been awarded the prestigious national Guiding Star award at her Brownie meeting in Staplehurst. One of only two awarded in the last two years, Eliana received the award for being an exceptional role model for others in her community.

Eliana was born with cerebral palsy and a visual impairment called nystagmus.

Nystagmus means that Eliana has no control over the movement of her eyes, which she describes as 'dancing eyes'. She uses hairstyles, coats, and voices to identify her friends and can even recognise which family member is entering the room by their footsteps.

Despite the many daily challenges she faces, Eliana is always happy and determined to give everything a go, including rock climbing with the Brownies.

Eliana has made two videos, which she has posted on YouTube, to explain her condition to others. She has been recognised by the awards committee as an exceptional role model, who has demonstrated huge resilience. Well done, Eliana!

STAPLEHURST EMERGENCY HELP TEAM

Staplehurst Emergency Help Team were proud to award their first recipient of the Duke of Cornwall Home Award.

Savannah Rhodes, 6, of 2nd Staplehurst Rainbows produced some outstanding pieces of work in order to complete the award, including learning what to do in an emergency, how to pack an essentials bag, and drawing a map to the village Welfare Centre. Congratulations to Savannah.

SEHT are currently signing local children up and supporting them through their age-appropriate level. Please email Chair@seht.org.uk for more information.



THE GP SURGERY

Staplehurst Surgery offers a number of services, including a self-service pod. The pod can be found just inside the surgery entrance, where you can have your blood pressure taken electronically and added to your patient records automatically. It's all self-service, easy to use, and requires no appointment.



Calling the surgery is the first point of contact for many, and we have new staff. If you have the technology, you can use the NHS app to order repeat prescriptions, find your test results, and view your medical record.

If you can't attend your appointment, please let the surgery know so it can be made available to others.

If you need a home visit or urgent appointment, please call before 10 am, and for test results, please call after 2 pm.

Summer Bank Holiday 26th August – the surgery will be closed.

Visit the website: <https://www.mhstaplehurst.co.uk/the-nhs-app>. Phone: 01580 891 220

STAPLEHURST PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP

SPPG now has a new Chair, Ani Martin and a new Secretary, Adele Sharp. Meetings have been held with the Practice Manager and the West Kent PPG Chairs. We now have a new Action Plan in place and meetings for patients, booked quarterly, for 2nd October this year and 15th January, 16th April, 9th July and 8th October 2025. These meetings will be held at the Health Centre at 7pm and are open to all patients at the practice. We hope to include talks and training sessions, so that meetings will be as informative as possible.

We set up a dedicated Facebook page: StaplehurstPPG, a contact email address: chairstaplehurstppg@gmail.com. For further information on Health Centre News, please visit link via the QR Code.



We will be widely advertising all events, so watch this space.

Our thanks go to Andrew Watson for his dedication in running this group for the last 5 years.

HEN & DUCKHURST ALLOTMENTS



The allotments waiting list in Staplehurst was introduced 22 years ago. So this has been a long, challenging task to re-introduce allotments to Staplehurst. Five years ago the developer agreed to a parish allotment site. Finalising the legal transfer has taken some time but the Hen and Duckhurst allotments are finally in use.

The eight allotments have all been allocated and the new tenants are settling in. Initially they are starting to tidy up the plots – see photos - and are looking forward to producing crops for next year. We still have a long waiting list! So if any land owner is interested in providing allotments, please let us know.

Before..



After...

EVENTS

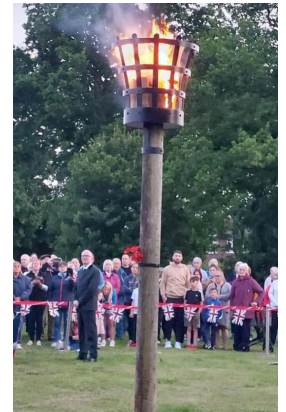
D-DAY COMMEMORATIONS

A big thank you to everyone who took part in the commemoration for the 80th anniversary of the D-Day Normandy landings on Surrenden Field, arranged by the Staplehurst Community Events Group.

The event was a truly cross-community gathering with representatives from the churches, the Royal British Legion, and parishioners. There were speeches by local historians and members of the churches, along with popular 1940s-related songs led by the Staplehurst Ladies Choir. A national commemoration speech was read out by Councillor Riordan as Chair of the Parish Council, and our new village beacon was lit.

It was lovely to see the event well attended and enjoyed by all. Hopefully, we will see each other again at next year's 2025 VE Day commemoration event.

Many thanks go out to the Staplehurst Community Events Group for their dedication in organising this historic event. If you would like to volunteer to help run SCEG, contact: SCEG@groups.outlook.com



VOLUNTEERING OPTIONS

Throughout every community, much work is done by various groups of volunteers. Staplehurst is no different, and the Parish Council receives regular reports from various organisations that need help to manage different activities, all of which are a huge benefit to our community.

While our volunteer day was a huge success due to the hard-working volunteers, we only had a total of 20 people who came to support us. In a village of approximately 7,000 people, it would be wonderful if more people turned up for these types of activities, enabling us to complete many more important local projects.

Many other community groups, such as the Staplehurst Community Events Group, Scouts, Guides, and various sports groups, put a lot of time and effort into creating activities for our community.

Once we manage to get the Youth Club up and running, we will also need volunteers to assist.

Please feel free to get involved and help improve our community.



Scan these QR codes to contact these organisations that are currently looking for volunteers

VOLUNTEER DAY



The Parish Council have unfortunately been without the help of the Community Payback Team for quite a period of time due to staff shortages. We are in the process of lobbying our new MP to see if we can get a team back as soon as possible.

We therefore requested help from our residents for a Volunteer Day, to carry out some necessary work to keep our village looking nice.



Twenty residents, of various ages, including children, members of the Greener Staplehurst Group, and Councillors attended. A

major tidy-up of the parade was carried out, including weeding, hedge trimming, sweeping, and painting bollards. We also laid new weed suppressant and installed fresh bark on the large planters.

This was a huge amount of work, and our appreciation goes out to everyone involved.



IN THE SPOTLIGHT:

NOTABLE FIGURES OF STAPLEHURST



We are introducing a new section where we will interview individuals in Staplehurst who are significant and highly relevant to the everyday life of our village. These are people who contribute greatly to our community, making it the vibrant place it is.

We are excited to kick off this section with an interview with **Linda Savage**. Her life story is fascinating and is sure to surprise many readers. Linda received the Parish Council Annual Merit Award this year for her exceptional dedication. We hope you enjoy learning about the remarkable people who make Staplehurst special.

Linda moved to Staplehurst in 1967 when she married David and fondly remembers how different the village was then, with a thriving array of shops, including three post offices! She had always wanted to train as a nanny, but instead, her love of children and determination to help others led her down a different path. For many years, she fostered disadvantaged children, both long and short term. At the same time, she became a voluntary classroom assistant at Staplehurst School, as well as being a member of the school's PTA. When Kathie Lamb, the District Commissioner for the Girl Guides, suggested that Linda should become the new Guide Leader in Staplehurst, she agreed wholeheartedly and ultimately rose to the rank of Assistant District Commissioner and trainer. Under her leadership, the Guides had many successes, including winning football trophies and a window dressing competition, from which they were disqualified for being considered too good. Children remained at the heart of every activity Linda became involved in. She became a sponsor for the charity ActionAid, providing support for children living in poverty in Bolivia, Romania, Malawi, and many other countries.

In 1986, she took up shotgun target shooting and rapidly became an excellent shot. By the early 90s, Linda was in the British team, travelling to compete all over the world, ultimately winning the world championship in Milan. Her last competition was in 2005, when she won a silver medal.

Linda and David were invited to the Queen's 40th Jubilee celebrations at Buckingham Palace, where she rubbed shoulders with sporting legends, including the 1966 England Football team. Her lasting memory of the day was Prince Philip telling rather risqué jokes!

In 2003, Linda acquired her first pony, called Marmite, now retired and aged 36 years old. Many more ponies followed, resulting in a plethora of rosettes and medals.

It was after watching a video clip of a badly injured dog in a ditch in Romania in 2016 that Linda embarked on yet another challenge. Once the dog had been put back together by a vet, she adopted him, followed by more rescues, and now she and David have four dogs at home. At the same time, Linda started filling charity shoeboxes for the same dog charity. Linda is so grateful for the immense support from Staplehurst residents, who have provided literally thousands of items for the boxes. She also collected shoes, coats, and jumpers to send out as well. Linda said that people have been absolutely amazing—she only has to ask, and the items are left on her doorstep.

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS FROM THE PAST (5)

We are revisiting a section last published in our Summer 2022 issue. As a summary, Tom Burham has kindly combed through our archives and searched the Parish Council minutes for noteworthy items, whether they are still relevant today, surprising, or of historical interest. Reviewing our archives is a challenging task, as all notes were handwritten and can be difficult to decipher. It's unlikely the original authors expected their words to be republished almost a century later.

In this sixth issue, we again encounter problems with the postal service—issues that seem to have been recurrent at the time and highlight how much the world has changed. There are also mentions of the sewage system. In our next issue, we will explore more interesting references to this, including some areas that many of you will recognise.

17th December 1926 – Agreed that the attention of the County Council be called to the state of the foot paths in the village.

A letter was read from the Maidstone Postmaster stated that letters posted in Maidstone before 10.30 p.m. (Monday to Friday) and 9.30 p.m. on Sundays are delivered at Staplehurst by the first delivery the next day.

8th April 1927 – A letter was read complaining of the inconvenience caused to pedestrians by coming in contact with the posts erected to protect the foot path in Horns Lodge Lane after dark. Agreed that the Clerk be empowered to get them whitewashed.

27th May 1927 – The Volunteer Fire Brigade having asked for new hose and fittings submitted a sample of hose which Messrs Merryweather stated they would supply by four 60 foot lengths complete with couplings as described in their estimate. Agreed that the Fire Brigade be asked to fix a suitable time for the Council to view the hose they now have.

30th September 1927 – Agreed that the Clerk write to the Postmaster General and to the Postmaster at Tonbridge and ask that the letters posted at 9 p.m. be despatched the same evening to Tonbridge or London.

16th December 1927 – The reply from the Postmaster General to the letter from the Council asking for a later despatch of letters than the present viz. 6.30 be arranged suggesting about 9 p.m. was read but he regretted that the wishes of the Council could not be complied with as the number of letters likely to be posted would not justify the extra expense. Agreed that the Clerk write again and ask that the matter might be re-considered as it was very inconvenient to the inhabitants of Staplehurst to have to post their letters so early in the evening.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Village Litter Pick - 26th October 2024 10am, meet at Staplehurst Youth Club

Remembrance Day Parade - Sunday 10th November 2024 muster at 9am

PARISH COUNCIL INFORMATION

Parish Council meetings - 7.30pm at the Infant Hall - Staplehurst Primary School

16th September 2024, 7th October 2024, 28th October 2024 and 18th November 2024

Clerk - Richard Griffiths

clerk@staplehurst-pc.uk

Deputy Clerk / RFO - Mrs Deborah Jenkins

deputyclerk@staplehurst-pc.uk

Parish Support Officer - Mrs Jean Terry

admin@staplehurst-pc.uk

Caretaker - Paul Nyahwa

Address: Parish Council Office, Community Centre, High Street, Staplehurst TN12 0BJ

Office opening hours: 9.00 - 13.00 Monday to Thursday

Phone: 01580 891761

For more information visit **Web:** www.staplehurst-pc.uk



Parish Council
Website



Facebook
Staplehurst Parish Council



Twitter
@staplehurstpar2



Instagram
@Staplehurstpc