**FUTURE OF THE REC**

The consultation on the future of the Recreation Ground on Southlands Avenue is going incredibly well with many people across Standish considering, debating and questioning what the community does with this valuable piece of land in the heart of the village.

A few of our members have asked for the ‘Covenant’ on The Rec to be sent to other members to read, and this is attached.

In the title absolute, you can see that Wigan Council is the owner and that the field has been declared as an Asset of Community Value, which gives it limited protection if there were plans to sell it off, after Standish Voice submitted a bid to do this in 2016. However, this protection is only limited (you can read about ACVs here: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asset_of_community_value>).

On the charges register you can see the land was given to the council in 1923 for the purpose of a “children’s playground”.

Before we undertook our consultation, Wigan Council told us all the options outlined legally complied with the Covenant.

We presume this is because as it is currently a full-size football pitch primarily for use by adult teams, the creation of a park, with facilities for children, would only enhance the wishes of the gift.

Also, we presume that the provision of a car park to serve any new park, and also the village centre and medical centre, does not breach this trust. A car park attached to a children’s playground/park is a normal situation, as at Ashfield. When the land was gifted in 1923, there was obviously no concept of the amount of cars in society almost 100 years later.

**STANDISH INDEPENDENTS LEAFLET**

You may have seen social media messages, articles and a leaflet from the Fairhurst councillors about the consultation.

We are a non-political organisation with people from across the political spectrum involved. If a committee member is a member of any political party, this has to be declared to our chair, Gill Foster. Our committee includes the village’s Rector. The Working Group, which sits below the committee, includes Conservative councillor Ray Whittingham and past candidates of both Labour and UKIP. The only thing we have in common is a love of Standish and a desire to make it a better place to live and work in.

We will not be responding publicly to the very hurtful and vicious untruths from the Fairhurst councillors about Standish Voice during The Rec consultation, as we do not wish to prejudice the outcome of it.

However, I do think it is necessary to challenge the statements made in their leaflet, which is attached and may have been delivered to you.

We do not have a ‘plan’ to turn The Rec into a car park. This is a policy option. Even if this option is carried forward this only facilitates an actual proposal to come after Standish Neighbourhood Plan is adopted.

The leaflet states: “it has come out that Standish Voice have been meeting with the council” about this. We have met with the council on regular occasions on numerous matters since we established in 2014. We need to work closely with the council on Standish Neighbourhood Plan.

We work with the council to get the best for Standish, but will stand up to and criticise the council where necessary. However, we believe to get the best for Standish, sometimes this criticism should not be made public.

The leaflet states the option is for 80 spaces. It is not, it is UP TO 80 spaces.

We are not “telling people how to vote”. We are recommending option 1 – to turn The Rec into a park with a small car park; but would be happy to take forward option 2  – to turn The Rec into a park only; but do not recommend option 3 – to leave it as it is.

We have said all along that we want people to read the full facts and then vote according to their view.

We do not say the “area will be lost to housing” if it is left as it is. The Fairhurst councillors are campaigning to leave The Rec as it is, and that is their right. However, Standish Neighbourhood Plan will shape the village until 2030 and we believe it is irresponsible of us not to consider what could happen to this land – which has not been used by organised sports clubs for its primary purpose of a full-size football pitch – during this time and believe it COULD be sold off.

Our leaflet with the full facts has been distributed to most of Standish, but remaining households will receive one in the coming days.

Whatever your view, it is important to vote. The vote, together with email and paper submissions will inform the draft policy on The Rec and parking in Standish Neighbourhood Plan.

To take part in the vote, follow this link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/2PVWH8J>

You can see information about our parking campaign and survey here:

<http://www.standishvoice.co.uk/information/parking-campaign/>

**STANDISH CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS**

Standish Voice has asked for all councillors and representatives of organisations across the village to come together to find a way to make our Christmas decorations better for this Christmas.

There was disappointment last December – not least among the hard-working volunteers who made the first Standish Christmas Market such a huge success – that the Christmas tree and lights, especially with the fencing around it, did not do our village proud.

The new Christmas decorations team will also decide when the trees on the front of the shops should go up in relation to the Union flags installed for Remembrance Sunday.

There also might be a possibility of lighting everything on Standish Christmas Market day, which this year is Saturday, December 2.

We have invited the three Standish-with-Langtree councillors: Coun Debbie Fairhurst, Coun George Fairhurst and Coun Ray Whittingham, along with leaders of non-political organisations in Standish to join the decorations team. They are Graham Wilcock, Chairman, Standish Community Forum; Chris Velone, Chairman Royal British Legion Standish branch; Tony Jones, Chairman Standish In Bloom/Standish Incredible Edible and also Phil Hawkins, representing Standish traders. Standish Voice committee member Ron Wade, who is also on the Standish Christmas Markets committee will co-ordinate the setting up of the group.

We have asked everyone to respond to a letter from Gill Foster, Standish Voice chair, by March 31. Ron will arrange and chair the first meeting, during which a chairman and name for the team will be chosen.

**FASHION SHOW**

On Friday, 16th June, Standish Voice will be holding a Fashion Show at Standish Unity Club, which will be even bigger and better than the two successful ones last year.

Sha Li be Jewellery and The Body Shop at Home will be with us alongside all the discounted high street brand outfits that will be for sale. There will also be cakes provided by the ladies of Standish WI.

Tickets are £4 each and available from The Hoot (Wednesday to Sunday), Mrs Lyon’s Tea Room (Tuesday to Sunday), the Friends of Standish Library, or by replying to this email. All money raised will be going to fund this year's Standish Christmas Market.

The Second Standish Whisky Tasting Night, held at the Unity Club on Friday, raised £70 for the fund. Thanks to Paul Dandy of Standish-based Miniature Whisky Company for hosting that.

Please remember our meetings are on the third Tuesday of the month at Standish Unity Club, in Cross Street, at 7.45pm. The public is welcome to attend.

You can also follow us on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/StandishVoice/>

Best wishes,

Paul Ogden

Vice chair, Standish Voice