Dear Standish Voice member,

Here is our newsletter for March.

**FUTURE OF THE REC**

Today, Standish Voice begins a major consultation about the future of The Rec playing field, on Southlands Avenue.

We want people to give their views on what should happen to this valuable public space and to vote in an online poll. This poll and people’s comments will dictate Standish Voice’s policy for The Rec in Standish Neighbourhood Plan.

The Rec has not been used by organised sports clubs for several years as it is not fit for purpose and Standish Voice believes it should be turned into a village park and small car park.

Our Neighbourhood Plan consultation survey showed that 73% of people strongly agreed or agreed there should be a park in Standish centre.

We believe The Rec is an ideal space to turn into a park for nearby residents, shoppers and visitors to Standish.

We have been working with Wigan Council to solve the car parking situation in Standish for a number of months since the council agreed to pay for a new public car park in the centre of the village. The council agreed to this after our petition gathered 1,300 names in few weeks highlighting the desperate need for more parking.

Our car parking sub-group, made up of committee members of Standish Voice, Wigan Council officers and a representative of Standish’s shops and businesses, discussed various sites and concluded the best, most realistic site for a car park was a small part of The Rec, nearest to the village centre.

This would be a long-stay, time-unlimited car park with up to 80 spaces which would be free of charge. It would be close to shops and businesses, the medical centre (which has virtually no public parking) and also ease parking problems at Wood Fold School. Wigan Council has said the impact of such a car park on the junction of Green Lane and School Lane would be ‘minimal’.

This would be coupled with improving Quakers Place car park and adding time limits to a number of parking places in the heart of the village to help free up spaces for everyone.

Drivers leaving their cars for more than a couple of hours could use The Rec, leaving parking spaces in other areas free for short visits. It would help ease the parking problem on residential streets, including Collingwood Street and Church Street.

If the car park proposal is not popular, we would be happy to just have a policy of turning the playing field into a village park only.

However, we do not recommend leaving the playing field as it is. There are numerous examples across the country of playing fields being turned into housing developments and we are worried this might happen to The Rec over the lifetime of our Neighbourhood Plan (up to 2030).

Attached is a Question and Answer sheet about the issue and a copy of the leaflet about it which will be delivered to all homes in Standish and be available in shops and the library. People can leave their views on paper at the library and also vote on the computers there.

If you are able to help us distribute the leaflet door-to-door please reply to this email.

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/>

We believe this will be the only realistic chance for a public car park in Standish in the foreseeable future and Wigan Council is committed to paying for it. However, if it is not popular with the community, we would be happy to take forward the proposal to turn The Rec into a park only.

**STANDISH CHRISTMAS MARKET**

We will be holding another Standish Christmas Market again this year, on Saturday, December 2.

Consultation with residents and Standish businesses overwhelmingly wanted it to return and we want to make the Market bigger and better.

Wigan Council and St Wilfrid’s Church are happy for it to proceed and, like last year, the Friends of Standish Library will be helping us to organise the event.

We have taken on board everyone’s comments and suggestions so we are hoping the day will be even more festive and a tremendous celebration for the whole community.

**THE LINE**

Dates for the transformation of The Line into a cycleway and footpath to the centre of Standish have been finalised.

Wigan council will begin the work at the start of July and plans to have the work done by the end of September - over the school summer holiday to minimise disruption for children going to and from Standish High School.

The mile-long route, from School Lane to Brookfield Road, off Old Pepper Lane, will be upgraded to provide a 3m-wide all-purpose route for cyclists, walkers and horse riders.

A planning application was passed last year and the route - the former mineral rail line - is in the process of legally being made a bridleway.

It will be a great way for children to go to and from Standish High, avoiding busy Preston Road, and for the residents hundreds of new homes being built on estates off Robin Hill and Almond Brook to reach Standish centre without having to use their car.

For more information, click below:

<https://www.wigan.gov.uk/Resident/Parking-Roads-Travel/Travel/Standish-Cycling.aspx>

**PARISH HALL DEFIBRILLATOR**

We were happy to help Standish First Aid champion Debbie Parkinson to use funds from the Brighter Borough scheme, agreed through Coun Ray Whittingham, to pay for a defibrillator in St Wilfrid’s Parish Hall recently.

Standish Voice applied for the money, through Ray, and Debbie organised the supply and fitting of the equipment.

Both Debbie and Ray are members of Standish Voice’s Working Group, which helps the main committee.

**THE BEECHES**

We are still monitoring the situation regarding The Beeches hotel and restaurant, which closed in January.

The building is not listed but is on a list of important local buildings compiled by Wigan Council.

We are in touch with the council over the future of the building and if there are suggestions the building will be altered or demolished, we will move quickly to apply for full listing status to protect it.

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