**STANDISH VOICE AGM 2016 - VICE CHAIR’S REPORT**

This past year for Standish Voice has not been all about our Neighbourhood Plan and housing developments.

We successfully campaigned to have more public parking in Standish, are helping the Save The Crown campaigners to stop one of Standish’s oldest pubs being demolished, pushed for Standish Cycleway to transform The Line into a multi-use route into Standish, held popular fundraising evenings and are about to have our first big, community event with Standish Christmas Market on December 3.

We ran the parking campaign to coincide with Wigan Council’s Deal In Action which came to Standish in February. Our petition gathered 1,300 names in just a few weeks and our comprehensive survey of the village centre concluded that ideally there should an extra 130 public spaces.

Wigan Council agreed a 12-point plan to improve parking, including provision of a new public car park paid for by them. Over the subsequent months, we have been holding regular meetings with the council, discussing various sites across Standish centre for a new car park and how existing ones can be improved. We hope to include proposals for these in our Neighbourhood Plan soon.

We asked the council to bring forward improvements to The Line to create Standish Cycleway. This project was announced last February with a planning application approved in summer and an order to make the route a bridleway is now out for consultation. Instead of completing the £150,000 project piecemeal, the whole project will be carried out next summer, all being well.

The closure of The Crown in January was a blow to the community of Bradley and everyone who appreciates pubs as important buildings within our community. We are helping the Save The Crown campaign to stop the pub being demolished and replace it with houses. The campaign has successfully held off this planning application for at least six months longer than normal and we are still hopeful the pub can be saved. Opposition is growing, a petition has amost 900 names and a public meeting is being held here on Saturday afternoon as part of a TV documentary about the campaign. We have also formulated a policy in our Neighbourhood Plan to protect our remaining pubs.

Standish Voice also helped the campaigns to stop rail services being diminished on the Southport to Manchester line and the re-opening of the A&E in Chorley, giving its views on the Greater Manchester transport plan and presented its views to Wigan Council on various planning matters.

No-one should under-estimate the silent victory Standish has achieved in having none of its green belt land earmarked for even more housing in the recent Greater Manchester Spatial Framework, which recommends building 225,000 homes before 2035. This victory is even bigger as one site on Rectory Lane is being put back into green belt, one of only three in the whole of Greater Manchester. We will be ready to defend this proposal robustly.

We continue to publicise what we do, with many articles and comments in the Wigan Observer. Our Facebook site has 3,100 followers who interact with our daily posts of news, information and events as well as sharing what other groups are also doing in Standish. Our publicity and ticket sales for Standish Community Fireworks Night at the cricket club helped to sell hundreds of tickets for the event.

We have 550 followers on Twitter and also send out a monthly newsletter to our membership, which is approaching 600 people.

Our first major event will be Standish Christmas Market on December 3, with the help of The Friends of Standish Library, the Women’s Institute and St Wilfrid’s Church.

There has been a huge amount of organisation needed for the event and our links with Wigan Council, which we have been to improving over the year, have served us well.

Can I thank everyone on the Standish Voice committee and everyone on the Christmas Markets committee for their hard work over the year in trying to make Standish a better place in which to live and work.

Especially, I’d like to thank Gill for her leadership and good counsel over the past 12 months, especially in the areas of liaising with the organisations and consultants which we need to complete our Neighbourhood Plan – not least securing the technical help and thousands of pounds in grant money which is vital to take the plan forward.