Dear Standish Voice member

Here is our newsletter for February.

A few weeks ago, a new planning application was submitted for the demolished half of Bradley Trading estate.

The history of this application for around 150 houses goes back to the spring of 2014, before Standish Voice was established, when initial planning permission was given by Wigan Council for housing on this land.

This should not have happened. The trading estate was, and still is, playing a vital role in giving employment in Standish and supporting other businesses and shops in the village. We believe it was wrong to allow half of this employment area to be given over to housing, forcing out a number of successful businesses.

However, as permission was granted, the buildings there have now been demolished, the area levelled, and the site classed as ‘brownfield’ (previously developed) land, it is highly unlikely housing can be prevented there, especially with the current government planning rules.

However, the time limit on this permission has now run out and further planning applications for the site have come in.

The site is now owned by the government agency, Homes England, which wants to build 163 homes on the site, off Bradley Lane.
The plan states: “This application represents an update to the previous proposal, with the following changes:
• Removal of proposed retail unit and former brewery and replacement with 15 additional dwellings,
• No secondary access from Bradley Close and a minor reorganisation of dwellings to take access from the main access point,
• Emergency access to be taken from Bradley Lane instead of Bradley Close.”
Standish Voice has objected to the plans because too many homes have already been passed for Standish and the mix of homes proposed does not reflect the needs of Standish people – who need more older people’s and affordable accommodation.

The mix of homes planned is 2-bedroom 15%, 3-bedroom 51%, 4-bedroom 34%.

The housing report for Standish Neighbourhood Plan shows that we do not need any more family housing – more than enough has been built or is due to be constructed. The Housing Needs Survey shows that accommodation for older people is especially needed. This accommodation would also help free up larger homes for families and so reduce the need for more green spaces to be taken for housing.
We are disappointed that a government agency - which will eventually sell the site to a housing developer - has not reflected the needs of Standish people in this application and we will be seeking a meeting with them to express this and hopefully persuade them to increase the number of affordable and older people’s homes.
You can see all the details on the plan by following this link: https://apps.wigan.gov.uk/PlanApps/PlanAppsDetails.asp?passAppNo=A/17/85026/OUTMAJ

In relation to the general housebuilding taking place across Standish, we have received a number of complaints from residents over the past several weeks about the awful state of roads in relation to mud.

This is especially a problem on Rectory Lane, Pepper Lane and Grove Lane as the developers have not been properly clearing up mud left by the vehicles leaving their sites. This is not only unsightly, it is potentially dangerous.

The proper cleaning of roads is a condition of their planning permission and last month we wrote to the planning enforcement team at Wigan Council to ask them to urgently look into this and ensure this issue is resolved as soon as possible, preferably by having proper wheelwashing facilities on their sites, rather than by using road sweeper vehicles, which seem only to push the mud on to pavements.

In recent weeks, we have held a number of meetings with Wigan Council’s planning department to discuss the submissions which were sent to us during the consultation on Standish Neighbourhood Plan.

As you can imagine, a number of housing development companies have objected to the housing policies we have set out, designed to give our community a greater say in the amount and type of housing that comes to Standish in the future.

These companies have employed professional planning agents to oppose many of the policies but we believe we have strong arguments and the evidence to show that these housing policies are in the best interests of our community and do not prevent sustainable development, where and when this is appropriate, which is in line with government rules.

However, we have to make sure our evidence and arguments are robust enough to ensure a government planning inspector – who will scrutinise the plan – is happy that it meets these government rules.

We are trying to process the submissions to the plan and our response to them as quickly as possible so that the plan progresses swiftly.

Therefore, due to this and the fact that we have no urgent business to discuss with members, we will not be holding our usual monthly meeting this coming Tuesday. We will be having a committee meeting instead to resolve a number of issues in relation to the Neighbourhood Plan.

The next monthly meeting will be held at 7.45pm on Tuesday, March 20, at our new venue of the Pavilion, at Standish High School.

Best wishes

Standish Voice Committee