Dear Standish Voice member

We hope you are enjoying the summer. Here is our newsletter with some updates on our activities and issues Standish Voice has been involved in recently.

**STANDISH LEISURE CENTRE**

Work is set to begin on Standish’s leisure centre in the next couple of weeks.
The new centre – which will be a £2m project on the old golf course on Rectory Lane – is due to take 12 to 18 months to build.

The building will include a gym with around 40 training stations, a fitness/dance studio, changing rooms, two outside 3G football pitches (on five-a-side, one seven-a-side), a multi-use games area and a MUGA pitch for tennis and netball. There will also be 11 council-run allotments near the development and a 93-space car park.

When it is open it will be run by Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles, the leisure wing of Wigan Council, with charges similar to other council-run facilities. There will be gym memberships available and you will also be able to pay as you go. The centre is being built by Persimmon Homes and Morris Homes as part of the planning obligations for their housing schemes on Rectory Lane.

The specification for the centre was finalised as part of the planning permission for the site, agreed before Standish Voice was formed in 2014, but we asked early on why a swimming pool was not included in the plans. The council said, as well as the significant ongoing cost of maintaining a pool, that the Standish area was well served, with pools at Britannia Hotel, Kilhey Court, Wrightington Country Club, Swimsmart and St Wilfrid’s Primary School.

Standish Voice has been liaising with IHS on the project for several months to try to get it started, with legal aspects delaying the beginning of the build. Persimmon now says work on the centre will begin this month. We believe it is great news that work on Standish Leisure Centre will finally begin.

This looks like a high-quality facility for the people of Standish and we are sure it will be very popular. We hope the project can now progress quickly and open up as soon as possible.

We hope the car park at the facility will be open for use by parents and grandparents dropping off and picking up children at St Wilfrid’s Primary School next door, which should help ease the severe parking problems at the school.

The leisure centre is part of the infrastructure we need in Standish to mitigate the large increase in population we will experience over the coming decade – but much more needs to be done.

**PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

**BLOOR HOMES:** The housebuilder’s application to increase the number of houses on its site off Pepper Lane and Robin Hill was passed by Wigan Council despite objections by Standish Voice and verbal opposition at the planning committee by Standish councillor Adam Marsh. No new land will be taken by the new homes as the area which already had planning permission will now contain smaller homes to accommodate the increase.

**THE BEECHES:** A plan to refurbish and extend The Beeches into a new Albert’s restaurant and hospitality venue was also approved by Wigan’s planning committee. Standish Voice was broadly supportive of the plan but asked that nearby residents should be considered regarding potential noise and the plans should be also referred to the council’s conservation officer for his views. A condition was placed on the planning approval that outside hospitality areas at the restaurant must close at 10pm each night to prevent excessive noise.

**LANGHAM ROAD:** Earlier this year, Wainhomes won planning permission for 80 homes off Langham Road, in Standish. The developer has now submitted detailed plans for the site, which also needs approval. Standish Voice has objected to the mix of housing planned, saying many more homes for older people and/or affordable homes should be included.

**GREATER MANCHESTER SPATIAL FRAMEWORK**

The draft blueprint for development across Greater Manchester until 2015 – the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework – has been delayed until the autumn so that new projected population figures for the conurbation can be factored in to the document.

Those figures show a lower projected amount of population increase in many areas, especially Wigan, which will mean a reduced number of homes will need to be built over the next 20 years.

Over the past 18 months we have been lobbying the council to refuse changes to Standish’s Green Belt land in the document to prevent yet more greenfield land being taken for development. We are hopeful that these new figures will help our case in preventing building on Green Belt land in the village. We will keep you posted on this.

**THE LINE**

The Line project is on schedule to finish by the end of next week. The hard surface is laid and a top layer of Fibredec will be added as the final stage over the next few days.

We have had reports that a couple of motorcycles (and at one point a car!) have driven on it. Measures to prevent cars from getting on The Line were in the project plan but there will not be the ability to stop motorcycles as horses and bicycles can use the route. However, law enforcement measures will be used to stop this anti-social activity.

The next stage in the project is to lay a Fibredec surface over the tarmac layer, which will mean diversions for the public for around five days. Bins are being put in place along the route where they can be emptied and lighting and signage is also in the process of being installed.

We have asked Wigan Council if Incredible Edible fruit bush planting can go along parts of the route and have asked if Greater Manchester cycling ambassador Chris Boardman can officially open it in due course.

It seems a long time since 2015 when we began to champion this project and its launch with Wigan Council in February 2016, but we are getting some very positive comments from the community on it now it is almost complete. Let’s hope there are no more delays and it is finished well in time for children to return to school.

**RECTORY FARM DEVELOPMENT**

Last year, a government planning inspector overturned Wigan Council’s opposition to the building of around 130 homes at Rectory Farm, on Rectory Lane.

This is a new site for housebuilding on the left of the lane coming leaving Standish centre just before the railway bridge.

We were aware there was a covenant on this land to prevent housebuilding on it, placed at some time in the 1990s by the diocese. This covenant would need to be discharged before any work could take place.

Councillor Ray Whittingham and Standish Voice gave their formal objections to the covenant being discharged to the legal department of the HM Land Registry. However, covenants are easily disregarded and, despite our arguments against it, the Land Registry decided that the covenant should be removed.

Before building can begin, a detailed planning application must be lodged for this site. We have also been told that the council has placed a number of tree protection orders on trees and hedgerows fronting this site on Rectory Lane.

**STANDISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

The next stage of Standish Neighbourhood Plan is for it to be sent out for public consultation by Wigan Council. We hope this will be done in early September.

Meanwhile, we have been checking all the necessary information is correctly presented and that all the policies are appropriately phrased so that they meet national planning policy and stand the best chance of being accepted by a national planning examiner who will look at the plan ahead of the referendum.

**THE CROWN**

We have been helping the Save The Crown group, which still working hard to try to secure the future of the closed Crown pub, in Worthington.

The original sale, announced at the end of last year, seems to have fallen through, which is hugely disappointing for everyone who wants this building to remain, rather than it be knocked down for yet more housing.

However, The Crown is again being actively marketed and we hope it will be bought as a going concern and re-opened as a pub or restaurant.

We do not hold a monthly Standish Voice meeting in August, so our next meeting will be on September 18. Our minutes and past newsletters can be found on our website and we would like to remind you that you can unsubscribe to our monthly emails at any time by replying to this email.

Best wishes,

**STANDISH VOICE COMMITTEE**