

STANDISH VOICE – VICE CHAIR'S ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19

Standish Voice has been involved in a number of other initiatives over the past year apart from the Neighbourhood Plan.

When we were first established as a Neighbourhood Forum in 2015, Wigan Council asked us for a 'quick win' project that they could consider funding.

We chose the refurbishment of The Line as one priority, using funds from the housebuilders to pay for it, so that new residents of the estates off Robin Hill and Almond Brook Road would be encouraged to use it rather than driving into the village centre. It could also be used for school children to have a safe journey to and from Standish High without having to walk along Preston Road.

After a number of delays due to legal problems, the contract to transform The Line was completed on time in late summer and has proved to be a well-used asset for the village.

Since our last AGM, which was held in November 2017, Standish Voice has held two Christmas Markets – both very successful – with the help of around 70 volunteers on the day.

On both occasions, around 5,000 people visited the Market and thousands of pounds were raised by good causes. I need to thank the outgoing Standish Voice Events Lead Jaime Jones, whose project management skills ensured both events went smoothly and she leaves the committee with our thanks for putting the organisation of the now annual event on a sound footing.

I'd also like to thank Kathy Robertson, who has been integral to the success of the Market for the past few years and she will assume the role of chair of the Standish Christmas Market committee.

I'd also like to thank Standish Voice committee member Diane Gore for co-ordinating the sponsorship drive which brought much-needed funding for the Market from local businesses.

Standish Voice has been involved in a number of other projects, helping the Save The Crown team keep alive the hope that the closed Crown pub can again become a hospitality venue, rather than being demolished. A new owner of the building has now said he wants this to happen and we hope this can be achieved.

We continue to press for work to start on Standish Leisure Centre, on Rectory Lane. Construction was due to begin in summer but we now have been told it will start next month due to drainage problems on the site.

Standish Voice committee members have helped as volunteers at a number of events over the year, including marshalling at the Remembrance Day Parade, tree planting on Southlands Rec and Standish Fireworks Display, at Standish Cricket Club.

Standish Voice established the Standish Christmas Decorations Committee, which includes representatives from across the village and councillors Adam Marsh and Ray Whittingham, and is now chaired by Diane Gore.

They successfully co-ordinated the fitting of the railings around the tree in November using money secured the year before by a Standish Voice crowdfunding initiative. The railings are an excellent addition to the living tree, which the Decorations Committee planted the year before.

We also asked Wigan Council to name a new road after Thorley Smith, the women's suffrage campaigner and Standisher who fought for women's rights 100 years ago. Thanks to Councillor Ray Whittingham, the council has agreed to this, along with a street naming for the late Keith Douglas, Mr Standish, who was a great friend of Standish Voice.

And we recently alerted Wigan Council to the fact that Stars Brow landfill site, on Preston Road, was operating in breach of its planning conditions, forcing the company to have to submit a new application.

Also, our Facebook and Twitter channels go from strength to strength with the Facebook page now the go to place for news, events and debate in the village. It is one of the most highly engaged local websites in Greater Manchester, with 7,000 followers. Unfortunately, two people were banned from the site during the year, for continually breaking our rules on swearing and aggressive or abusive behaviour.

However, only six people have been banned from the site for breaching the rules since the page was established – an incredibly low number and proof that Standishers want to interact with each other in a civilised manner.

I'd like to thank everyone on the committee for their hard work this year and especially Gill, whose leadership as chair is always an inspiration and whose wise stewardship of Standish Voice has ensured its continued success.