**Dear Standish Voice member**

Here is the newsletter for January.

**AGM**

Thanks to all those who came to our Annual General Meeting last week.

For those of you who could not attend, the annual reports of Chair Gill Foster and Vice Chair Paul Ogden are attached to this newsletter.

In line with our constitution, five committee members stood down to allow for elections to their posts. These committee members were Fran Aiken, Brian Jones, Allan Foster, Sarah Djali and Diane Gore. No members nominated themselves to join the committee and all the retiring committee members wanted to stand again, so they were elected unopposed.

Standish Voice’s Events Lead Jaime Jones, who has been instrumental in the success of Standish Christmas Market, resigned her position late last year as she has moved away from Standish. We want to thank her for her incredible input into Standish Voice and the Market. Kathy Robertson, who has been heavily involved in the Market, was elected unopposed into her position on the committee and we welcome her to the role.

The following positions on the committee were agreed: Gill Foster, chair; Paul Ogden, vice chair; Ron Wade, membership secretary; Karen Bliss, treasurer.

The accounts were presented and you can find these on our website, www. standishvoice.co.uk

**CHADWICK’S PLANNING APPLICATION**

Standish Voice has responded to the planning application to knock down Chadwick’s in Standish and turn the whole site into elderly people's accommodation, lodged with Wigan Council by developers McCarthy And Stone. The scheme would sweep away all current buildings on the 2.3-acre site, including the former flooring shop and the restaurant fronting on to High Street, to be replaced with 92 apartments and communal areas catering for different types of elderly people. There would be two blocks of homes, 31 of Retirement Living apartments and 61 Retirement Living Plus apartments with a residents’ restaurant and other facilities for extra care. There would be 60 car parking spaces for residents, visitors and staff and landscaping around the development.

Planning officers are considering the application and here is our submission to them:

***Standish Voice Neighbourhood Forum would like to give its views on the planning application submitted by McCarthy and Stone for 92 homes on land owned by Chadwick’s butchers and restaurant (A/18/86437/MAJOR) at High Street, Standish, Wigan.***

***It is disappointing that such an historic and highly-regarded independent business should choose to close and give up its premises to a housing development.***

***Standish Voice wants to see a vibrant and thriving village centre with more retail and hospitality units which can serve its increasing population.***

***Although some housing would be acceptable on this site, we believe a mixed scheme of homes and retail/hospitality development would be the best solution for it.***

***However, given the business has now decided to sell its premises for housing, we believe accommodation for older people in the village is needed. This is reflected in the Housing Needs Survey which was independently commissioned for Standish Neighbourhood Plan.***

***Providing new homes for elderly people will prevent some of our older population having to move out of Standish for suitable accommodation and will allow downsizing which will free up family homes for younger people.***

***Therefore, Standish Voice generally supports the application, with caveats, but we would hope that, in line with Wigan Council policy, 25 per cent of the homes in this scheme will be classed as 'affordable' or a sum provided for 'affordable' homes for elderly people elsewhere in Standish Neighbourhood Area.***

***The age profile of the owners of these homes will most likely mean more traffic in the centre of Standish will not be generated by this scheme. However, parking in the centre of the village is at a premium already and we believe the number of parking spaces proposed is inadequate. Carers, staff, residents and visitors will require parking spaces and it would be wrong to further inconvenience residents of nearby streets who already face parking problems as parking spaces outside their homes may be used.***

***Standish Voice also wishes to raise objections to the scale of the development. We feel the massing of the block closest to High Street is too great and has an overbearing effect on the street. It would appear that this section completely dominates the street scene and is most certainly not in keeping with the existing buildings on the opposite side of the street.***

***Further, it would appear that the development proposals include demolishing the existing stone building on this front part of the site. This stone building appears to be in excellent condition and we believe it is an important element of Standish village heritage.***

***We urge the council and developers to keep this building and convert the interior to provide communal accommodation at ground floor level and perhaps apartments at first floor level. There should be no new building forward of this existing stone building and we believe the retention of this stone building would alleviate some of the monotony of the brick and render finishes proposed.***

***We request the planning department and planning committee take these views into consideration when deciding on the application.***

**LOCAL POLICING**

Standish Voice Vice Chair Paul Ogden met with the local policing team, alongside Standish Community Watch organiser Debbie Parkinson, to discuss policing and crime in the village.

Paul brought up the problem of cars and vans parking dangerously near The Beeches during the construction work there and police and parking officials will look into this, and other areas which experience parking problems. Anti-social behaviour and burglaries were also discussed.

Debbie, who is on Standish Voice’s Working Group, which helps the committee, is in the process of establishing Neighbourhood Watch schemes across Standish.

The meetings with the police will now take place on a regular basis.

**THORLEY SMITH**

Last year, Standish Voice asked Wigan Council to name a new road after a Standish man who played a major role in securing votes for women a century ago.

Wigan Council has now agreed to a new estate road being named after Thorley Smith, who was born and raised in Church Street and last year named as one of the nation's 100 Suffragette pioneers - one of only three men on the list.

He was the first person to stand as an MP on a platform backing the Suffragette movement. He didn’t win the election but pushed forward the cause of votes for women.

Thorley was born and brought up In Standish, third son of a Monumental Stone Mason and was the first Labour councillor on Wigan Council before standing an MP - and pressing for women's voting rights. He was born in 1873 and lived in Church Street until he moved to Wigan after the age of 18.

Standish Voice asked for the street naming and Standish’s Councillor Ray Whittingham also put it forward alongside names of three other Standish people.

The council has now approved them for the new residential development off Rectory Lane Standish. Councillor Whittingham has also secured street names after three other notable Standishers: Douglas Green after Norman Keith Douglas, the ultimate volunteer for all things Standish; Sedgewick Green: Peter Houghton Sedgewick, a tireless sport and youth campaigner; and Moss Green Close after Tom Moss. MBE, world Professional Dancer and dance teacher.

Thanks to Councillor Whittingham for his work on this.

**FACEBOOK**

Standish Voice’s Facebook page goes from strength to strength with it 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 more than 7,000 followers.

Unfortunately, two people were banned from the site during the past six months, 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.

Remember, you do not need to use Facebook personally to read our posts. You can access our page via the Home page of [www.standishvoice.co.uk](http://www.standishvoice.co.uk/)

**Best wishes,**

**STANDISH VOICE COMMITTEE**