

Standish Voice Vice chair Paul Ogden's report – 2020 AGM

Hello, thanks you again for attending.

The adoption of Standish Neighbourhood Plan and the fourth Standish Christmas Market were the main successes for Standish Voice this year.

I would like to thank Gill for her strong leadership and wise counsel in steering Standish Voice to our village having the first residential neighbourhood plan adopted in Greater Manchester. The hard work put into that achievement cannot be underestimated and I'd thank Gill and the whole committee for their commitment to overcoming the many obstacles that were put in our way.

I'd like to thank the Christmas Market Committee for putting on another tremendous event, especially our Events Lead, Kathy, who worked tirelessly all year and took the Market to the next level of success with thousands of happy faces and thousands of pounds raised for charity.

Thanks to Diane and Councillor Adam Marsh for their efforts in raising money from sponsorship, which increased by 10% from 2018 and Diane and Councillor Debbie Parkinson for their efforts in the raffle, which was another commercial success. Thanks to Sarah for organising another great Christmas trail and the rest of the committee and volunteers on the day for their enthusiasm and hard work.

But our committee members were involved in a number of other initiatives this year.

I would like to thank Diane for her work chairing the village's Christmas Decorations Committee. This year, Standish Voice agreed to pay a share of the cost of lighting up the village so that our councillors would have more Brighter Borough money to spend on other things. We also funded hanging baskets on our village Christmas Tree. We hope to do more next Christmas.

Allan attending meetings with the North Wigan Service Delivery Footprint team to discuss policies to make life more inclusive for older people and Ron and Diane have been our representatives on the village-wide committee to decide on this year's Mayflower and Myles Standish celebrations in September.

I, myself, attended regular meetings of the local policing team to discuss crime and crime prevention in Standish and liaise regularly with Councillor Debbie Parkinson and her Standish Community Watch page, helping to keep the village safe.

Standish Voice also met the housebuilder and the agent planning more homes at Robin Hill. They were consulting before submitting a planning application last spring and we told them that the proposals did not comply with the Neighbourhood Plan, especially as the site was part of one of our Green Corridors. The plan is now on indefinite hold.

We were successful in getting the council to allow a new road to be named after Standish women's suffrage campaigner Thorley Smith, with the help of Councillor Ray Whittingham.

We updated the newsletter this year and it is now presented much more attractively and sent out to our 1,200 members via MailChimp. I'd like to thank Ron for liaising with our website developers in automating the membership information we use for this.

We have also been continuing to work with the Save The Crown campaign to ensure that The Crown pub in Worthington has the best chance of reopening - and we are expecting some very exciting news on this in the next few weeks.

We moved into our new venue. This not only includes a bar, but it saves us just over £500 a year on meeting room costs compared to meeting at the High School. Alberts give us this room free of charge, so thanks to them for that.

I have joined the board of the Mosaic Multi-Academy Trust, which includes Standish High School, to represent community views on this body. The Trust was keen for a community voice to be included on it.

Standish Voice has been pushing the need for more affordable and older people's homes in the village for many years and we are pleased that two small council developments for Standish are nearing the planning stage. Thanks to Allan and Nicky for their social housing knowledge with this.

We also commissioned an environmental audit of some of our green areas by a Lancashire Wildlife Trust consultant, organised by Ron, to find out how we can look after these areas.

Standish Voice has a new storage facility, free of charge, at Standish Self-storage and we would like to thank Councillor Whittingham for allowing us to use the Standish Community Forum facility until now.

We have also been liaising with the council over possible highway improvements – thanks to Brian for that – and how the village can best spend 106 million from the developments. We will make sure the 94.5% of people who backed the referendum will get what they voted for with this funding, and we are sure our councillors will work with us to ensure that referendum is respected and the plan honoured.

But some of our aims have been frustrated. We have been working with the council and our councillors to bring more parking spaces to Standish centre and this continues to elude us and while backing in principle the Chadwick's scheme for older people's apartments we wanted the historic frontage retained but lost that battle with the planning committee.

We have been shouting about these things in the press and on our social media, including articles in the Wigan Observer, Manchester Evening News and Borough Life magazine and Gill was even interviewed on BBC TV in the aftermath of the Neighbourhood Plan referendum. Our Facebook page is going from strength to strength, with another 1,000 followers added this year to take us past 8,200 and we have more than 1,100 followers on Twitter.

I'm sure 2020 will be as eventful for Standish Voice