Dear Standish Voice member,

Here is the newsletter for February.

**REDESIGNATION AS A NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM**

We have been the Neighbourhood Forum for Standish for five years – a designation that gives us a greater chance to influence what happens in our village and enhances our ability to apply for grants and to stage events, like Standish Christmas Market.

However, our designation as a Neighbourhood Forum is coming to an end and we have applied to have it extended.

We need all our members to email Wigan Council to tell them that you want Standish Voice to be the Neighbourhood Forum for Standish for another five years. We would really appreciate your help with this.

All it takes is a short email to this address – neighbourhoodplanning@wigan.gov.uk – to tell the council that you want Standish Voice to continue to be a Neighbourhood Forum.

Over the last five years our committee, all volunteers, has tried to be a voice for our community, organising events, including four hugely successful Standish Christmas Markets, creating a Neighbourhood Plan that 94.5% of voters backed in a referendum, planting a living Christmas Tree, informing residents about news and events and answering questions through our popular Facebook page, supporting organisations across the village, liaising with the police and local councillors, leading and helping campaigns – including the one to save The Crown pub – and building a membership of more than 1,200 residents.

Standish is a great place to live in but faces many challenges, so help us to continue our work by giving one minute of your time to support us by emailing the council to say you want us to continue as a Neighbourhood Forum for another five years.

The consultation closes on March 18, so please send your email soon.

Thanks very much!

For more information on the redesignation process, click here

<https://www.wigan.gov.uk/Council/Strategies-Plans-and-Policies/Planning/Neighbourhood-plan/Standish-plan.aspx>

**THE CROWN AT WORTHINGTON**

**We are overjoyed that The Crown pub, in Worthington, has a new lease of life after being rescued from demolition.**

**After being closed for four years, The Crown will reopen as a pub and restaurant following a complete refurbishment by the new landlord Andrew McKenna and his partner, Nic.**

**The couple will revamp the Platt Lane building after it closed in January 2016 when the then owners left suddenly.**

**The reopening is a huge victory for the Save The Crown campaign, which Standish Voice has helped since the pub closed.**

**We both have campaigned to keep the building as a pub or restaurant after it was threatened with demolition and the site being turned into housing.**

**We strongly objected to the planning application for homes and helped Save The Crown to champion the reopening of the pub – once a national Camra Pub of the Year runner-up – in the media and behind the scenes.**

**It represents a huge victory for all those people who want to ensure our historic buildings are given a chance to survive.**

**Save The Crown spokesperson Heidi Lipscombe said: “We are overjoyed that Andrew and Nic have seen the value in giving The Crown a new lease of life, and we thank them very much. It was a marvellous pub and can be again, especially as Standish is such a growing community.**

**“Our campaign group has had a rollercoaster ride since we decided we would not let another piece of history be demolished in Standish and campaigned for The Crown to serve pints again, as it has done for the last 160 years at least.**

**“I, Jim, Brian and Carl would like to thank all our supporters, including Standish Voice, for their help in rescuing our pub. We have all proved the doubters wrong.”**

**Paul Ogden, Vice Chair of Standish Voice, said: “We would like to thank Andrew and Nic for their vision for The Crown and to the campaigners who would not let this landmark building be destroyed.**

**“We hope the refit goes well and we are certain that The Crown can soon be a great pub once again.”**

**Read a news story on this by clicking here:**

[**https://www.wigantoday.net/news/people/delight-wigan-pub-prepares-open-fine-food-and-drinks-1886419**](https://www.wigantoday.net/news/people/delight-wigan-pub-prepares-open-fine-food-and-drinks-1886419)

**LANCASHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST REPORT**

A report by Lancashire Wildlife Trust which Standish Voice commissioned and funded is now available to read.

The report gives expert advice and recommendations about many of our green areas in Standish. How we can protect them and enhance the biodiversity within them.

The report is informing our discussions with Wigan Council about how to implement the policies in Standish Neighbourhood Plan and how to spend developer 106 money to enhance our village.

The report looks at ideas including protecting our Sites of Biological Interest, tree planting, creating new ponds and establishing wildflower meadows.

We have sent the report to the council for their information and it is now on our website. We will be liaising with LWT further on these sites.

You can read the report by clicking here:

<http://www.standishvoice.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/LWT-advice-on-Standish-Neighbourhood-Plan-December-2019.pdf>

**STANDISH RAILWAY STATION**

**A fresh campaign has been launched to reopen a railway station at Standish.**

**A new petition has been created by the prospective Labour candidate for Aspull which will be used to lobby the Government’s transport secretary to have a stop at Standish to serve our growing population and improve our inadequate public transport.**

**Standish Voice has pushed for a new rail station in the village – the original one was closed in 1949 – since we were established as a Neighbourhood Forum in 2015, meeting officials from Transport for Greater Manchester and Wigan Council to promote the issue.**

**But, despite a report in 2013 saying a new station could be value for money, the fact that it is on the busy West Coast Main Line has blocked progress.**

**A recent report from TfGM, which has been backed by Wigan Council, has said a station will only be looked at in the medium term, perhaps coupled with a reduction in services on the WCML with the introduction of HS2.**

**However, the petition could be a way to inject new interest into the campaign at a high level.**

**The Wigan Observer has published a news story on the petition and Standish Voice gave this response to it.**

**We said: “Standish Voice has championed the cause of a re-opened station at Standish for a number of years and have had meetings with Wigan Council and Transport for Greater Manchester to push forward this issue.
“We understand the problems with a new station being on the West Coast Main Line, but the logic in creating a stop at Standish – with its huge increase in population and current poor public transport connectivity – is obvious.**

**“A report for Wigan Council in 2013 also said a station here could provide value for money.**

**“We will support any help in pushing this on locally and nationally and look forward to working with this new campaign.
“We believe it is crucial to secure the backing of Wigan Council in this matter as we are sure the local authority will be vital in driving this forward with TfGM and government.”**

**You can read news articles on this here:** [**https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/calls-no-brainer-decision-bring-17818035**](https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/calls-no-brainer-decision-bring-17818035)

**And here:** [**https://www.wigantoday.net/news/transport/new-campaign-wigan-townships-railway-station-be-reopened-picking-steam-2000034**](https://www.wigantoday.net/news/transport/new-campaign-wigan-townships-railway-station-be-reopened-picking-steam-2000034)

**Please sign the petition by clicking here:** [**http://chng.it/gc6NHgKV**](http://chng.it/gc6NHgKV)

**THE LOOP**

A group of intrepid walkers led by Standish Voice committee member Ron Wade braved a storm to walk The Standish Loop.

The Loop is a circular network of tracks around the village, mainly in countryside, that has been identified as a route that people can use for recreation.

It is made up of footpaths and bridle paths, and some highway, and Standish Voice is in discussions with Wigan Council about upgrading the majority of its length, as well as other paths, so that it can be enjoyed more easily by Standish people. The Loop featured in Standish Neighbourhood Plan, which was overwhelmingly endorsed by voters last year.

Lancashire Walking Group trekked the Loop’s eight miles, starting from Boar’s Head and going mainly through Green Belt which encircles the village.

Ron hopes that a variation of the Loop can be an official walk in Greater Manchester Walking Festival, which will be held in May.

Pictured are the walkers and a map of the Standish Loop (the dotted line within the Standish Neighbourhood Area boundary).

**ALMOND BROOK PLANNING APPLICATION**

**Standish Voice has objected to a planning application for Almond Brook Road which would create an access into the Green Belt.**

**An application has been submitted to make a road into an overgrown area, which was formerly the site of St Marie’s School.
The land is in Green Belt, so no development of it, housing or otherwise, is allowed.
The site has been fenced off for many years but the owner, who lives in St Helens, now wants to create a gravel roadway into the site, which the application says is needed so it can be maintained properly.**

**We have objected to the application on the grounds that it is unnecessary as the area has been maintained for several decades without the need for a road and is an unwanted development in the Green Belt.**

**We have also said the entrances could be dangerous on a stretch of road that now has numerous junctions off it and we also objected to the felling of a tree as part of the plans.**

**Below, you can see a photo of the area and the plan of the proposed access road.**

**DOG MESS CAMPAIGN**

Standish Voice bought 3,000 biodegradable plastic bags for an initiative to increase the awareness of owners clearing up mess from their dogs.

Councillor Debbie Parkinson used the bags in a workshop in Standish Library which showed people how to make poop bag dispensers out of plastic bottles for lampposts.

The dispensers are now on lampposts across the village.
Even if those lazy dog owners who do not take responsibility for their pets ignore the free bags, every time they see them they will be reminded of the community they are disrespecting by leaving dog dirt where people can tread in it.

The Wigan Observer published a news story on this and you can read it here:

<https://www.wigantoday.net/news/uk-news/wigan-residents-have-message-bottle-dog-owners-1886522>

**ELDERLY HOUSING**

**Wigan Council is set to move to the planning application stage on two small developments for elderly people for social rent in Standish.**

**A public consultation on the schemes, off Longridge Avenue (eight apartments) and on Almond Brook Road (four apartments), was conducted at Standish Community Centre recently, where residents could view the plans and ask questions.**

**The council has told Standish Voice that the consultation was very positive and the next stage in the process should be full planning applications for the projects.**

**Affordable homes for older people were identified in Standish Neighbourhood Plan as needed in the village because the vast majority of housing now being built in the village is for families.**

**ROBIN HILL DEVELOPMENT**

We still have no firm news on the proposed housing development at Robin Hill.

We are hoping the developer has dropped plans for 85 houses on this greenfield site, which were announced about a year ago.

Last spring, Standish Voice met with the developer, Keir, and told them their proposals were unacceptable as they did not comply with Standish Neighbourhood Plan, including part of the site being in a Green Corridor where biodiversity has to be properly factored into any plans.

Keir initially delayed the submission of a planning application until after Standish Neighbourhood Plan referendum and then, when 94.5% of people voted for the plan and the policies were enacted; they said the proposals were on long-term hold.

The Wigan Observer has followed up the story and Keir has issued a statement to the paper saying: “We would like to thank local residents in Standish for all of their responses to our proposals for Robin House Farm.

“Future plans for the site are still being considered and this feedback, alongside the Standish Neighbourhood Plan, is important considerations as to how we may move forward.”

We are hoping Keir will now drop these plans. The land, off Robin Hill Lane, is still classed as ‘safeguarded’ for future development but we hope our Standish Neighbourhood Plan policies will be robust enough to protect this area, or at least ensure any housing plans have biodiversity measures built into them.

You can read the news story here:

<https://www.wigantoday.net/news/environment/uncertainty-over-new-homes-plan-wigan-village-1890059?fbclid=IwAR2WYPkZGObVMNEFlgPpnzPDlAW9KTMFcrj1pocS_3n03flGFGesCY5_-sg>