

August 2023 Newsletter

Kilhey Court

Standish Voice is continuing to work with Wigan Council and others to overturn the decision to allow Kilhey Court Hotel to be closed and used as a hostel for asylum seekers.

You can help by emailing the Home Office and Macdonald Hotels – which owns the building – giving your views on why this should not go ahead.

Please send your emails to:

Public.Enquiries@homeoffice.gov.uk

enquiries@macdonald-hotels.co.uk

Standish Voice has joined Wigan Council, Lisa Nandy MP and our councillors in Standish and Aspall to oppose turning this historic building into a hostel – which is totally inappropriate and unsafe for those housed there – with little public transport, footpaths and local amenities.

It could also spell the end of the viability of the building as a hotel which has been part of the fabric of life in the village for generations. Staff have lost their jobs, numerous weddings and other events have had to be cancelled, and the community has lost its access to the gym, swimming pool and function rooms.

Standish Voice has had an inadequate response from our letter to the Home Office and has had no reply at all from Macdonald Hotels, which is set to make a large profit from their contract with Serco. The company says the situation is temporary, but you cannot book in at the hotel until at least January 2025.

We have had a series of meetings with Wigan Council to look at planning and legal avenues to overturn this decision and the council is stressing that the site is totally inappropriate to house asylum seekers – especially as Standish already has similar accommodation at the Britannia Hotel.

You can read extracts of Wigan Council's letter to the Home Office objecting to the situation here: <https://www.wigan.gov.uk/News/Articles/2023/August/Extracts-of-Councils-letter-to-the-Home-Office.aspx>

Standish Voice is also concerned that outside organisations may come to our village to cause trouble. A march on Sunday (September 3) – organised by a councillor from Ince – to the hotel has been cancelled after police raised safety concerns but a protest in Standish is planned. Police will be present.

We will keep you updated.

Bradley bridge

Wigan Council is continuing to review plans to instal traffic lights at Standish's Bradley Lane bridge after Standish Voice and our councillors protested that it would be dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists.

Installation of the traffic lights at the railway bridge was meant to start last month but the work was paused so that the council could look again at having a pedestrian setting.

The traffic lights project has been discussed for a number of years after the amount of traffic at the single lane bridge increased. The council consistently said there would be a pedestrian feature to stop traffic at both ends so people could walk under the dark and narrow bridge. However, at the 11th hour, the council said there would be no pedestrian feature as the delay to traffic was too long and vehicles would back up.

Standish Voice and Standish councillors objected to this, saying the new lights would increase the danger to pedestrians as, currently, motorists drive very slowly under the bridge, wary of oncoming traffic. However, traffic lights would make drivers less fearful of facing oncoming vehicles and so travel through the bridge at speeds that could be dangerous to people walking through. This is especially important due to the new estate being built nearby.

The council has now written to nearby residents and businesses to say the work will be delayed until the risks and options can be assessed again.

In the letter, the council's Major Projects team states: "We are listening carefully to feedback from across the community, and following this have taken the decision to pause the works whilst this is considered. We are grateful for your patience and continued cooperation, as we look again at proposals to best address concerns on Bradley Lane."

If you have views, you can email the council's Major Projects Team on majorprojects@wigan.gov.uk

Standish Cricket Club

Updated plans have been lodged for the building of five houses on land owned by Standish Cricket Club to fund improvements to facilities, including a new clubhouse.

The new plans show small changes to the layout of the homes so that protected trees will not be affected.

The sale of the land for the homes to be built would give the club funding to pay for the new pavilion, a new cricket nets facility and a new car park.

You can also read new documents about the funding situation at the club.

People can comment on the plans until September 7th.

See <https://planning.wigan.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=constraints&keyVal=RTCSF1RRKJT00&fbclid=IwAR1IqIoV3rNWvjqBI5gvfXL2wX8kJH3j-dHq-2Tn3oFdHJSj5SjisgiaLm8>

More buses for Standish

Standish will see new buses and much earlier and later services to and from Wigan from September 24th.

Greater Manchester's new bus network has promised extra services, with Standish one of the first communities to get the new-look buses. Single fares will stay at £2 and schools will also use the buses free of charge.

GM is taking over all bus services in the region and most Standish services will be improved, with buses running earlier and later in the day so they can link to trains at Wigan's stations – including the earliest trains to Manchester. This includes the 362 running two hours earlier to Wigan on weekdays.

Details of the improved services are:

362: Standish - Wigan

Towards Wigan: Monday-Friday: services start 2 hours earlier. Saturday: services start 2.5 hours earlier. Sunday: services start 30 minutes earlier.

Towards Standish: Monday-Friday: services finish 60 minutes later. Sunday: services finish 30 minutes later.

635: Shevington Vale - Wigan Infirmary

Towards Wigan: Monday-Friday: services start 2 hours earlier. Saturday: services start 2.5 hours earlier. Sunday: services start 30 minutes earlier.

Towards Shevington: Monday-Friday: services finish 60 minutes later. Sunday: services finish 30 minutes later.

640/641: Wigan - Shevington Moor Circular

Monday-Saturday: services start 60 minutes earlier and 2 hours later.

You can find out more about the new service - set to start on September 24th - here:

<https://news.tfgm.com/press-releases/a40f916b-2fe0-44bb-9fb1-a82eeb5f42f4/the-bee-network-one-month-to-go?fbclid=IwAR2nYPrFPDBaGIJBvH6VqBL6LOqLbbXZ8gIMBENVc7krwKwWqhCfhAWBaT4>

Church tours

Standish's historic St Wilfrid's Church is throwing open its doors to visitors who want to learn about its rich history.

Church tours will take place in September for National Heritage Open Days – and you can even climb the bell tower to see how the bells are rung.

On Saturday 9th September there will be church tours at 11am and 2pm. In between tours the church's Director of Music, Carol Kwater, will be on hand to explain how the organ works.

Throughout the day there will be opportunities to visit the bell-ringing chamber and learn how the bells are rung. Please note that this involves climbing a steep spiral staircase.

On Saturday 16th September there will be church tour at 11am. All tours are free of charge.

The church is currently raising funds to renovate its Victorian spire and fix its clock. Architects have discovered the need for vital repairs to the 130ft spire – a landmark for Standish and the surrounding area for more than 150 years since it was built on to the original medieval building.

Standish's foremost local historian, Stan Aspinall, is helping the campaign with a new printing of his popular book looking at how the village changed over the 20th century. He is donating the profits from a new print-run of 100 books of his recent title, A Century Of Change, Standish 1901-2001.

It is for sale – together with another of Stan's books – with all profits going to the Save Standish Spire appeal. The two books are sold together for £10 and can be bought at St Wilfrid's Parish Office, which is open from Monday to Friday, 10am to noon, or at Standish Library.

To contribute to the appeal, follow this link to the church's Just Giving page: <https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/save-standish-spire> or send a cheque with 'Spire' on the back to The Parish Office, St Wilfrid's Parish Hall, Church Street, Standish, Wigan, WN6 0JT.

Harwoods

Standish's patisserie Harwoods has been the centre of TV attention over the past several weeks with their team taking part in Channel 4's Bake Off: The Professionals. And they are now in the final!

Andrew Harwood and his wife Sarah opened their patisserie on High Street a few years ago and Andrew, with partner Raf, have wowed TV audiences with their confectionary creations.

They won every round they took part in, bar one, and the final will be screened on Tuesday (September 5th) at 8pm.

Join us in cheering them on!

Christmas Market stall applications re-open

Applications have reopened for stall holders this year's Standish Christmas Market – but be quick to sign up.

There are only a few more slots available and applications close for the final time on Sunday, 17th September.

CCTV for village centre

Wigan Council has installed CCTV in the centre of Standish to deter crime and anti-social behaviour in partnership with the police.

Now Standish Community Watch – a Neighbourhood Watch group established by Councillor Debbie Parkinson – is encouraging everyone who sees a crime, ASB or suspicious activity please report it. The camera footage can then be reviewed.

If you see a car turning into market Street when it shouldn't or any other crime ASB or a problem, please either report anonymously to Crimestoppers on <https://crimestoppers-uk.org/give-information> or ring 0800 555 111.

In an emergency, always dial 999.

Chorley A&E

Chorley's A&E – which many people in Standish use – is safe from closure until at least the mid-2030s.

Chorley councillors have been told the emergency service – currently open to adults only from 8am to 8pm – will only be under threat after a new Preston hospital is built in around 10-15 years' time.

It is now seven years since Chorley A&E shut its doors for nine months due to staff shortages, putting a question mark over the long-term future of the unit. It was also closed for much of 2020 following the onset of the pandemic, in order to concentrate resources on the Royal Preston.

When the A&E shut there was a huge outcry as many people in Standish use it rather than Wigan Infirmary. The closure put more pressure on the A&E at Wigan.

Read the latest story here: <https://www.lancs.live/news/lancashire-news/chorley-ae-remain-open-until-27368438>