

Standish Voice is the Neighbourhood Forum for Standish and we would like to clarify important information about our organisation – including about our funding.

What Standish Voice is: Standish Voice was established as a community group in 2014 shortly after the vast bulk of housing now being built out across Standish was given planning permission as we were frustrated at the lack of knowledge and expertise of our then councillors to represent the village. We used new legislation and successfully applied to become a Neighbourhood Forum which makes us a statutory consultee on planning issues and allows us to more forcefully put across our views to Wigan Council and others.

Who we are: Standish Voice has a committee of 14 people, the majority of which have been on the committee since we launched, including the Rev Andrew Holliday, Rector of St Wilfrid's Church. All our committee are volunteers, do not receive payment or expenses and give their time and expertise freely to try to make Standish a better place to live in and work in. We are all passionate about Standish and have worked very hard on many different projects to improve our community. As an organisation we are non-party political. We work with both our Labour and Conservative councillors and one of our committee members resigned her role when she was elected as a Conservative councillor. Committee members are elected to serve three-year terms at our AGM every January which all members of Standish Voice can attend and have a vote. We have 1,773 members and anyone can apply to become a member if they live or work in Standish. It is free to join and you will receive a regular newsletter. We work with and support our councillors and many organisations and clubs across Standish.

How we are funded: All our funds are raised by ourselves and our accounts going back several years are fully audited and can be found on our website – www.standishvoice.co.uk. We do not take any money from Wigan Council apart from accepting one grant of £1,000 in 2016 to launch Standish Christmas Market because the councillors at the time refused to offer any financial support. The majority of the funds we raise goes on the annual Christmas Market, which this year will cost about £15,000 to stage, but we also fund other things such as last Spring's OwlFest children's event at Standish Library. We sometimes use crowdfunding for specific projects such as Standish Coronavirus Help where our volunteers organised hundreds of shopping trips and other help for vulnerable people, and to pay for railings around the new living Christmas Tree in front of the church.

What we have done: Over the past several years we have been involved with many projects, including...

Standish Christmas Market – In 2016, we launched Standish Christmas Market, which has become a huge success, getting bigger and better every year since, apart from when it was postponed due to the pandemic. We have a fantastic Market sub-committee to organise this and are grateful for the 70 volunteers who help us to stage the day.

Standish Neighbourhood Plan – We created the first Neighbourhood Plan in Greater Manchester laying out a framework for improvements in the village over the next decade focussing on issues including village centre improvements, limiting housing development, protecting green spaces and adding footpaths and cycle routes.

Standish Coronavirus Help – We worked with our councillors to set up and run a scheme to help vulnerable people across Standish which ran for 18 months through the pandemic.

School Lane Widening – We successfully lobbied to prevent the council's road widening scheme which could have led to more housing developments being passed.

The Line – We pushed for the upgrade of The Line, which has been a huge success.

Infrastructure money – We continue to ensure Wigan Council uses all the money from developers on projects in Standish.

The Crown – We successfully campaigned with regulars to save The Crown pub from demolition.

And many more...

How we inform our members and the public:

Public meetings – We hold public meetings every month, apart from August and December, usually the third Tuesday of the month at 7.45pm, in a room at Alberts, on School Lane. Anyone who lives or works in Standish is welcome to attend and speak. Our most recent meeting was held last Tuesday when our three Standish councillors attended to give an update on matters, including the situation at Kilhey Court. Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, October 17th.

Newsletters – Our Standish Voice members receive regular newsletters and bulletins in their email inbox and members and non-members can contact us on email and Facebook Messenger.

Social Media – We use Twitter and especially Facebook to inform the Standish public of our activities and other news, information and events in Standish. We have a number of admins for the page from our committee. Standish Voice Facebook page is a public page, so anyone can read it, unlike Facebook groups which you need to be a member of to access. Standish has some fantastic Facebook groups, including Standish Then and Now and Standish Community, which allow open and friendly debate, but some others only allow those with similar views to join and comment. Anyone can comment on our posts, as long as those comments conform to our rules, which are published on our website. We have 12,200 followers on our Facebook page and only 12 people to date have been banned from commenting on our page for continually ignoring the rules, which are there to keep all people safe from abuse online.

We would like to thank Standish Voice's members, other members of the public in Standish, and local organisations for their continued support, especially in difficult times and when local politics is so heated.

If you want to ask any questions about Standish Voice or its committee, please email standishneighbourhoodforum@gmail.com or if it is not a confidential enquiry, please ask the question in the comments below.

Thanks