

## STANDISH VOICE NOVEMBER 2023 NEWSLETTER

### Standish Christmas Market

Welcome to the November newsletter of Standish Voice. You will find information on Standish Christmas Market, Kilkey Court and the Britannia Hotel, Bradley Lane bridge, Standish GP provision and having your say on a new council local plan.

Standish Christmas Market returns on Saturday (December 2<sup>nd</sup>) – a seasonal takeover of the centre of our village with more than 60 stalls, music and song, festive attractions and lots of fun!

Standish Voice has been organising the Market on an annual basis since 2016 – apart from two years when it was postponed due to the pandemic – and the event has been getting bigger and better every year thanks to the enthusiasm of the people of Standish; the generosity of businesses that help us with funding; the fantastic, friendly volunteers on the day; our supportive councillors; the understanding of village centre residents and hard work of Standish Christmas Market committee.

Here is a rundown of what will be going on and you can find this information in our 16-page Market programme that you can pick up now in Standish's shops and which will be given out on the day.

**Standish Parish Hall and Car Park:** The heart of the Market, with the live entertainment marquee and drinks tent, selling beers, mulled wine, cocktails, prosecco and more (11am to 8pm). The Parish Hall has lots of stalls (11am to 5pm).

**Market Place:** The food court with lots of different options and a covered seating area which also houses our Wishmas Tree (11am to 8pm).

**St Wilfrid's Parish Church:** Pop in to see the church to see the amazing light display (TBC) and don't miss the family carol concert at 4pm.

**Cross Street:** Outdoor traders for your Christmas gifts and festive buskers (11am to 7pm).

**Lychgate pub:** There is a festive funfair on its car park (11am to late).

**Standish Library:** Father Christmas (now sold out), children's activities (10am-4pm), children's show (1pm, 2pm, 3pm), refreshments. Inflatable Snow Globe for festive photos outside (11am-5pm).

**Standish Community Centre:** Craft stalls and refreshments (11am-5pm).

**Standish Methodist Church:** Two craft halls and refreshments inside (11am-5pm). Outside on the car park is the Living Nativity (12pm-4pm) and music from Prospect Brass Band (11am-1pm), a choir and buskers.

**Standish Unity Club:** Festive karaoke with Standish singer Neil Dunlop (2.30pm-5pm).

**Cross Street Arts:** Open studios and art sale inside The Standish Centre (11am-7pm).

**Standish Social Club:** Live entertainment (4pm to late).

**Village centre:** Christmas Trail – a family trek around the village to spot the cuddly penguins and hopefully win a prize (11am-7pm).

**Throughout the Market:** Spot our naughty elves running around or the full-sized Grinch entertaining the crowds during the afternoon.

### **Shuttle bus**

This year, we have organised a FREE shuttle bus to take people who live in Standish to the Market. The bus will do a figure of eight journey around the village (Almond Brook Road, Old Pepper Lane, Pepper Lane, Preston Road, High Street, Wigan Road, Chorley Road and Rectory Lane). Pick ups from permanent bus stops are from 10am to 1pm and 5pm to 8pm.

### **Our live entertainment stage (with photos and set list)**

Our Live Entertainment Marquee is the venue for free music, singers and choirs from 11am to 8pm.

Standish comedian and entertainer Chris Boyle (pictured) returns to be compere on our Live Stage, who will introduce a series of acts familiar and new to the Christmas Market.

Our primary school choirs begin the day with festive songs and carols before the Market is officially opened by Wigan's Deputy Mayor and Standish councillor Debbie Parkinson.

A day and evening of music is kicked off by the inimitable Wigan Ukulele Band (pictured) and ended by Standish's 'Pievarotti', Neil Dunlop. See our set list, which is subject to change and please be mindful of others in the marquee because it gets very busy.

We would like to give our huge thanks to all the brilliant performers who are giving their time and talent free of charge during the event.

### **Standish Voice Bar with photo of councillors**

One of the main ways we fund Standish Christmas Market is through our Standish Voice bar in the drinks' marquee on the Parish Hall Car Park.

We try to keep prices as low as possible while having to pay the considerable costs on the day.

Standish's councillors continue to be hugely supportive of the Market and Debbie Parkinson, Ray Whittingham and Terry Mugan have given us £400 each to buy reusable prosecco cups for use at the Market. These will sit alongside our reusable mulled wine cups on the bar.

This year a large cup of mulled wine or prosecco will cost £4.50 and a reusable cup costs £1. You keep the cup and bring it back to the bar to buy your refill. Keep the cup as a Standish Christmas Market keepsake, or donate it back to the Market. There are no refunds on cups.

### **Traders**

See below for a list of traders operating at Standish Christmas Market this year.

### **Sponsorship and raffle**

We can only stage Standish Christmas Market through the generosity of our Sponsors.

We would like to say a huge thank-you to our fantastic Gold Sponsors whose logos appear on the front page of our Market programme. They are: Top Grades Education – Gerrards carpet and upholstery cleaning – Holts brewery, owners of the Lychgate – Ainscough Industrial Services – Asylum bar – Inglenorth Contracting Ltd.

Standish businesses are also Silver and Bronze sponsors – see our programme for details – or have given prizes for our fantastic raffle and you can buy tickets on the day. See below for a list of prizes.

For up-to-date information, follow Standish Christmas Market on Facebook [here](#)

### **Update on Kilhey Court and Britannia hotels**

Standish Voice is continuing to meet Wigan Council over the use of Kilhey Court and the Britannia Hotel to house asylum seekers.

The Government has already announced that Kilkey Court will close to asylum seekers in around March next year but full details of this have not been released by the Home Office.

In September, Standish Voice agreed to employ a planning consultant to look at all the planning applications granted at Kilhey Court since it was converted from a residential property into a hotel. We used £2,400 of our funds for this, but we believed this was an important issue for the village with Kilhey Court being an asset to the community, a historic building in our village and totally unsuited to asylum seeker accommodation.

A report has been sent to us by the planning consultant and details of the findings have been passed to Wigan Council. No breaches of the planning permissions were found but there are questions to answer about the planning status of the site and Wigan Council is looking into this, along with other planning issues at Kilhey Court.

It is important to continue putting pressure on the Macdonald Hotels and the Home Office in this situation. We have also urged the council to liaise with Macdonald Hotels about the future of the hotel.

Wigan Council officers and Standish's police sergeant Sgt Nick Forshaw attended Standish Voice's monthly public meeting last week, along with Standish councillors Debbie Parkinson and Ray Whittingham, to answer questions from the public about asylum seekers in Standish.

The council says numbers in both hotels are falling, but do fluctuate, with latest figures being 55 asylum seekers in the Britannia and 45 at Kilhey Court. The council continues to ask the Home Office for its plans for both sites, but apart from knowing Kilhey Court will close by the end of March, nothing else has been forthcoming.

Sgt Forshaw said that there had been a lot of misinformation on crime relating to asylum seekers on social media and confirmed that all reports to the police of incidents were followed up and any crimes were dealt with.

We will continue to give updates on this issue.

### **Standish GP provision**

Standish Voice is continuing to pressure our health authorities to improve the level of GP services in Standish.

We have again been in contact with Healthier Wigan, which organises primary care provision, after the lead GP partner at Standish Medical Practice, Dr Nadia Ghalayini, resigned due to personal reasons after 14 years.

There has been a huge upsurge in demand for health services due to the development of new housing in Standish and there seems to be no plan to meet this from the local health organisation.

We are due to meet a Healthier Wigan leader next month to discuss this but in the meantime we instigated an article in the local media in which we stated: "It is really sad to hear that Dr Ghalayini has resigned from Standish Medical Practice. She and her family have given fantastic service to the people of Standish over many years.

"We raised our worries about inadequate GP service provision in Standish with Healthier Wigan in January, after Dr Ghalayini spoke out publicly about the pressure the surgery was under due to the 'relentless increase' in demand because of new houses being built in the village.

"During subsequent meetings through Wigan Council we asked how Healthier Wigan were going to improve the situation, and they promised this would be looked at, but this information has still not been forthcoming.

"We raised the issue again earlier this month at a meeting of Wigan Healthwatch but are still waiting for a plan to restore even an adequate level of GP service to Standish.

"We are very concerned that Dr Ghalayini's leaving the practice will make this situation even worse, that the population of Standish will continue to be failed, and the hard-working, caring staff at Standish Medical Centre will have to shoulder even more pressures."

Read the article here: <https://www.wigantoday.net/health/residents-raise-the-alarm-about-health-services-being-stretched-to-breaking-point-in-wigan-neighbourhood-4394889>

## **Bradley bridge**

Transport for Greater Manchester has come back to us and Standish councillors with solutions to concerns about pedestrian safety at Bradley Lane bridge when new traffic lights are installed.

We were worried about safety after a TfGM said pedestrian setting on the lights would be impractical due to the length of the bridge and time it would take.

So the measures to be put in place instead are:

- Both sets of lights to be on red until a car reaches the lights, preventing cars from speeding through the tunnel on green
- A lined pedestrian walkway on the road within the tunnel
- A sensor with a lit sign alerting drivers to pedestrians within the tunnel

Installation of the traffic lights at the railway bridge was meant to start in September but the work was paused so that the council could look again at pedestrian safety and the scheme will now be installed in February.

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.

## **Wigan Local Plan**

Please have your say on Wigan Council's new Local Plan, which will include new development policies for Standish.

Standish Neighbourhood Plan was agreed at referendum in 2019 and should be the starting point for the Standish section of this plan, but the council is consulting people and businesses again.

The borough-wide plan – which will be a blueprint for development across Wigan and Leigh – will run until about 2039 or 40. The council carried out a first stage of consultation last autumn and now people can again have their say on issues such as housing, open space, biodiversity, and retail and employment areas.

Standish Voice has already been in discussion with Wigan Council over the plan and will be urging the council to respect Standish's Neighbourhood Plan and its policies and keep Standish's Green Belt intact.

The council is consulting on Options and Preferences, which you can access [here](#). It includes a main consultation document and an accompanying map book. On each you can click on 'bubbles' in the page to both view comments that others have made and leave your own comments. It will be anonymous on the webpage.

You can also view paper versions of the documents in Standish Library.