

STANDISH VOICE VICE CHAIR'S REPORT 2023

It some ways 2023 was a difficult one for Standish, with the issue of Kilhey Court sowing division and anger in our community, but they year ended with another fantastic coming together of our community at Standish Christmas Market.

It was the sixth Market organised by Standish Voice and its Christmas Market committee and it was a huge success, being bigger than ever, with more people attending, more village businesses and organisations joining in and achieving the highest level of business sponsorship.

However, our ambition and inflation made it the most expensive to date to stage. The first Christmas Market in 2016 cost £7,000 to put on, in 2023 that was £20,000. But we have an excellent committee – led by our Events Lead Kathy Robertson – who work together in a very professional manner, and oversight by Standish Voice Treasurer Karen Bliss, to ensure the event returns a profit to enable the Market to return each year.

I would like to thank Kathy and the other Standish Voice committee members who sit on the Market organising committee: Ian Trafford, Sarah Djali and Diane Gore for their dedication to this event, and our councillors, Debbie Parkinson, Ray Whittingham and Terry Mugan for supporting the Market financially and working with Standish Voice on various issues during the year.

I'd also like to thank all our committee members for their hard work this year, but especially those on other committees in the village, including Sarah for her continuing work with our schools; Fran with the Friends of Standish Library which in 2023 staged its successful OwlFest with funding provided by Standish Voice; and Andrew, who sits on various church organisations including Save Standish Spire appeal. The appeal was only launched in March but it is well on its way to raise the £500,000 needed to renovate the spire of St Wilfrid's Church. Standish Voice's contribution is funding a feature length documentary about the history of the church, which is due to be finalised this Spring.

I would like to thank Gill, who chairs Standish Voice so ably. She heads up our efforts to engage the council on various issues – and, in 2023, the local health authorities in our ongoing campaign to improve GP services for Standish. Her leadership and level-headedness continue to serve Standish Voice and the people of the village well.

In 2024, Standish Voice enters its 10th year and I'd also like to express our gratitude to our members – which now number nearly 2,000 – who give us amazing support in what we are trying to achieve.

