

# **STANDISH VOICE**

## MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES OCTOBER 17, 2023

**The meeting commenced at 7.45pm. Management Committee present:** Gill Foster, Paul Ogden, Ron Wade, Sarah Djali, Janet Monks, Allan Foster, Andrew Holliday, Kathy Robertson

1. **Apologies:** Sharon Gerrard, Karen Bliss, Diane Gore, Fran Aiken, Nicky Ogden
2. **Minutes:** The minutes of September's Management Committee meeting were passed without alteration.
3. **Update:** Gill gave an update about a number of meetings she had had with Wigan Council regarding Kilhey Court. This would be taken as a separate item.
4. **Kilhey Court:** Gill said that Standish Voice continued to work with Standish's councillors and Wigan Council to put pressure on the Home Office and MacDonald Hotels to overturn their decision to allow Kilhey Court to be closed and it to be used as a hostel for asylum seekers. She said the council was not being given clear information by Serco on the details of arrangements for the site. Paul said that at the September meeting of Standish Voice (SV) the committee had decided to engage an independent planning consultant to look at the individual planning applications granted for the site since it became a hotel in 1983. He said this was costing £2,000 plus VAT but the committee felt it was important that all possible avenues for objection to the current situation were looked into. Paul added that a final letter from the consultant was due soon and the findings would be shared with Wigan Council in their effort to have the situation overturned. Gill said that Standish Voice had been invited to attend a recent full Council meeting where a resolution was due to be put to oppose hotels being used by asylum seekers. SV had objected as there was no reference to Kilhey Court, though Wigan Council later said this was due to a ruling that no specific ward could be mentioned in generic motions. Members of the public asked questions and raised concerns about the situation with Standish Voice and Standish's councillors: Cllr Ray Whittingham, Cllr Terry Mugan and Cllr Debbie Parkinson.
5. **Standish Voice clarifications:** Paul said that at a recent public meeting in Standish, totally untrue statements were made about Standish Voice and its committee. These had been refuted on SV's Facebook channel and in a newsletter to its members.
6. **Robin Hill Field:** Ron said the council had not yet set up a meeting for the final plans for planting on Robin Hill Field but he was pursuing this. SV had asked for names to come forward from the public for the field, with the word 'park' at the end of it, and a number of different options had been put forward. The most popular would be put to a poll.
7. **Standish Christmas Market:** Kathy gave an update on progress on the organisation of the Market and said preparations were going well.
8. **Save Standish Spire:** Rev Andrew Holliday gave a presentation on the appeal to raise approx. £500,000 for the renovation of the spire of St Wilfrid's Church. The clock, broken for two years, would also be mended. He said the building was an iconic structure in Standish and central to its history. So far, £252,000 had been raised and grants were now being sought. A professional fundraiser was being engaged. Standish Voice committee voted to give an amount to the appeal, to a sum to be decided after the Christmas Market.
9. **Update from lead committee members:** Gill said she recently attended a meeting of Wigan Healthwatch and spoke to Jonathan Kerry, Assistant Director of Primary Care and Delivery. She asked for a meeting to discuss primary care provision in Standish and the level of service at Standish Medical Practice. One will be arranged.

**The meeting ended at 9.35pm**