

STANDISH VOICE NEWSLETTER – OCTOBER 2024

CHORLEY ROAD AND PEPPER LANE PLANS REFUSED

We were delighted that Wigan Council's planning committee refused two planning applications linked to new housing developments in Standish – despite planning officer recommending their approval.

Standish Voice successfully argued that the two applications – one for Chorley Road and one for Pepper Lane – breached policies in Standish Neighbourhood Plan. The planning committee agreed that Standish Neighbourhood Plan – created by Standish Voice and passed by referendum in 2019 by 93% of voters – needed to be upheld.

We fully expect the developers to appeal against these decisions, but we will be prepared to defend the plan and its policies to limit development – especially in the face of inadequate infrastructure – at any public inquiries which come forward to decide on them.

The plans, for 57 new homes off Pepper Lane and a new junction after demolishing a house on Chorley Road breached policies on infrastructure development and impact and provision of amenity green space.

In the weeks leading up to the committee meeting, there was huge controversy after Wigan Council planning officers ignored warnings from the NHS locally that Standish's GP services could be overwhelmed if the new Persimmon housing plan for Pepper Lane went ahead.

Standish Voice's Chair Gill Foster spoke at the planning committee saying policies in the Neighbourhood Plan needed to be upheld, that infrastructure promised when past housing schemes were passed had not yet been delivered and it was obviously our community could not cope with another rise in population. She also pointed out that the land where the new Chorley Road junction would be created was designated as Amenity Green Space in the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Chorley Road plan would have created a junction at Fairhurst Lane that could have opened up fields behind Rowton Rise, owned by Seddon Homes. But it could also have created access to fields with outline permission for more homes, owned by Bellway – and others without planning permission. We also successfully argued that the council had no way of knowing what amount of traffic would end up using the new junction.

We would like to thank Wigan planning committee for listening to our community, respecting a Neighbourhood Plan which our population put its faith in, and ignoring blatantly biased reports from planning officers which did not tell the full story about the impact of these developments.

This is our reaction which we gave to the media: "We are relieved and grateful that the planning committee upheld policies in Standish Neighbourhood Plan and understood the importance of local democracy and local people being able to have a say in how their community develops.

"Standish has had a huge housebuilding programme over the past decade, with almost 2,000 new homes set to increase our population by a quarter without significant increase in infrastructure.

"The people of Standish – encouraged by Wigan Council – put their faith in the planning system to protect it from yet more overdevelopment with the creation of Standish Neighbourhood Plan, which only allows sustainable development. The planning committee has rightly agreed that to ride roughshod over these plan policies – which council officers were recommending – would be wrong, undemocratic and deeply damaging to our community.

“The NHS locally gave a very stark warning against more development, which could overwhelm our already overloaded GP services – an alert which was not reflected in the planning officer’s report to the extent of misleading the committee. But councillors saw through this and rightly concluded that to overload our infrastructure even more would be a dereliction of their duty.

“We have no doubt that the developers will appeal against these refusals but when they do, we expect Wigan Council to mount a robust, comprehensive defence of these decisions and Standish Neighbourhood Plan.

“We would like to thank our Standish councillors and the hundreds of people who objected to these applications – and who supported the development of the Neighbourhood Plan. You have helped to turn the tide of unsustainable overdevelopment in our lovely village.”

STANDISH CHRISTMAS MARKET

The biggest one-day celebration of Christmas in the Wigan area is back in Standish next month with the return of its Christmas Market.

The huge seasonal event has attractions, stalls, live entertainment and the streets of the historic village are filled with people packing out its pubs and restaurants for the annual Market, organized by Standish Voice, the community’s Neighbourhood Forum.

This year, Standish Voice is promising a bigger and busier day, more attractions and live music – with an extra entertainment stage – and surprises to be announced just before the free event on Saturday, November 30th.

There will be four halls full of craft stalls and makers selling Christmas presents – St Wilfrid’s Church Hall, two at Standish Methodist Church, and Standish Community Centre – and stalls lining Cross Street and Market Place – including seasonal food and drink outlets.

The Market runs from 11am to 8pm with music from bands, singers and school choirs running throughout the day, next to a drinks marquee where you can buy beers, cocktails, prosecco and seasonal mulled wine.

This year, the popular Snow Globe returns outside Standish Library and Father Christmas and children’s activities will be inside. If you love the Christmas movie, Elf, there will be a real-life Buddy running around the village and a full-sized Grinch also entertaining the crowds.

The Market also has real reindeer for people to take photos of this year and there is a Christmas Trail where families can spot cuddly toys in Standish shop windows as they walk around the village, and a Merry Christ-Mutts dog competition.

Other Standish venues are also joining in, too, with the popular Christmas Karaoke at the Unity Club, entertainment at Standish Social Club, and a family carol service in St Wilfrid’s Church. There will also be an extra entertainment stage at the Methodist Church car park during the day.

Companies and organisations from across Standish and beyond have got behind the community event with sponsorship to make it even bigger and better, with Gold sponsors Inglenorth, Gerrards Carpet and Upholstery Cleaners, Holts brewery (Lychgate pub), Top Grades Tuition, McRobbs Butchers, Circ Dental, Bibby Hygiene, Standish Engineering and Millennium Care – as well as Silver and Bronze sponsors.

Standish's councillors Debbie Parkinson, Ray Whittingham and Terry Mugan have continued to support the event with their time and financially through Wigan Council Brighter Borough funding. Debbie is due to open the Market at 11am in her capacity as Mayor of Wigan.

A free shuttle bus will run around the main roads of Standish at the beginning and end of the Market helping to reduce the need for people to drive to the event.

A spokesperson for Standish Voice said: "We are expecting another fantastic day in Standish and have been working hard all year to put on an event that the village can be proud of. All our stall slots have completely sold out and we have arranged an amazing line-up of local talent who are giving their time for free to entertain the crowds.

"We have had brilliant support from local companies – without them we could not run this event – and village centre businesses are gearing up to join in the celebrations with activities of their own. It is going to be a wonderful day and is a great way for our whole community to have a seasonal knees up!"

Standish Voice is asking people to leave cars at home and walk to the Market, take public transport or the free shuttle bus which will run on the day, with details to follow. Please keep dogs under control. People are reminded that Cross Street and Market Place will be closed to traffic throughout the day, with the exception of Church Street businesses and residents who will have passes to go through the roadblock on the day.

Keep up with all the details on Standish Christmas Market social media.

WOOD FOLD SCHOOL EXPANSION CONSULTATION

A Standish school is set to expand by half as much again to accommodate new families in the village.

With Standish growing by around a quarter over the past decade due to new housing building, Wigan Council is asking people their views on increasing the size of Wood Fold Primary School.

The school wants to admit 90 children each year starting from next September – currently it only admits 60.

If the plan is approved, buildings on the school site on Green Lane will be enlarged to take the extra children to a maximum capacity of 630 places in the school by 2029.

The consultation document calculates that an extra 1,000 family homes will be built in Standish over the coming decade or so and expansion of the school needs to begin now to cope – with only 180 spaces currently available. From next year Wood Fold, which is judged as Outstanding by Ofsted, would become even more oversubscribed.

The council document says: "Our data indicates that by increasing the number of places available, we can ensure that children living in the Standish area where parents express a preference for a school in the area, will be able to secure a place for their child."

The document has no details of parking or other issues which may affect residents – although if extra building is needed, a planning application will have to be submitted and consulted on.

The council document adds: "At this stage we have not worked out every detail of the proposal as we need to listen to your views and concerns so that the detailed proposals which we make later in the process can take these into account."

A final decision set to be made on March 25th next year.

There are open consultation sessions for the public at the school on Friday, November 8th from 8.30am to 10.30am and 2.30pm to 4.30pm. If you wish to attend one of these sessions, please contact Wood Fold Primary School either in person or by phone on 01257 400271 and you will be allocated a time to attend.

To give comments, you must do so by November 19. See this link for more information:
<https://www.wigan.gov.uk/Resident/Education/Schools/School-admissions/consultations/index.aspx>

POPPY APPEAL PLEA

Can you help with Standish's Poppy Appeal over the next couple of weeks?

Volunteers are being sought to help with the annual fundraising for veterans and their families. You can give as little or as much time as you wish.

If you can spare some time for this fantastic cause, please email standishneighbourhoodforum@gmail.com

NEST NURSERY PROJECT

A Standish care village wants to build the 'UK's first forestry-led intergenerational nursery' at its base on Chorley Road.

The £2m nursery would be constructed at Millennium Care's Standish Care Community, next to Kilhey Court, and the public is being asked for its views on the plans at a public consultation event next month.

Millennium Care has five care homes with four in Wigan, including at the Standish Care Village consisting of the existing Worthington Lake and Lakeside care homes, and the recently constructed Langtree care home for residents with advanced dementia, which is due to open soon.

The company now wants to create a 40-place, purpose-built nursery in the centre of the care village.

Millennium Care says: "By bringing together children and older adults, we aim to nurture a setting where both can thrive, benefiting from the therapeutic power of nature. Set within the heart of the Standish Care Community, we're creating a warm and uniquely enriching early years environment, designed to inspire and bring joy to all.

"With private access to Worthington Lakes and Arley Woods, it will be the hub of the care village; a connective community thread using innovative approaches to bridge generations in a way that is a first for the borough."

Before the scheme goes ahead, a detailed planning application will need to be submitted for the site, which is in Green Belt land.

You can see the plans and discuss the scheme with the Millennium Care team at a consultation event at Albert's restaurant on School Lane on Friday, November 8th from 2pm to 6pm.

You can see the full proposals here: <https://www.millennium-care.co.uk/the-nest/>

You can also see more information on their Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/millenniumcareuk/>

Pictured are impressions of how the nursery would look and a flyer about the consultation event.

CRICKET CLUB FIREWORK DISPLAY

Standish Cricket Club is holding its annual firework display on Tuesday 5th November.

There will be food and drink, kiddies' rides and a great display, right in the heart of the village.

You can purchase tickets from Copper Vines restaurant or The Globe pub but you can pay on the door at the Green Lane club on the night.

Admission is £5 per person with under 5s free. It is cash only and please bring the correct amount. Please leave your cars at home as there will be no parking available.