



Standish Parish Council



NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2023/2024

Multi User Path – A Success Story for Standish

As regular readers will know, the Parish Council, supported by a small group of residents, started work in 2017 on plans for a pathway for those on foot, cycle or horseback and those with disabilities to move more safely and sustainably around the parish, avoiding the busy B4008.

We are delighted to report that funding has been achieved to enable the section of path between Horsemarling roundabout and the entrance to Black Bridge to be constructed. Shovels will be in the ground in the coming financial year. Negotiations about both the siting of the path (the greater part of which will be 'behind the hedge' on County Council-owned land) and the funding have been lengthy and detailed, involving us working closely with Gloucestershire County Council and Stroud District Council. The finance for the project is coming from several sources: the Department for Transport, County Council, Stroud District Council, the Community Infrastructure Levy fund administered by the District Council and – last but not least – the Parish Council's allocation from the Standish Gate development, which was essential in helping us to kickstart the project.

The path will be the first stage of the Gloucester-Stroud cycling and walking spine to be constructed, with other sections added as funding becomes available to the County Council. For Standish residents, it will provide a good start towards safer and more sustainable access to services in Stonehouse. It will link to the large network of Standish bridleways and footpaths, including those leading to the proposed new housing development (PS19a) and Great Oldbury. It will also enable access to the Natural Wildspace Area, planned by Stonehouse Town Council, at the Stagholt playing field site. Before work starts, GCC will hold a public consultation meeting, supported by the Parish Council.

Special thanks are due to Sue Oppenheimer and Alison Widgery, who have worked with me to achieve this outcome. **SUE HARTLEY**



The Parish Council needs you . . .

Standish Parish Council meets once a month (except in August), currently on a Wednesday evening. Members of the public, together with our District and County councillors, are invited to attend. As a parish councillor you become someone to whom your community can turn for advice, help, guidance and support. Seeing your community change for the better, as a result of decisions you have helped to make, is something that can give you a sense of achievement and pride.

It is true that parish councils, on their own, have limited powers to make decisions. However, they have the ability to negotiate with, and power to influence, higher tiers of local government, developers and other organisations. All these organisations know that a parish council gives the best reflection of how a community feels about something, and its views will be taken seriously.

Parish councillors are volunteers! They do not get paid. The Parish Clerk receives a salary.

The best way to find out what it's like to be a parish councillor is to talk to someone who is doing it now. Come along to a meeting or speak to one of our councillors.

On Thursday 2nd May, there will be elections for Standish Parish, for Stroud District Councillors and for the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Commissioner. Our polling station is in Standish Church. Photo ID will be required in these elections unless you have a postal vote. Driving licence or passport photos are acceptable – the document does not need to be in date but the photo must be a good likeness.

ALISON WIDGERY

A Personal View of Parish Council Duties

The elections on 2nd May will offer the opportunity for new councillors to join Standish Parish Council. As the most recently co-opted councillor, I wanted to share my experience regarding the duties and impact that being a member of the PC has, for the consideration of those who might consider standing for election. When I submitted my candidacy about a year ago, I had little idea what to expect, but considered that being part of the democratic process at local level was worth some of my time. On being co-opted, I found that the work was about what I thought it would be – completely focused on the local aspects, free from grand politics, and well-embedded in trying to address the needs and concerns of the local community.

Being a member of the PC is ultimately about how much time you put in. The routine elements (approving expenses, dealing with grass-cutting arrangements etc.) are quickly handled in most cases, thanks to the support of the clerk. After that, it is a question of how much time you want/can allocate to tasks – there are some complex planning applications going on now that affect Standish, and specific policies (e.g. on biodiversity in the Parish) that need to be drafted. The multi-user path article above, shows what can be achieved when councillors are committed to a task. The work is enjoyable, the meetings are not onerous, and this is an opportunity to spend time with like-minded neighbours to try and ensure that the community spirit of Standish is maintained, keeping the parish moving forward. Being able to represent the concerns and needs of my neighbourhood area, the old Standish hospital site, is a bonus, and I have made new connections through this.

Local democracy is the foundation of the democratic system, and it is what we make of it. Come May, there is an opportunity for those interested to take it beyond going to the polling booth once in a while. **ANDREAS BIERMANN**

New Constituency Boundaries

The new constituency boundaries are now in place with Standish being included within North Cotswolds. To me, this feels fundamentally incorrect as the Parish is located within the Severn Vale and is not located within the Cotswolds. The Government aimed to reduce the number of seats in Parliament from 650 to 600, though the number has now been kept at 650. The final position results in all parties losing current seats, apart from the Conservative Party. This may change, of course, when we have a General Election. Standish will remain part of the Stroud District Council area. As previously reported, the Parish Council objected to these changes as unhelpful to the democratic process. The Parish Council reiterates the point that we are likely to experience a reduction in political engagement with our MP, as Standish is on the outer edge of the new constituency. **OLIVER KIRKHAM**

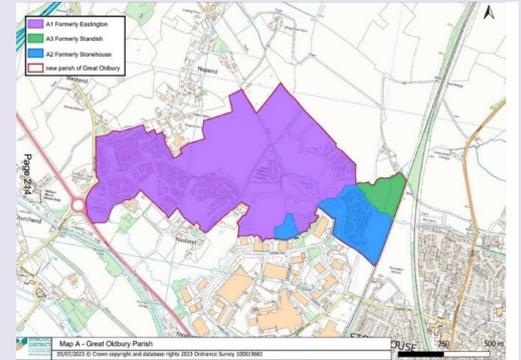
Green Walk Matters

With construction on the site proceeding, and the final new build homes now well under way, as is the reconstruction of the stable block, an end is in sight. The PC ensured that bridleway signs were delivered to the developers (PJ Livesey) at the end of January, for installation along the path. It also continues to engage on the location of the defibrillator and noticeboard, and follow-up on planning condition matters more generally. A partial list of these at present relates to species/bat-monitoring, reconstruction of Horsemarling Lane, which has been considerably delayed, and the construction of the natural play area. **AB**



Governance Reform

The Stroud District Council (Reorganisation of Community Governance) Order 2023 will come into force on 1st April 2024. There will be a new parish of Great Oldbury, which will include a small area of land formerly sitting within the Standish Parish boundary. This was authorised by Stroud District Council in December. Standish Parish Council had previously agreed to the changes. **OK**



Biodiversity in Standish

Biodiversity is the variety of all life on Earth, according to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) (Biodiversity 2020). It includes all species of animals and plants – everything that is alive on our planet.

We are fortunate to have much information on the biodiversity in our area due to members of the community who regularly record wildlife sightings in Standish. Juliet Bailey has been recording here since 2001 and Roy Widgery since 2016. They send data records to organisations such as British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), Defra, The Wildlife Trust and Butterfly Conservation.

You can also help by observing and recording wildlife in your gardens. Gardens are really important habitats for wildlife. The more we understand how birds and animals use our gardens, the more we can improve our village and our individual gardens for wildlife.

Here is a link to a garden observation site. Garden BirdWatch | BTO - British Trust for Ornithology
In Standish we are already hosts to such amazing wildlife as hedgehogs, water voles, eels, swifts, housemartins, barn owls, tawny owls and peregrine falcons.



Water vole in a Standish stream.

Since 1945 the UK has lost 98% of its meadows. The combined effect of habitat loss and climate change means that butterflies and moths are in severe decline across the UK. But ... it doesn't have to be that way. Butterfly Conservation is asking for everyone's help to transform the UK into a butterfly and moth haven by creating more wild spaces where they can thrive. Here is a link to their exciting project. Let's get Standish on the map! Let's Create Wild Spaces - Wild Spaces (wild-spaces.co.uk)

Under the 2021 Environment Act, public authorities (including parish councils) who operate in England must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England.

Government guidance published on 17th May 2023 clarifies that, as a public authority, town and parish councils must:

- Consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- Agree policies and specific objectives based on their consideration.
- Act to deliver their policies and achieve their objectives.

In particular, Standish Parish Council will aim to improve the biodiversity of the area in the following ways:

- consider the potential impact on biodiversity represented by planning applications.
- manage its land and property using environmentally friendly practices that will

promote biodiversity.

- support local businesses & council operations in the adoption of low impact practices.
- support residents and local organisation activities to enhance and promote biodiversity.

The full Standish PC Biodiversity policy will be available to read on the PC website at <https://standishvillage.co.uk/council-policies/>

There is also a detailed Biodiversity paper in the draft Neighbourhood Development Plan which is currently being updated and should be on the website soon. It contains detailed lists of species recorded in Standish.

This is a very useful and informative link to S.Gloucestershire Field Guide to assist anyone with little or no ecological background in supporting biodiversity and conservation.

Local Nature Action Plan Field Guide (southglos.gov.uk)

AW



An eel on its way to the Sargasso Sea via Green Walk.

Climate Emergency

On 7th November 2019 Standish Parish Council declared a Climate Emergency and agreed to work towards a target of 2030 for Standish to become carbon neutral.

With the recent information that the global temperature has risen by 1.5°C and the more extreme weather we are experiencing, the need to join forces and think of ways we can limit our emissions and move towards climate neutrality is essential.

The PC has raised awareness of climate issues with wildflower and tree walks and talks, has established wildflower areas and worked with the Village Hall Committee to erect swift boxes and bat boxes on the village hall – but much more needs to be done.

We have also carried out traffic surveys to show the state of the B4008, carried out footpath surveys and reported to the PROW officer where stiles etc need replacing and have commented on biodiversity issues and sustainability (or lack of) in planning applications.

It would be great to have input from our community. There is lots of support (and some funding) for climate emergency projects. Let us know if you are interested. **AW**

Oxlynch Lane / Roddy Lane – new signage – will it work?

A significant number of vehicles, including HGVs, attempt to access Green Walk via Roddy Lane, even though this access has been closed to all vehicles for many years. This has resulted in considerable damage to the road surface and verges. In turn, after the heavy rainfalls, a large amount of detritus is washed down the lane blocking ditches and leaving mud on the road.

Drivers ignore signs at the entrance to Roddy Lane, convinced that their Satnav knows better. Highways are not in a position to dissuade drivers and so the Parish Council has put up a sign at the entrance to Oxlynch Lane from the B4008, advising drivers to ignore their Satnav. It remains to be seen whether this will be effective in the longer term but there have been at least 2 instances of the warning being ignored. In one case the driver of a van chose to drive through the brideway entrance to Green Walk damaging a lawn. **ROBERT KELLIE**

A Tribute to the Chair of the Parish Council

Sue Hartley has worked tirelessly as Chair of the Parish Council since her election to this position in February 2017. She has dedicated many hours each week, on behalf of the Parish, taking a lead on the Neighbourhood Development Plan project, the Safe and Sustainable Travel Working Group (which developed into the Multi-User Path project), the Urbaser Community Liaison Group (maintaining oversight of the incinerator) and Community Fund Group (making decisions about the allocation of the fund), editing and producing the twice yearly Parish Newsletter and numerous other tasks on behalf of our community.

Sue became a Councillor in 2015 and we are truly grateful for her dedication and all the work she has done for the Parish since that time. Many members of the Parish have been in touch with her, requesting assistance and input with issues and problems. These requests have always been attended to in a timely and thorough manner.

Sue will not be seeking re-election to the Parish Council in May 2024. **RK**

Tree Tour of Green Walk

On Sunday, September 3rd I was delighted to lead a tree tour around some of the wonderful trees at Green Walk. Joined by around twenty people, we had some really interesting discussions about the value that trees bring to our communities, and the importance of tree care and arboriculture in making sure they are properly looked after. Many topics were covered during the walk, including pests and diseases, biosecurity, tree species selection for a changing climate and the dangers which development can pose to trees.

We were also able to spend some time enjoying the magnificent individual specimen trees around Green Walk such as the ancient pedunculate oak, propped and boarded in the woodland area, the unusual cut-leaf beech by the drive and the magnificent cedar.

Of particular interest is the cork oak, the champion tree of this species in the UK and arguably the most important tree on the site.

My personal favourite is the Lucombe Oak, a naturally occurring hybrid between the turkey oak and cork oak named after Exeter plantsman William Lucombe, who discovered the tree in the mid-18th century and loved it so much he had his coffin made out of it. We hope to organise some more tree tours around Standish in 2024. If you are interested, please get in touch with the Parish Council and we will let you know when we have some dates lined up.

John Parker, Standish Parish Councillor and CEO of the Arboricultural Association



Standish Village Hall

The task of keeping the Village Hall in good order has continued during the second half of 2023. The work refurbishing the front of the building by repairing and repainting the cast iron gutters, downpipes, and vent pipe has been completed together with the fitting of the swift nesting boxes on the front of the building and the bat boxes on the rear elevation.

The stonework has been re-pointed where it was showing signs of damp ingress.

This work has once again been generously funded by the Urbaser Community Fund, for which the Village Hall Committee is extremely grateful.

The other positive news is that a new cooker has been funded by the County Council's 'Build Back Better' Scheme and was installed in January.

We are continuing to see more people use the excellent facilities available at the Village Hall which is a real community asset.

To book the Village Hall visit <http://www.standishvillage.co.uk> for details.

Ian Richens, Village Hall Management Committee Chairman

Parish Handyperson

The parish employs a handyperson (Terry Hefferman) to carry out maintenance work on Parish Council assets such as the bus shelters, public benches, parish signs etc. He is now also responsible for maintaining the grass areas belonging to the Parish.

However, the predominant task is to keep the roadsides clear of litter. This work is necessary due to the large number of motorists passing through the parish, who choose to throw food wrappers, cans etc out of their vehicles, rather than disposing of their rubbish appropriately. Clearing the roadside litter is fraught with hazards due to the volume and speed of the traffic along our local roads. Please do keep a wary eye out for him when he is working. Terry's work also includes tidying and trimming vegetation around bus stops and other public amenity areas and ensuring signs are visible and legible.

We are hugely grateful to him for his dedicated work. **RK**



Gardening for Wildlife and the climate emergency (with refreshments)

The Parish Council is planning an exciting presentation in the Village Hall on Sat 20th April at 2.30pm to help us all support and encourage the wildlife in Standish. Chloe Cox from Wild Stroud will show us how best to garden to encourage wildlife. We will find out (amongst other things) how to build a hoverfly lagoon, what to plant for a changing climate, how to attract pollinators and how to support hedgehogs. There will be a presentation by the Wildhogs rescue centre. Garden Guardians focus on helping people reconnect with the natural world encouraging each of us to do our bit to help the planet. There will be activities for children and refreshments for all to enjoy. Stroud Valleys Projects will also talk about some of their local activities. **AW**

Council Tax 24/25

The Parish Council set its Council Tax rate for 2024-25 at its January meeting.

Mindful of financial pressures and with an increase in the number of households in the parish, we have been able to maintain the Band D rate at £63.42, the same rate as for 2023-24. This will give the Council an income for the year of £15,863.

STANDISH COMMUNITY EVENTS

Water Station for the Stroud Half Marathon

Standish was pleased to provide the first water station for the Stroud Half Marathon run in October.



Harvest Supper 2023

The 2023 Harvest Supper, held on 21st October, was once again a sell-out! More than 60 villagers attended and had a fabulous evening with good food, excellent entertainment (thank you to David Bradbury on the keyboard) and splendid company.

Many thanks to the organisers who planned, cooked and served – Keren Mattfield, Melanie Gibson, Jackie Knights, Olly Kirkham, Lisa Lumsden, Terry Hefferman, Anneka Hefferman, Rob West, Sue Hartley and Alison Widgery.

Thanks to Phil and Rachel Smith who put the super quiz together and to Nigel and Keren Mattfield who prepared the fiendish dingbats! Many thanks to those who generously donated raffle prizes. Thank you to all who came!

We were delighted to be able to donate £920 to the Trussell Trust (Stroud Food Bank). A message from the Food Bank thanked us for our continuing support and stated that our donation would enable them to help more people through the continuing cost of living crisis and the costs of Christmas. Thank you to the Village Hall Management Committee for supporting this community event by funding expenses (food, drink, entertainment etc) of £452.05. **AW**



Harlequintet+ Concert

A splendid concert was performed by the Harlequintet+ brass ensemble in Standish Church on 3rd November. Local resident and brilliant musician, Gerald Hartley, was the founder member of, and played flugel horn and cornet with, the sextet.

The fundraising concert, prompted by the fact that Gerald had terminal cancer, was attended by over 100 people and was very well received. An amazing £1,560 was raised in donations for Longfield and Sue Ryder Hospices. **AW**

Last Post

For many years, Gerald also played Last Post and Reveille as part of the annual Remembrance Ceremony at the Standish War Memorial.

Very sadly, Gerald died on 21st January 2024.

Gerald's wife, Sue, and Harlequintet+ are planning a memorial concert later in the year. **AW**



Dates for your diary

STANDISH CONSORT CONCERT

The next Consort concert will take place in Holy Trinity Church, Minchinhampton on Sat 13th April, 7pm. The Consort will perform works by Renaissance and Baroque composers including Tallis, Byrd and Purcell. Tickets are available from Alison Widgery or from www.ticketsource.co.uk/standish-consort

GARDENING FOR WILDLIFE TALK – Sat 20th April 2.30 in the Village Hall

Find out how to encourage and support the biodiversity in your garden. Delicious refreshments and some children's activities will be available.

STANDISH TREE WALK

A date in May, to be confirmed

To keep up to date with activities and events in Standish visit the website at www.standishvillage.co.uk and join the village mailchimp list.



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