



Standish Parish Council

NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2025-26

Standish Multi-User Path: The Grand Opening!



Representatives of Parish, District and County Councils at the official opening of the Standish Multi-User Path

The first phase of the Standish multi-user path was officially opened in September 2025.

Warm tributes were paid by County and District Council representatives to the work of the Parish Council in bringing the path to fruition. Cllr Roger Whyborn, Cabinet Member for Sustainable Transport & Strategic Highways at Gloucestershire County Council, said: "This project is a shining example of how all tiers of local government can work together to influence positive change and deliver improved infrastructure for communities. We're grateful for the funding from Stroud District Council and the perseverance of Standish Parish Council in making this a reality."

Cllr Chloe Turner, Leader of Stroud District Council, added: "The vision and ambition of Standish Parish Council in this project over many years has been inspiring, and I'm so pleased we have been able to partner with them and with Gloucestershire County Council to bring the path to life."

The Standish multi-user path will form a vital link in the 26-mile Gloucestershire Cycling and Walking Spine, which will eventually stretch from Stroud in the south to Bishop's Cleeve in the north,

connecting Gloucester and Cheltenham along the way. Once complete, it will be the longest new active travel corridor of its kind in the UK.

A few weeks ago, Gloucestershire County Council was awarded the Level 3 rating by Active Travel England (ATE), recognising the county as one of England's highest performing authorities for active travel. It is the only predominantly rural council to achieve this milestone.

The Parish Council is now keeping in regular contact with the Projects Team about Phase 2 of the Standish path, which will extend it to the bridleway at Crowcumpill. The team has been working through some challenges, particularly around reducing vegetation removal near Crowcumpill Cottages. We await an updated forecast for the Phase 2 start date. We hope it will be soon.

We are also taking a keen interest in plans for the planting of trees and shrubs around the area of the path. Our resident expert, Cllr John Parker is making contact with the County Council Tree Team, to discuss what they have in mind. It will be important to choose species carefully to avoid issues such as encroachment onto the path or leaf drop that could cause drainage or slip hazards.

SUE HARTLEY

A New Parish Councillor

After only a short period as a councillor, Andrew Walker resigned for personal reasons in October 2025. The Parish Council is fortunate to have recruited a replacement with minimum delay and welcomed Richard Faith, who joined us by co-option, in December. Richard introduces himself here:

"I moved to Standish about 4 years ago and live in Arlebrook, near the middle of the parish. I'm also familiar with Green Walk, as I often visit my wife's family there.

Although I moved here from a city, I grew up on a small village farm and being close to the natural environment is something that has always been important to me.

The rural character of Standish and the close presence of wildlife are things I cherish but, as we experience more intense summers, I have seen the impact on the fields and meadows. My family are trying to adapt our own garden to survive more intense weather and as a councillor I will be supportive of ways to improve natural resilience and biodiversity around the parish.

While Standish is rural it isn't remote; development here and close by is an issue needing frequent attention. My professional background as an architect will be useful in considering planning issues, the impact of development and any potential benefits.

I'm joining the Parish Council as Gloucestershire anticipates having a single unitary authority. We will have a new relationship with the county council in the future. In this change, I see the Parish Council being a consistent voice to represent local issues and, as a small parish, to ensure Standish is served equitably."

Parish Council Budget 2026-27

The January meeting of the Parish Council set its budget for the coming year. With 27 new homes in the parish paying Council Tax, we again decided not to increase the tax payable by each household, meaning Standish residents will not have seen an increase in the parish rate for 4 years. The Council Tax payable at Band D remains £63.42. The Council's budget for 2025-26 can be viewed on the Standish Village website under the Parish Council's heading Financial Audits and General Finance. **SH**

Standish Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) Approaches Completion

It is some time since we have updated you on the NDP work being undertaken by a small group of parish councillors and our previous council colleague, Sue Oppenheimer. An NDP is a legal planning document which sits under the Local Plan of the planning authority. It provides relevant local information and detail that it would be hard to incorporate in the Local Plan which, in our case, covers the entire Stroud District. It plays a part in assessing planning applications and guiding infrastructure provision at local level.

Although supported by a planning consultant, our first attempt to produce an NDP failed to win the approval of the Independent Examiner in 2022. Since then (although interrupted for a time by personal bereavement) we have been working to revise the plan with the help of planners at Stroud District Council. It is now nearing completion and we hope to have it out to you for consultation in the next few months. There will be two stages to the consultation, the first undertaken by the Parish Council and the second (once any necessary amendments have been made), by the District Council. It will then go to an Independent Examiner and lastly, if all is well, to a referendum of the Standish population. **SH**

Defibrillator News



Unfortunately, the defibrillator that was installed at Standish Village Hall 5 years ago is not functioning at the moment. The new pads and battery it requires are made in the USA and are not currently available here. Having tried to access new spares with no success, we are planning to source a new machine. If we eventually obtain spares for the older machine, we will resite it within the village. For the moment, the nearest defibrillators are at Green Walk and Stonehouse Coop.

We hope to organise a defibrillator training session soon and will make the details available. The session we had when we first installed the defibrillator was excellent and also covered some basic first aid. In the meantime, the British Heart Foundation has a 'Learn to save a life' (Revivr) online guide on how to respond to a cardiac arrest. <https://revir.bhf.org.uk> **ALISON WIDGERY**

Green Walk Matters

With the developer close to leaving the site, the Parish Council has been keen to see progress on a number of outstanding planning conditions and has been maintaining regular contact with PJ Livesey, Stroud planners and (through our County Councillor, John Patient) County Highways. We have now heard from PJ Livesey that the play area, estate road surfacing and tree planting works are scheduled to be completed in the spring, specifically during March, subject to weather conditions. We have been in contact to ask for further details on the tree planting.

The Horsemarling Lane situation is more problematic. Although, in 2021, County Highways had agreed to outline plans that appeared to make best possible provision for all users within the existing limitations of the lane, we now understand that the detailed plans submitted in the past few months have not met the requirements of a Road Safety Audit. We understand that Stroud District Council, as the planning authority, is actively involved in trying to achieve a resolution. The Parish Council will continue to monitor the situation closely and do all it can to contribute towards a satisfactory outcome. **SH**

Footpaths in Standish

In 2019, many Standish residents helped to do a survey of local footpaths and bridleways. We have been able to address some of the issues raised in that survey but certainly not all.

If you are aware of any footpaths, bridleways, stiles or gates that require attention, please let us know. Some issues we may be able to resolve with a willing working group*; for others, we may need to contact the local Public Rights of Way officer for information and assistance. We have also allocated a portion of our budget and hope to source some external funding to do more to support active travel in Standish.

Please let Elizabeth Oakley, Parish Clerk, know of any issues requiring attention on clerk@standishpc.org.uk

*If you would like to organise or join a group clearing footpaths, please let Elizabeth know. We look forward to hearing from you! **AW**

Safeguarding Our Trees

Standish is home to many wonderful trees such as ancient open-grown oaks, the limes around the churchyard, the beech of Standish Woods and a magnificent collection of specimens at Green Walk, including the UK Champion cork oak. However, it may surprise you to know that relatively few of the trees in the parish have legal protection through Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs).

The TPO system enables the Local Planning Authority to control what happens to trees of particular importance, protecting them from removal and ensuring that any pruning work is undertaken by an appropriately qualified, experienced and insured arboricultural professional. The main group of trees in Standish protected by a TPO is that at Green Walk. In September 2025, the Edward II Oaks to the north of Standish Lane also received legal protection, in part due to the intervention of the Parish Council.

The key criteria for a tree being deemed worthy of a TPO is that it must have amenity value and ideally be visible from land that is accessible to the public. It must not be dead, dying or diseased. It can help if the tree has some particular importance in terms of size, form, rarity or landscape contribution, or if it is under imminent threat from development or removal – however, at that point it can sometimes be too late. Please note that TPOs are typically not placed on trees owned and managed by a Local Authority (such as Gloucestershire County or Stroud District Council).

Standish Parish Council invites residents to get in touch if they know of a tree which they think deserves protection. Please check the TPO map on the Stroud District Council website (visit stroud.gov.uk, then search for TREES) to check if it already has a TPO. If not, email the Parish Council with a detailed location and/or map, and a photograph of the tree. If appropriate, we can then contact Stroud District Council and request that a TPO be created. Thank you. **JOHN PARKER**

Green Walk - A Nature Lover's Eden

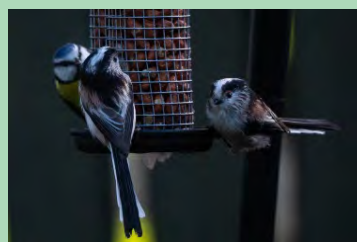
As a lifelong nature lover and avid wildlife photographer, moving to Green Walk last summer was a perfect decision. With such a wide diversity of wildlife in and around the community, I have great photo opportunities in the back garden daily.

Daily visitors in winter are Chaffinch, Goldfinch, Long tailed, Blue and Great Tits, Robin, Blackbird, Dunnock, Jackdaw, Magpie, Wood Pigeon and Greater Spotted Woodpecker. Nuthatch, Collared Dove, Song Thrush and Wrens are seen a couple of times a week.

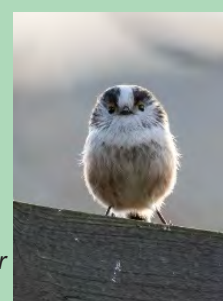


The Greater Spotted Woodpecker and Nuthatches are favourite visitors.

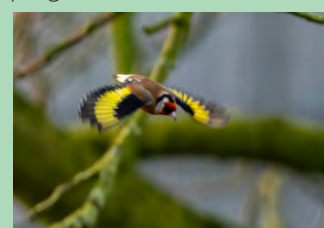
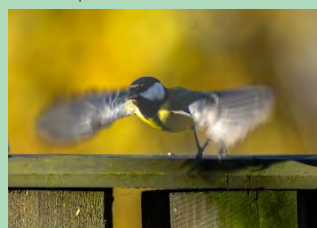
Providing food for the birds in winter is very important, so we have a variety of feeders and food to suit the different species. As well as the usual hanging peanut, fat and seed feeders, a ground station is essential for the robins, blackbirds, chaffinches and dunnocks that cannot perch on the suspended feeders.



The Long Tailed Tits swarm in together sometimes with half a dozen or more on a feeder at one time



For my bird photographs I mostly use a 400-800mm lens that enables me to get close to even the smallest birds. The big challenge is to capture birds in flight, not a problem for larger birds but getting pin sharp shots for the smallest birds requires a lot of practice and is a work in progress.



Great Tit and Goldfinch heading for the food.

Long Tailed tits are particularly elusive when in the air but with patience and practice I will hopefully have some pictures to share in a future issue.

Charlie Pratten, Green Walk resident

Farming with Nature

A healthy and thriving natural world is essential to support a resilient food system. With almost 70% of land in England used for farming, where and how food is produced has a huge impact on nature's recovery. The recovery of nature at scale depends on the choices we make for the future of farming. By working with nature, and making more space for wildlife, farmers can improve the natural assets and ecosystems on their land. Healthy soils, clean and plentiful water, and thriving invertebrate populations are the foundation of our farming system — yet are threatened by climate change and ecological breakdown. The UK Government's Food Security Report 2024 makes it clear that climate change and ecological breakdown pose existential threats to food security. "Long term decline in the UK's natural capital is a pressing risk to UK food production," and "Climate change, nature loss and water insecurity pose significant risks to the ability of global food production to meet demand over the longer term." Climate change no longer presents abstract threats confined to a post-apocalyptic future. The consequences are now playing out across the UK with significant impacts for our ability to produce food. The restoration of nature – including natural habitats, ecosystems, rivers, uplands, peatlands soils and much, much more – is critical to feeding ourselves in the future.

From the Wild Life Trust article 'Food and Farming in the Nature and Climate Crises. How farming with nature can support farmers, people and the planet'. <https://share.google/j4MB9bG0NQ9PvOJ1B>

I am very grateful to Standish farmers who have kindly shared information about some of the things they do to support wildlife and soil health.

'We start the hedge cutting year, usually in February. The hedges along the lane have to be done every year but all the others are done in rotation over three years. We round the tops to allow new growth at the bottom to thicken the hedge which supports wildlife. Chemical fertiliser use has been reduced by 50% by better use of farmyard manure together with other trace elements as needed. Wide margins are left around a lot of the fields to support wildlife*

*and narrower margins on all the others. Ponds have been dug out in some damp places. There are long term grass leys, two fields left for wild flowers and bird seed with the lower end of the long field with the ancient oaks put down to wild flowers to protect the tree roots. Only a small amount of ground is ploughed, the rest is minimum tillage.** We also practise a four-year crop rotation'.*

Melanie and John Gibson, New House Farm (Beth's Eggs)

*Hedgerows support up to 80% of British woodland birds. Not only that, they sustain over 2,000 wildlife species, either by providing shelter and food or by acting as routes to move through the countryside. Hedgerows also have a key role to play in addressing climate change: they prevent soil loss, reduce pollution and flooding, and regulate water supply; and they reduce greenhouse gases by storing a large amounts of carbon. Every kilometre of hedgerow has the capacity to store 600 to 900kg of carbon dioxide per year for up to 20 years! We've lost around 118,000 miles of healthy hedgerows since 1950: that's around 50% of UK hedgerow cover. In line with this national decline, the amount of hedgerow in Gloucestershire has decreased at an alarming rate.

**Minimum tillage uses less fuel than other methods, produces less soil erosion, improved water penetration and enhances soil health.

'Although we milk cows here at Horsemarling Farm, we have a keen interest in the soils. Everything the cows eat comes from the soils. The quality and quantity of what we grow is, of course, directly related to the soils and in turn this has a direct impact on the health and productivity of the livestock. A healthy soil is more productive and more resilient to the challenges it faces. We have been on the farm for nearly 5 years now and are continuing towards establishing more diverse grasses and multi- species swards that are more resilient to weather extremes. These diverse grasses will also benefit the soil and insects and invertebrates that live above and below the ground. Our new grasses are also accompanied by clovers that can provide nitrogen fixed from the atmosphere that will help the crops to grow'.

Jenny and John Percival, Horsemarling Farm (Stonehouse Milk) AW

STANDISH EVENTS: PAST AND FORTHCOMING

Harvest Supper 2025

Thank you for supporting this village event in September, and for your generosity. We raised £1015.57, which was greatly appreciated by the Stroud Food Bank.

The Supper was a sell-out for the third year running and supported by residents from all areas of the parish. The amazing team of Standish cooks produced another splendid spread, catering for a wide range of food requirements, that was enjoyed by all. The village hall is a great venue and it was very generous of the Village Hall Management Committee to support this community event. We were delighted to have the new dishwasher to speed the clearing up.

As it was held on National Apple Day, we had an apple theme running throughout. Local cider as a welcome drink (as well as prosecco) was very well received. The menu included parsnip and apple soup, apple pie, apple crumble as well as many other delicious offerings.

The entertainment – dingbats and an apple quiz were great icebreakers and pianist (David Bradbury) helped the evening go with a swing. Thank you to the hardy carpark monitors: it would be difficult without your patience and organisation.

To donate to the foodbank, see <https://strouddistrict.foodbank.org.uk> for details of how to donate ££, food or toiletries. The warehouse is on Hope Mill Lane, London Road GL5 2SH - very near the Stroud Brewery. **AW**



grant from Transition Stroud's Facilitation Fund: Inspiring Action for a Sustainable Future.

The workshop will be led by two facilitators and will help us understand the challenges and pressures around biodiversity, through a fun, collaborative, visual and accessible workshop, based on the Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystems (IPBES) report. Thank you to Jenny Faith who is helping to co-ordinate this event.

Places are limited so if you are interested please apply ASAP. ajwidgery1@gmail.com, 07974117960 or use the code on the flyer.

Free refreshments too!!! **AW**

Village Hall Report

Standish Village Hall has been in regular demand over the autumn and winter season, with the Christmas period being very busy.

The AGM reported that the Hall had had another successful year. However, it is disappointing that there were no new recruits to join the Committee and we do need to replace members who will be leaving in the near future.

The new dishwasher is a great asset and has been put to good use on a number of occasions - none more so than The Harvest Supper so ably organised by Alison Widgery and her band of helpers.

Once again, in 2026, the Hall has been booked for a Specialised International Film Festival during the first week of September. Note that entrance is free for local residents.

For Village Hall bookings visit <http://standishvillage.co.uk>

Ian Richens, Chairman

Gerald Hartley Memorial Concert, October 2025

The second memorial concert by Harlequintet+, the brass septet founded by Gerald, was a well-attended and joyful event. We raised £721.24, shared between Longfield and Sue Ryder Hospices and the Esme Orike Foundation. Thanks to the band and all the local friends who helped to make it a success. We hope to organise another concert in the autumn. **SH**

COMING SOON

Why Nature Matters Workshop,

Sat 7th March 2026 2-5pm, Standish Village Hall

The Parish Council is pleased to be funding a workshop looking at why nature matters and what we can do to support the biodiversity in our beautiful area. We are grateful to have been generously supported by a

Take Care on Local Lanes!

Local residents will be well aware of the dangers of our national speed-limited lanes. There have been several accidents near the bend on Standish Lane over the years. The latest occurred on 26th January, with the occupants of this car ending up in the ditch – shaken but fortunately unhurt. **SH**



MEET THE COUNCILLORS



SUE HARTLEY

CHAIR

01452 724000

suehartley@standishpc.org.uk



OLIVER KIRKHAM

VICE CHAIR

07887 793464

okirkham@googlemail.com



ANDREAS BIERMANN

07397 530503

a.biermann@gmail.com



RICHARD FAITH

07514910242

richardfaith@standishpc.org.uk



JOHN PARKER

07841 920188

john@trees.org.uk



ALISON WIDGERY

07974 117960

ajwidgery1@gmail.com

WEBSITE: www.standishvillage.co.uk
CLERK: clerk@standishpc.org.uk

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