

# LEISURE & CULTURE NEWS

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## ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

### PARKS AND COUNTRYSIDE

#### Pennington Riding High

Pennington Flash Country Park is proving to be a real gem in the Trust's portfolio of Greenspaces. The past year has seen footfall increase steadily and the number of visits to the golf course has been boosted.

On New Year's Day alone over 4,000 people visited the park and it is estimated that over 800,000 people will have visited the park by the end of the financial year, making Pennington one of the Trust's most visited attractions.

"We have tried to embrace the Trust's Getting Wigan Active vision at Pennington. We provide a natural environment that is attractive to people of all ages and is the perfect venue for people to relax," says Peter Alker, Pennington's Senior Ranger.

During the first three-quarters of the year Pennington has also seen golf visits increase by 30 per cent.

"The golf course has really taken off this year. While we are thankful for the unusually pleasant weather, all of the staff at Pennington, particularly the green keepers, have done a great job in providing an excellent course that all of our customers seem pleased with," continues Peter.

Contact: Peter Alker on 01942 605253.



#### Commemorative Benches

Since 1996 Pennington Flash has offered regular visitors to the park the opportunity to have commemorative benches placed on site to sustain the memory of their lost loved ones.

In all, there are now eight benches on site to mark the passing of regular visitors, including a local golf fanatic and an enthusiastic bird watcher.

"It is nice to give people the chance to have something tangible for family and friends to see when they visit. The benches are always well respected by other users and it is also beneficial for the site to have good quality benches throughout the park," says Peter Alker, Pennington Country Park Senior Ranger.

The commemorative bench service is offered by the park at cost price, and the rangers on site maintain the solid metal benches at no extra cost to the provider.

Contact: Peter Alker on 01942 605253.

## HAIGH HALL

### An Ice Day at Haigh

Visitors to Haigh Hall's newly refurbished 'Stables Tea Rooms' are now able to take away a taste of Haigh following the launch of Haigh Hall's own ice cream. To mark the official opening of the Stables Tea Rooms, Haigh's Catering Team launched the ice cream based on the flavours of the exotic fruits once grown in Haigh's famed tropical greenhouses.

The Mayor of Wigan, together with regular Haigh visitors, attended the opening of the Stables Tea Rooms. The new Tea Rooms, formerly known as the Haigh Café, have been transformed into a more warm and refreshing environment.



"We've invested in new state of the art kitchen equipment and food display units, new furniture and a completely new décor, making the Tea Rooms a more pleasant environment in which to enjoy a light meal or snack and relax," says Gary Povall, Haigh's Catering Manager. "We've also completely revamped the menu to offer a wider range of food to suit every palate. We will be serving everything from wraps to Danish pastries and are now offering exclusive picnic boxes and of course the brand new Haigh Hall flavour ice cream."

The new ice cream, produced locally by ice cream specialists Dowson's, is completely organic and contains no additives.

Contact: Gary Povall on 01942 832895

## GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

### Hard Work Pays Off

This year's Wigan Council Team of the Year Awards saw Grounds Maintenance, along with their Street Scene colleagues from Engineering Services, awarded third place in the category of "Customer Satisfaction".

First place went to Building Control, with the runners up spot going to Pest Control. The Trust's Schools Libraries Team were also in the running. It was the first time that Grounds Maintenance Services has been entered into the Team of the Year Awards, so to take third prize was a great achievement.

Grounds Maintenance and Street Scene staff take great pride in the job they do, making sure the borough's green spaces and streets are kept neat, tidy and well maintained, so it is great news that their hard work has been recognised in this way.

"It is great for staff and staff morale to receive an award like this and I am sure that all who attended will acclaim the success of the event. Hopefully, next time we will bring home the main prize," said Paul Barton.

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## SPORT AND HEALTHY LIVING

### SPORTS DEVELOPMENT UNIT

#### Service Area Boost

The Wigan Borough has made a significant step in the development of rugby league following the employment of a full time Service Area Co-ordinator, Ben Lazenby. This post is the culmination of years of hard work by the voluntary sector and is funded through a unique partnership between the RFL and the Trust. Ben has been given the task of pushing rugby league to new boundaries across the borough.

The role, in conjunction with both the professional and amateur clubs, will be to promote rugby league and ensure that the best possible opportunities are in place for players of all levels and abilities regardless of age, race or gender. Ben will also be able to support some of the best young talent in the area to reach their full potential.

Contact: Ben Lazenby on 01942 828510

## **Rugby Dinner Success**

On Saturday the 4<sup>th</sup> February, over two hundred members of the Wigan and Leigh rugby league community come together to raise money for the Service Area Youth Development Programme.

People from all areas of rugby league gathered to the JJB Stadium for the event, which raised over £6,000, of which £2,000 was raised through the auctioning of memorabilia. The Wigan Warriors and Leigh Centurions were in attendance and there were more famous faces from rugby league dotted around the tables, as well as good club representation from St Judes, St Cuthberts, St Patricks, Leigh Miners, Ashton, Orrell St James' and Ince Rose Bridge Rugby League clubs.

"This kind of backing and support from the clubs for the first dinner bodes incredibly well for the future. Hopefully, all of the Service Area clubs will come next year and we'll make it an even bigger and better night to remember," said Ben Lazenby, the Trust's Service Area Co-ordinator.

Wigan Warriors Dean Bell said, "The money raised is vital to the running and development of the Service Area. We now have more people aware of what we are trying to achieve, which is getting everyone involved in the Borough working together for the benefit of the game of Rugby League."

Contact: Ben Lazenby on 01942 828510

## **Cross Country Successes**

Over 65 youngsters from the borough took part in the Greater Manchester Secondary Schools Cross Country Championships. The team gained three individual medals and two team prizes. Ten borough athletes also qualified for the Greater Manchester team to compete in the English School Championships.

At primary school level over 400 pupils took part in the Wigan Cross Country Championships. All of the winners will represent Wigan at the Greater Manchester Primary School Championships and have been invited to receive specialist training.

Entries are now being taken for the Wigan 5km run being held on 2nd April at Haigh Hall Country Park. The event is in aid of the Mayor's Charity.

Contact: Marie Dixon on 01942 404982.

## **MUGA Is A Big Hit**

Platt Lane Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) is situated within the Standish Aspull & Shevington Township area. The project was completed in October 2004, and in November 2005 the project secured funding to appoint two qualified sports coaches who deliver diversionary activities to young people of all ages.

Young people in the area are given the opportunity to participate in multi-sports activities and games which are led and supervised by qualified community coaches from the Trust. The diversionary activities have had a fantastic response and to date the MUGA has attracted over 75 young people with approximately 20 - 30 attending each session.

The qualified coaches work with the young people at the MUGA on Monday, Wednesday and Friday evenings. The project is a multi-agency initiative and partner agencies include the Trust's Sports Development Unit, Community Protection, Greater Manchester Police, One Voice Tenants and Residents and Positive Futures.

Contact: John McMullen on 01942 828510



## **Youths Get In the Zone**

Sports Development's Youth Only Zone (YOZ) has been taking place since January 20<sup>th</sup> and has become an instant success. Aimed at assisting the Hindley TCSG Action Plan, the initiative is combating areas of anti-social behaviour and lack of facilities for young people.

With over 20 young people attending each Friday night at Hindley Sports Centre between 7pm and 9pm the YOZ has been gathering momentum each week. A host of sports are available including football, rugby, basketball, indoor hockey, badminton, tennis and, coming soon, dance and fitness sessions. The sessions are open to boys and girls aged 11-19 and are free of charge.

Contact: David Bradley on 01942 404971

## ACTIVE LIFE

### Champions Bar Rewarded

Robin Park's Conference and Catering Team was represented in this year's annual Wigan Council Team of the Year Awards. Placed in the 'Motivation' category, the team from the Champions Bar finished in a highly respectable third place.

Mike Woodruff, Centre Manager at Robin Park, says, "Since the new Conference and Catering Team was put together just over twelve months ago, the service has gone from strength to strength under the guidance of Cath Howarth, the Catering Manager. Due to their extreme motivation they have attracted new business such as weddings, sportsmans' dinners, computer fairs and many more. Needless to say I am very proud of what Cath, Mary, Emma and the team have achieved in such a short time".

Having a quality in-house catering team has helped the facility secure events such as World Championship Boxing and the British Gymnastics Championships. Wigan Athletic's Supporters Club has made the Champions Bar their base before every home game.

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## ACTIVE LIVING

### Well at Work

'Well @ Work' is a new pilot programme aimed at improving health and well-being in the workplace. In the Wigan Borough, the Active Living Team, the PCT and Healthworks are working in partnership with H J Heinz and Hindley Prison to encourage staff to be more healthy.

So far, employees have been offered health and lifestyle assessments and the team are now looking to implement initiatives to get people to be more active, eat healthier, lose weight and reduce stress.

"This is a great opportunity for staff at both workplaces to get involved. Our aim is to get people to understand the benefits of making small changes to their lifestyle and to understand that exercise and healthy eating can actually be fun," says Alison Gilfoyle from the Active Living Team.

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## SupaKidz Rise to the Challenge

On Monday 13<sup>th</sup> February around one hundred Year Five children from schools in Golborne gathered together at Golborne High School, for the Trust's *SupaKidz* competition.

The children competed in a series of events that tested co-ordination, movement, and health knowledge through activities including, the 'Clever Kidz - Mastermind Challenge', 'Loopy Hoops', skipping and other healthy activities.

"The aim of *SupaKidz* is to encourage and promote healthy lifestyles and help in the prevention of childhood obesity. We aim to provide the opportunity for children and young people to participate in a variety of fun and innovative health and fitness based activities," said Julie Wallis the Active Living Team's Children's Health and Physical Activity Officer.

Contact: Julie Wallis on 488480

## Moving More Often Celebration

Hundreds of elderly residents in Wigan Borough are feeling the benefits of a more active lifestyle thanks to the introduction of a little gentle exercise into their lives. The *Moving More Often* initiative has seen over 85 care staff receive training from the Trust's Active Living Team on how to deliver gentle exercise courses at residential care homes across the



borough.

The scheme trains care workers within residential homes, care settings and groups to deliver a variety of physical activities. All of the successful participants gathered at Robin Park Arena, to receive their certificates.

"The aim of *Moving More Often* is to get elderly residents of care homes to partake in some gentle exercise that will help improve their mobility, balance and ailments such as arthritis," says Alison Griffin from the Trust's Active Living Team.

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## **LIBRARIES, INFORMATION AND HERITAGE**

### **HERITAGE SERVICES**

#### **Volunteers Sign Up**

As part of the Trust's commitment to Lifelong Learning, Wigan Pier hosted a volunteer recruitment day in November last year. The aim of the day was to encourage people of any age from across the borough to become part of Wigan Heritage Service's volunteer team – with the choice of working at The Way We Were Museum, Trencherfield Mill, the History Shop or Leigh Archives.

Volunteers, with their knowledge of local history, enhance the visitor experience as well as providing invaluable support to staff. Volunteers themselves gain practical experience in a variety of areas and are offered the chance to undertake an NVQ in Heritage Care or Visitor Services. Heritage Services has volunteers who have shown many years of loyalty and commitment to the organisation and some strong friendships have developed.

The recruitment day was a success, with eight new volunteers signing up to work across our services. At Wigan Pier in particular, the volunteers are settling in well and becoming valued members of the team.

Contact: Debby Hill on 01942 705747

#### **Holocaust Remembered**

The Trust once again led the arrangements for this year's National Holocaust Day remembrance services on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2006. The commemoration ceremonies included moving readings and poetry at Wigan Town Hall and the Turnpike Centre in Leigh.

The theme chosen for this year's event was 'One Person *Can* Make a Difference', to recognise the work of those who have helped the survivors of genocide attacks.

"We greatly appreciate the efforts of everyone involved in the day's events. Both events were really well attended and we are glad to see that the day is still held in high regard by the people of Wigan and Leigh," said Carole Tydesley, Heritage Services Manager.

Contact: Philip Butler on 01942 827594

#### **Atherton Library's New Hours**

Atherton Library is opening its doors to the public earlier from Monday 27<sup>th</sup> February in a move aimed to provide a more family friendly service.

The library will open from 9am instead of 9.30am in the week, closing earlier on a Friday evening with Saturday's hours remaining the same. The new hours will run for a trial period of three months to evaluate how successful they are.

The revised opening hours will be:

- Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday: 9am to 7pm
- Thursday: closed all day
- Friday: 9am to 5pm
- Saturday: 9.30am to 12.30pm

"We get lots of requests from the public to open earlier during the week and we are particularly hoping to attract parents who will be on their way from schools in the morning," explains Joyce Peat, Communities Library Officer.

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## **COMMUNITY REGENERATION**

### **YOUTH AND COMMUNITY**

#### **Funding for Voluntary Sector Project**

Developed by the Cultural Partnership and funded initially through the local Neighbourhood Renewal Programme, this project employs a full-time officer charged with responsibility to:

- build capacity across the 'cultural voluntary sector' so as to enable successful project delivery and the achievement of sustainable legacies with lasting impact
- work on the front line to guide and support lead contacts in arts groups, those concerned with the environment, heritage, play and sport
- increase the accessibility of information on funding streams relevant to and supportive of culture

It is founded on the premise that if a 'lively mix of leisure and culture' is to be achieved the community and voluntary sectors need to be mobilised alongside officers from the public sector.

This project is about equipping local communities to grow their own projects and achieve goals of specific importance in their neighbourhoods.

Building on the phase one successes and lessons learned to date, phase two will see the Project Officer continue to assist with advice on identifying and securing funding. It is hoped that the sector's capacity can be increased through training sessions provided for voluntary groups.

The training packages will initially be rolled-out by the Funding Project but also in the Hag Fold area, with further training opportunities offered to partner and stakeholder organisations with the possibility of borough-wide cover.

Since the beginning of phase 2 in December 2005 (with Zenno Vattev's appointment as successor to Elaine Hiser) there have been 31 groups that have received advice and support on identifying funding.

Contact: John Hesketh on 01942 486916

### **Kick Racism Lunch Proves Effective**

An event to strengthen Wigan Borough's already successful Kick Racism Out Of Football campaign took place on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> February, at the Turnpike Centre in Leigh as part of Hate Crime Awareness Week.

All of the key partners who took part in Wigan Borough's anti-racism campaign 'Kick Racism Out Of Football' came together to celebrate the success of the 2005 programme, and to discuss ways in which the campaign can be further developed in 2006.

"Today's gathering shows how important the Kick Racism campaign is to many people in the borough and we, as a Trust, are committed to continue leading the campaign," said Rodney Hill, Chief Executive of the Trust.

Over 60 people attended the lunch from the local community and across the Council's departments. Many new ideas and networks were created that will have a benefit to the 2006 campaign.

Contact: John Hesketh on 01942 486916

## **PLAY**

### **New Community Group Formed!**

Consultation has been carried out with residents and children who live next to Cromer Drive play area in Atherton. The Township of Atherton had agreed to invest in the area and it was felt that all local residents should have their say on how the money was spent.

The success of the consultation has meant that a new group of residents have agreed to keep meeting to make further improvements to the play area and its surroundings.

A new Activity Trim Trail is to be installed before the Easter holidays, with other play areas in Atherton to be updated including Upton Rd, Howe Bridge Sports Centre and Central Park.

### **Ashfield Park to host National Playday**

National Playday, the biggest event in the Play Section's calendar, is to be held in Wigan this year. The Play Section, local councillors and community groups are already planning the big event, which usually attracts over 2000 children.



This year, the event will take place at Ashfield park on the 2nd August 2006, 10am till 3pm.

### **Monaco Play Sessions a Huge Hit**

The regular Monday evening play sessions for the under fives are proving to be a huge hit at the Monaco Ballroom. The sessions include playing with large inflatables, lots of arts and crafts activities, group games and singing.

Ninety people regularly attend these sessions and Chris Hayes, who leads the project says, 'If they get any popular we will have to start a booking system!'

Contact: Deborah Freeman on 486920

## ARTS AND FESTIVALS

### Gearing Up for Arts For All

The Trust's hugely successful summer arts event, *Arts For All*, is set to return to the grounds of Haigh Hall and is seeking community groups, visual artists and performers to take part.

Last year's *Arts For All* event saw over 4,000 visitors experience a vibrant and diverse mix of arts activities on a sunny July day in the grounds of Haigh Hall and Country Park. This year organisers are anticipating an even higher attendance and are urging would-be participants to make contact early to express their interest.

Supported by Greater Manchester Local Strategic Arts Fund, this free family day is a celebration of interactive visual arts activities, exhibitions, craft demonstrations and live performances. There will be opportunities to celebrate what has been achieved in the community, and a chance to discuss and meet artists, partners and participants who have taken part in new and exciting arts based projects during the year.

Martin Green, the Trust's Development Officer and co-ordinator of *Arts For All* says, "The programme for the day is not fully confirmed so there is still chance to get involved in any capacity."

Contact: Martin Green on 01942 709305

### European Influence at the Turnpike

As Manchester enjoys the brilliance of the British Art Show 6, the Turnpike Gallery is currently hosting a new international exhibition with more than a hint of capital influence. The exhibition runs until Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> March.

Specially organised by London-based artist and curator Andrew Bick, *The Kingston Turnpike* presents the work of five artists who are gaining a reputation across Europe including Philip Akkerman, Andrew Bick, A K Dolven, Tal R and Annelies Štrba.

"Visitors to the gallery will be able to delight in both the energy and subtlety of the paintings, video and photography on display and ponder the various ideas behind the work," says Martyn Lucas, Visual Arts Officer for the Trust.

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## CORPORATE SUPPORT

### LEISURE VENUES

#### Moorhouse on Monaco Mission

Award winning comedian and star of Phoenix Nights, Justin Moorhouse, will be appearing at the Monaco Ballroom on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> June. Justin's appearance is part of his imaginatively titled 'the difficult second tour' and follows on from sell-out shows at the Monaco by Phoenix co-stars Dave Spikey and Paddy McGuinness.

"Justin has performed in Wigan before. He put in a storming performance at the Mill at the Pier in 2004. His style fits in nicely with the string of top comedians we are putting on at the Monaco Ballroom," says Brian Yates, Leisure Venues Manager for the Trust. "I would urge people to buy their tickets as soon as possible so they won't be disappointed. Judging by the interest in the Dave Spikey and Paddy McGuinness gigs, it is sure to be a sell-out."

Widely recognised as one of most exciting talents to have emerged from the North West in recent years, Justin has come a long way since winning the 'City Life Comedian of the Year' Award back in 2000. He is now one of the most sought after acts on the British and International comedy circuit.

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