

BoroughLife

ISSUE 73. SPRING 2024

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Wigan Council

The Leader's column



Welcome to the Spring 2024 edition of Borough Life.

Important historical landmarks and major events appear to have been the norm for us in recent years. It looks like 2024 is no exception.

In April, Wigan Borough marked its 50 year anniversary following the major re-shuffle of local authority areas in the early 1970s.

In this edition we've spent some time looking back on the reasons behind that decision, what it meant for our communities and reflected on some of the major achievement, events and developments which have shaped our lives over those five decades.

As we know, the strength of our borough is in the networks of diverse but inter-connected neighbourhoods and communities that all have their own unique identities.

Through this reflection of our recent history, we explain why the Progress with Unity motto – which was associated with the borough's Coat of Arms - will see a re-emergence.

Meanwhile, this summer will see some of the music industry's biggest acts perform alongside our own local heroes for the most highly-anticipated events of a generation at Robin Park Arena.

We go behind-the-scenes to see what wider impact these gigs will have, why we should all be excited and what the acts themselves are feeling in the build-up to the big week.

The Borough Life team also catch up with our front-cover star Jane Daniels to highlight her amazing achievements and how

she is a trailblazer in the world of motorcycling.

Elsewhere, this edition shines a spotlight on some of the programmes and initiatives that are helping hundreds of young people into employment through apprenticeships.

There are also important updates on development schemes that are designed to provide families with supported living facilities and sustainable housing options and an in-depth look at how amazing volunteers help to make one of the borough's most-loved facilities tick.

I hope you enjoy this edition as we look ahead to a busy spring and summer season. As ever, keep an eye-out for the many events, activities and local businesses you can visit, enjoy and support. There's plenty to keep you busy.

David Molyneux


Councillor David Molyneux MBE
Leader, Wigan Council

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If you are a resident of Wigan Borough but haven't had a copy of Borough Life delivered through your letterbox, view it online at www.wigan.gov.uk/boroughlife

For all the latest updates straight to your phone, sign up to the weekly My Borough Life email update. Visit: www.wigan.gov.uk/boroughlife

For general comments email: boroughlife@wigan.gov.uk



MIX

Paper from
responsible sources

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On the cover

The recent success of motorcycling champion Jane Daniels has really captured our imagination here at Borough Life.

For our latest front cover, we met up with Jane and the team at Hyde Studios. We'd like to say thankyou for their support as the images really set the tone for an energetic edition with plenty of feel-good content. To watch a behind-the-scenes video of how the cover shoot all came together, visit: www.wigan.gov.uk/BoroughLifePlus

If you'd like to see some bonus content...

As usual, this edition of Borough Life is bursting with great stories, eye-catching images and handy tips.

So much so in fact that we have a whole bunch of extra content that didn't make it in. All is not lost though, as you can see all this bonus material by following this link: www.wigan.gov.uk/BoroughLifePlus







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Your latest news round-up.

8-9 | BUILT ON AMAZING VOLUNTEERS
It provides an incredibly important service for our residents through love and empathy. We meet the caring individuals who make Wigan and Leigh Hospice such an inspiring place.

10-13 | LIFE IN THE FAST LANE
A world champion and a pioneer in the world of motorcycling. It's been a remarkable year for homegrown hero Jane Daniels.

14-15 | JOIN US ON A BE WELL JOURNEY
Making positive, healthy changes is a big part of the Be Well movement that is making giant strides across the borough. We catch up with some of our members who have empowering stories to share.

16-17 | A TASTY TREK IN TYLDESLEY
A range of independent businesses creating a buzz and a scheme to revitalise its heritage means

this borough town has become a popular destination for visitors. So, we went along for a tour of Tyldesley.

18-19 | PETALS OF POSITIVITY
An act of kindness became a life-saver and led to a new movement that could make positive waves across the country.

20-21 | A CARING CAREER PATH
Our borough is leading the way when it comes to helping prepare young people build a career in social care.

22 | AN EYE ON THE FUTURE
Several schemes to create career opportunities are having a huge impact across the borough. We speak to some of the hard-working apprentices who are taking their first steps into the world of work.

23-30 | 50 YEARS OF WIGAN BOROUGH
It was a key date in the history of the areas that make up our borough. We delve into our archives to reflect on what has happened over the last five



decades and how Progress with Unity is making a comeback.

32-35 | A SUMMER OF MUSICAL MILESTONES
A superstar returning to his roots, plus there's amazing home-town gigs for the borough's rising stars. We look ahead to the Robin Park Arena music series with those making it happen both on stage and behind the scenes.

36-39 | WHAT'S ON
Your handy guide to what's going on in your area over the spring months and leading in to an exciting summer season.

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Board to boost Love-Leigh vision

A prominent business leader has been appointed to spearhead a new group to help oversee investment projects in Leigh town centre.

The Leigh Town Board (LTB) was formed earlier this year with Karen Cox, centre manager of Spinning Gate Shopping Centre, as its chairperson.

The town has been given more than £30m in central government funding and it is hoped this will unlock much more in private investment.

Karen said: “I am honoured to have been invited to become

chairperson. Our role will be to work alongside the council and local partners to develop a 10-year vision for our town and a three-year investment plan.

“I am really excited to bring representatives from lots of different sectors together to make sure we deliver the best for our town’s future.”

The LTB will oversee the spend of the government’s Long-Term Towns Fund, ensuring it is transparent, accountable and in line with national guidance.

www.wigan.gov.uk/LeighRegenerationProject



Support campaign is still Here For You

Two-years-on from the launch of Wigan Council’s cost-of-living campaign, Here for You, the authority is shining a light on the impact it has had on the lives of individuals across the borough.

Taking a pro-active and targeted approach, the local authority’s welfare support team have helped hundreds of residents access more than £1.6m in previously unclaimed welfare benefits.

And in the last year, over £350,000 of support for rent has been distributed to over 970 households through discretionary housing payments.

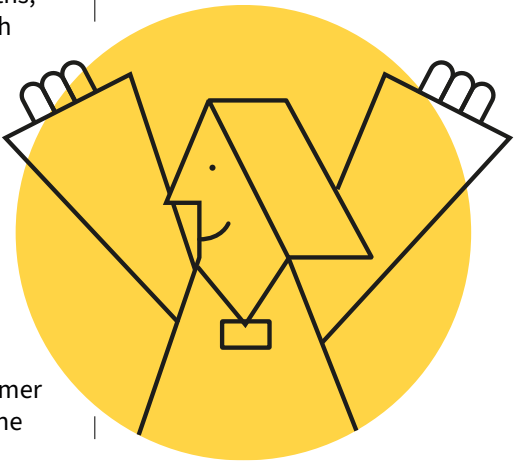
Throughout the winter months, the council joined forces with local voluntary, faith and community organisations to offer a network of more than 80 warm, welcoming spaces across the borough which saw thousands of visitors.

Over 7,500 children eligible for free school meals participated in holiday activities during Easter, summer and Christmas of 2023 and the

council distributed nearly £5.7m in food and fuel support to residents most in need through the Department for Work and Pensions’ Household Support Fund.

In the latest phase of activity, specialist advisers have been touring the borough’s libraries to offer expert advice and support to help people access financial support they are missing out on.

To find a date near you, visit **www.wigan.gov.uk/HelpToClaim**
For cost-of-living advice, visit: **www.wigan.gov.uk/HereForYou**



Make measles protection a priority

Residents across the borough are being encouraged to check their vaccination status to help protect them from measles.

Cases have been on the rise in the UK and the virus can spread easily among those who are unvaccinated or have only had one dose of the Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine.

If you are unsure whether you or your family have had the vaccine, speak to your GP. Measles can be very unpleasant and cause serious complications.

www.wigan.gov.uk/mmr Vaccination



Keeping you in the loop

Last year Wigan Council and the team behind Borough Life asked for your feedback on how you would like to be communicated with.

In our last edition of the magazine, we promised to let you know how your answers have shaped how we continue to keep you in the loop.

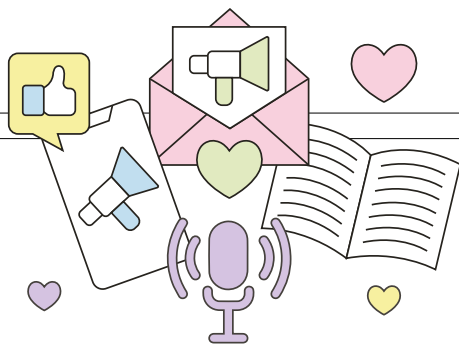
For Borough Life magazine, this spring edition has been published a bit later so that our popular What's On section incorporates the start of the summer season.

We have included more news from across our district centres,

highlighted how council decisions have had an impact on you and your communities and featured interviews with local people with fascinating stories to tell.

To keep up-to-date with all the latest news and what's on information, sign up to our weekly My Borough Life email visit www.wigan.gov.uk/boroughlife

And keep your eye out for this year's version of the survey, which will be shared later in 2024.



Around the borough

In **Ashton-in-Makerfield**, preparations are well underway for the town's levelling up project. Funding worth £6.6m was secured last year that will help refresh the town centre, improve walking and cycling routes and create community spaces.

The borough's next two Family Hubs are set to open this summer in **Hindley** and **Atherton**. These new facilities will offer a range of services under one roof and will be based at Hindley Nursery School on Mornington Road and Meadowbank Primary School, Formby Avenue, respectively.

As the summer approaches it is a great time to join the weekly walking groups and routes on offer at **Standish** and **Howe Bridge** leisure centres. You can even stay for a brew and a chat afterwards.

The Flashes Festival of Nature returns to **Pennington Flash** on May 25 and 26. A range of activities are available including guided walks, stalls, arts and crafts and more.

Music lovers rejoice as **Aspull** will play host to the Wigan International Jazz Festival, Thursday July 11 to 14. It is one of the highlights of the borough's cultural calendar featuring artists from across the globe. Tickets are on sale now.

In **Golborne**, plans for a new rail station – the first in Greater Manchester for 20 years - have taken a step forward. A business case was submitted to central government earlier this year, following a public consultation that received more than 3,000 responses.

For more information on all of the above, visit either

www.visitwigan.com
www.wigan.gov.uk or
www.bewellwigan.org.uk and search for the relevant key words.

Fly-tippers targeted as Keep It Clean grows

Fly-tipping is a crime

Fines for fly-tippers have been increased to £1,000 as Wigan Council sends a strong message that environmental crime will not be tolerated.

As part of the borough's Keep It Clean campaign, which recently celebrated its one-year anniversary, thousands of volunteers have been making a positive impact on the environment across the borough.

And the increase to fly-tipping fines, up from £400, which is the maximum the council is allowed to enforce, is aimed to boost efforts to keep our borough clean and tidy.

Councillor Paul Prescott, cabinet portfolio holder for planning, environmental services and transport, said: "Fly-tipping is a blight on our environment, it creates a hazard for people and local wildlife, and it really damages civic pride.

"We want the message out there loud and clear that fly-tipping is an unacceptable crime and by fining the maximum that we can, we will show offenders that we take this seriously across our borough."

Keep It Clean initiatives included waste amnesties in every ward, an increase to the council's free bulky waste collection offer, installing new bins, working with local volunteers, and a borough-wide campaign to raise awareness of the impact of litter and fly-tipping on our environment.

www.wigan.gov.uk/keepitclean

Protect yourself from doorstep crime

Residents are being warned of the risks of doorstep scammers and rogue traders.

On many occasions, it can start with a phone call or knock on the door, but can leave people thousands of pounds out of pocket with sub-standard works to homes or gardens. But there are simple steps to help safeguard yourself.

And you may like to become a neighbourhood champion to help raise awareness in your community.

Ian Kelsall, from Wigan Council's trading standards team, said: "Please use our local Good Trader Scheme. Each trader commits to a code of practice as you can see

how well they have been rated by previous customers.

"Avoid paying all the money upfront and in cash. Paying for a service before it's finished means it's harder to get the money back if the work is sub-standard, or hasn't been completed.

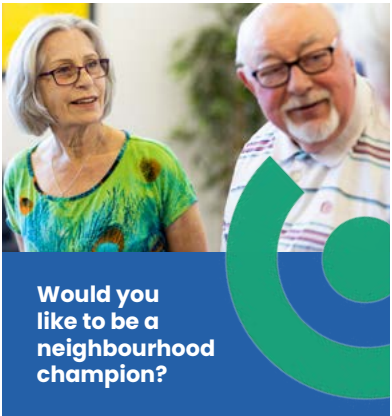
"Reputable traders will be happy to provide you with a written quote and leave it with you, so you have time to think about it.

"Get multiple quotes from different tradespeople and don't be pressured.

"Remember; all responsible contractors should have the facility to accept debit or credit card payments. This matters because

the way you pay for things affects your rights if there's a dispute."

For more information trading standards and Neighbourhood Champions, visit: www.wigan.gov.uk/NeighbourhoodChampion



Top names sign-up for town centre regeneration

A redevelopment scheme in Wigan town centre has seen two significant updates since the turn of the year.

Firstly, construction giants Galliford Try were unveiled as the construction partner for the first phase of the project to replace the former Galleries complex.

This was followed a few weeks later with the announcement that major hotel firm,

Hampton by Hilton, have come on board for the six-storey, 144-bedroom hotel, which is part of the site.

Wigan Council and its development partner Cityheart are overseeing the regeneration project that includes a new market hall, cinema, leisure facilities, housing, retail and restaurants.

Graham Dodd, managing director development, Hilton

UK and Ireland, said: "Our partnership with Wigan Council marks an exciting new chapter. We were impressed by the council and Cityheart's vision."

Darren Parker, managing director for Galliford Try Building North West, said: "The Galleries project will create a real landmark for the town centre and we look forward to playing our part in creating high-quality facilities for local people."

Rotary Club's big year will include a Believe Star

A Wigan Borough organisation renowned for helping worthy causes will be given a Believe Star in its centenary year.

Wigan Rotary Club turned 100 earlier this month with the bestowing of the star coinciding with its anniversary celebrations.

The community organisation is well known for establishing Wigan and Leigh Hospice in 1983 and has donated hundreds of thousands of pounds to local, national and international causes.

A star unveiling ceremony will be held on a date to be confirmed later in 2024.



Time to attend a TechMates Tea Party!

Wigan Borough residents are becoming safer and better internet users thanks to the council’s successful and expanding digital inclusion network.

Figures released to mark Safer Internet Day earlier this year show a significant rise in the number of locals who have been able to access support with online skills.

Regular TechMate Tea Parties, where unsure net users can drop-in for help with all kinds of tech issues, now take place in nine different locations across the borough – with 788 people attending a total of 168 such events in 2023.

Meanwhile, the council-led Digital Communities Partnership has grown to include 29 active partner organisations; assisting a further 1,469 adults last year and signposting 758 individuals to additional digital training and support.

Local volunteers have been at the heart of the TechMates expansion, giving up a combined 390 hours of their spare time last year to help those who are

less tech-savvy. Seven of the nine regular Tea Parties are now also exclusively volunteer-led.

Sarah Platt, who hosts weekly drop-ins at Ashton Library, said: “Internet safety is the biggest thing for me; I like knowing that people are safe online. There’s a lot of bad things out there and people who are vulnerable or new to the digital age need help to be safe.

“I’d highly recommend being a TechMate. You don’t need to know

everything; even if you know just a little bit about something that you’re passionate about it can take you miles!”

To find your nearest TechMate Tea Party or learn more about TechMates and the Digital Communities Partnership visit www.wigan.gov.uk/DigitalWigan

You can also follow the digital Wigan team on X and Instagram [@DigitalWigan](https://www.instagram.com/DigitalWigan)



Dedicated places to reflect and remember

Wigan Borough’s two dedicated sites for Covid-19 remembrance are now open to visitors.

The Places of Reflection are located in Mesnes Field in Wigan (left) and Lilford Park in Leigh (right). Both sites were unveiled in May.

They have been specially designed – following a public consultation – to provide a space to acknowledge the sacrifices and contributions made during the pandemic.

Leader of Wigan Council, Councillor David Molyneux MBE, said: “These two sites offer the

opportunity to relax and reflect, and also to remember those who are no longer with us.

“We know how important this project has been for our residents, including the many who contributed to the consultation to help develop the plans.”



Joan and Lilian with hospice staff member Chloe

A beautiful place with lots of kindness

It's Lilian Kearsley's 80th birthday and she's spending the day at one of her favourite places: Wigan and Leigh Hospice.

Lilian is one of the charity's longest serving volunteers, with an impressive 27 years of service at the hospice's base in Hindley.

After a busy morning shift answering phones on reception, she finally takes some time to have a cup of tea and slice of birthday cake.

"Everyone here is so kind and friendly," Lilian tells *Borough Life*. "You really are part of the team."

The hospice opened in 1983 and offers care for those who have been diagnosed with a life limiting illness, and support for their families and friends.

Over the years, Lilian, who lives in Hindley, has taken on different roles including supporting events, visiting patients, secretarial tasks, and helping with activities such as card making and flower arranging classes.

"I love being able to speak with the patients. Being here is also a good reminder that there are often people who might be in a more difficult situation than you are.

"If I'm worrying about having backache or this and that, I come here, and it can help put my problems into perspective."

Lilian's husband, a Methodist minister, who had originally introduced her to the hospice when he was a chaplain there, has been diagnosed with dementia.



Joan and Lilian with fellow volunteers

"I like how peaceful it is here," she adds. "Especially in the gardens. It's a place where I can come just for me, to get a bit of peace and independence."

"Things have changed a lot since I first started volunteering here, but it's always meant so much to me."

Wigan and Leigh Hospice relies on more than 400 volunteers like Lilian.

Around 300 work in the charity's 10 shops, but there is always a wide range of roles available.

Care is taken to match a volunteer's skills or interests with the right option for them, whether that is supporting the IT team, or helping to maintain the beautiful gardens.

Joan Rosen, from Abram, has been a volunteer at Wigan and Leigh Hospice for two years.

"I've always been a do-er and one day I was driving to the shops, and I saw the sign for the hospice and decided to call in and ask if they needed any volunteers. I'm so glad I did."

"I used to be a boss, I used to make big decisions in work, but as you get older and everything changes, you start to think you're useless at everything. Being here has given me my confidence back. It's completely changed the way I think and feel."

Joan largely supports the fundraising team, who need to generate £12,000 per day to fund the services the hospice offers.

"I realised I could help the fundraising team with practical tasks, so that they could focus on bigger projects. So, I do anything that's needed, from putting things in envelopes, to helping at events, but I'm very much treated as an important part of the team."

"Being a volunteer is also very freeing because I'm choosing to be here. That's not to say I don't work hard, sometimes the staff have to tell me to go home! But I'm doing it for me, so it feels different to having a job."

"Some people think of hospices as being places where people go to die, so they assume it will be miserable, but it's not like that. It's a beautiful place with lots of kindness. Volunteering here has changed my life."



Flowers in the hospice gardens

Could you give a helping hand to the hospice?

The hospice team provides a variety of services including:

- Community hospice nurse specialists, assess a patient's needs in their home and offer specialist advice.
- Hospice in your home, offer one-to-one visits as well as practical and emotional support to patients and loved ones.
- The inpatient care unit with individual rooms, overlooking the beautiful gardens in Hindley.
- Counselling and complementary therapy sessions at the Woodview Centre in Hindley – this includes support for families and friends.
- Education and training for health and social care professionals in Wigan Borough.

To find out more about the hospice go to **www.wlh.org.uk**

If you would like to get more information about being a volunteer at Wigan and Leigh Hospice, email **v@wlh.org.uk** or call **01942 525566**.

You do not need any specific skills or qualifications but should be compassionate, caring, and respectful. Volunteering hours can be flexible depending on how much time a volunteer can offer.



A homegrown champion

Motorcyclist Jane Daniels tells us about what life is like in the fast-lane.



See more at Borough Life Plus
wigan.gov.uk/boroughlifeplus



Already a multiple world champion, Jane Daniels made headlines this year for her amazing performance at the Dakar Rally. Borough Life caught up with the Standish born speedster.

Whether it was tinkering with bikes in the garage of the family home in Standish, or watching her dad, Andy, competing, Jane’s life has revolved around motorsports for as long as she can remember.

It was a hobby, that turned into a passion that – after a lot of hard work – saw her forge a successful career.

The 30-year-old has four world-titles to her name in the motorbiking event Enduros, which is an extended cross-country race involving racing through forestry, rock gardens, mx type sections, rugged terrain and over obstacles.

She is one of the most decorated riders on the scene. And it certainly sounds like this was destined from a young age.

“My dad always had motorbikes and I grew up around them,” she explains.

“When I was really young, he got me a quad (bike) and I’d go in my grandma’s garden or down the fields at the back of our house.”

Inspired by dad, a road-racer, and brother Gary (a fellow Enduro competitor) she decided to try off-road racing.

“Dad would follow me around to make sure I was okay, at first. The first race I ever entered (when she was 12) was on a flat track, because my dad thought if she goes off and falls, at least she won’t be upside down on a big hill!

“I did that race and I absolutely loved it.”

First race ticked off, the track to a motorsports career was clear and Jane was ready to accelerate. In 2012, a friend competed in the first two races of the world Enduro Championship – a concept which was entirely new to Jane.



Jane at the Dakar Rally



She was immediately sold on the concept, however, and soon after made her first international trip to Italy.

“It was 42 degrees when I did my first international event, and I drank too much water. I ended up doing the opposite of dehydrating, which is an actual thing; overhydrating.

“My first race went well, I really enjoyed myself, although my body wasn’t feeling great and I ended up in the medical tent!”

“I came third on the first day, but then I couldn’t start the second day because I was still sick.”

But all was not lost.

During that race, a scout for one of the racing teams noticed Jane and she was signed up for the next year.

For the last 11 years, she’s completed every season of the World Enduro championships, winning four times.

Her journey has taken her to some extreme locations, and she says this has taught her discipline, resilience, patience and consistency.

All these qualities were required in abundance earlier this year as she competed in the Dakar Rally – a gruelling 8,000km race across two weeks in the Saudi Arabian desert.

She attracted international attention, finishing as the highest placed Britain in the field and the sole female finisher.

This was all after a difficult start and after recovering from a crash on day six, and a few more crashes throughout the event.

“It’s a truly relentless race that’s a real test of your body and your bike; you’ve got to get both of them to the finish line. You’ve got to be very consistent and pace yourself, and ride within yourself.

“Every morning you would have two to five hours riding before you start the special stage, and then the same again.

“You’ll do six or eight hours in the special stage, and another few hours back to the paddock.

“I actually got into a really good flow. I forgot about racing everyone else and thought, I’ve just got to enjoy it.

“I’m here to finish and there is no pressure from the team for an outstanding result. I’ve just got to finish and enjoy it.

“When I kept reminding myself of that, it was way better; I wasn’t stressing or making stupid mistakes.”

A proud representative of her hometown, Jane was thrilled that her achievement led to a special congratulations from Wigan Borough’s first citizen.

An invitation was extended to visit the town hall for a civic reception and Jane, alongside



From the back garden in Standish, to the deserts of Saudi Arabia, via many tracks and courses along the way, Jane Daniels is a homegrown champion whose two-wheels are most certainly on the right track.

We can't wait to see what comes next.

dad Andy (pictured above), were thrilled to attend.

“Receiving a letter from the mayor of my hometown isn’t something that happens every day, we couldn’t believe it,” she recalls with a beaming smile.

“It was amazing to see the stained-glass windows in the town hall and it was a great day, definitely something we’ll remember for years to come.

And this was followed by a special guest appearance at the council’s International Women’s Day event (pictured above).

The former Standish High School student spoke to a packed-out audience at the Edge conference centre about being a trailblazer for women’s motorsport.

“I’m proud of my achievements and I hope I can pave the way for others to start a career in motorsports.

“I’ve got a lot of people looking up to me, there are a lot of young girls riding in the UK, with a lot more coming through the classes which is a really nice thing to see.”

Listen to the BoroughLife podcast with Jane Daniels

linktr.ee/wigancouncil



Mum Annette, Daniel Brennan with Chris Hewitt, Be Well instructor

Daniel's journey is an inspiration

Running a marathon and completing an Ironman triathlon are ambitious goals for anyone, let alone a teenager, but 18-year-old Daniel Brennan from Ashton-in-Makerfield is used to overcoming daunting challenges.

Four years ago he was at “rock bottom”. Struggling with his weight, his self-esteem and his mental health, he’d all but given up. Today, things couldn’t be more different.

“He’s changed in every single way,” says proud mum Annette. “He’s more confident, fitter, healthier; his whole outlook on life has totally changed.”

The catalyst for Daniel’s incredible transformation was Be Well’s family fitness team and, in particular, specialist wellbeing instructor Chris Hewitt.

Daniel was already known to Chris having been referred by his GP for weekly activity sessions and advice on nutrition and healthy habits. He’d been making good progress before Covid struck and sent him into a downward spiral.

With the nation in the grip of lockdown, Daniel would spend his days in his bedroom, in his pyjamas, isolated and eating packet after packet of crisps. His mum knew she had to

intervene, and that’s when she reached out to Chris to see if he could help.

The pair reunited, albeit virtually this time, with Chris offering guidance and encouragement over video calls to help Daniel get a handle on his unhealthy habits and rediscover a lost love for running and swimming.

“He’d get me to keep a food diary so I’d be accountable for what I was eating,” explains Daniel. “Instead of going straight for that pack of crisps I’d have to write it down first, and that made me think about what I was putting into my body.”



Chris would also map out weekly exercise plans and set Daniel the challenge of running a mile a day for 30 days. Inspired by his mentor, he ran not just 30 miles but 80.

“I’d always try to do that little bit more, I guess you could say I was doing it to impress Chris. It was Chris who kept me going, because now I wasn’t just doing it for myself – someone else was relying on me too.”

Daniel was soon running weekly Saturday morning 5ks, progressing from there to events such as the Wigan 10k, Wigan Half Marathon, and the West Lancashire Summer Triathlon – and now he’s even setting his sights on a marathon, the Ironman 70.3 in Bolton, and a Hyrox fitness race.

His remarkable improvement was recognised at the Believe Sports Awards in November 2022, when he was presented with the Changing Lifestyle Recognition Award.

But in many ways that is just the start of his story; one that continues to



inspire others treading the same path. Not only does Daniel regularly give talks to current family fitness participants, he’s now also an official member of the Be Well team as a swimming teacher and lifeguard at Ashton Leisure Centre.

His aspiration? To be the role model he wishes he’d had at the outset of his own journey.

“I know if I had someone to look up to who had been in the same situation, I’d have found it a lot easier to stay motivated to achieve what I wanted – because I’d have known it was possible,” he says.

“It makes me happy that I can give the kids a sense that they can achieve what they want to achieve – and, although it’s a slow process and it seems near impossible, it’s actually not.

“It’s my way of giving back to Chris and the team for what they did for me, and of helping others who are in the same position I was in to be happy with themselves.”

Your Stories

Be Well is helping people all over Wigan Borough make positive changes to their lives, empowering them to improve their health and wellbeing - whether at our Leisure Centres or out in the community, at the heart of our neighbourhoods. That’s our story, now here are some of yours...

Andy’s Story

“I didn’t want to lose that part of who I am...”

Andy’s life was turned upside down when he suffered a stroke - but through playing walking football with Be Well he’s rediscovering his real self.

Watch Andy’s story on YouTube:



Jenny’s Story

“I’ve met really inspirational instructors who have motivated me.”

Jenny joined Be Well to improve her fitness and achieve a healthier weight. Now, as a qualified group exercise instructor in her own right, she’s inspiring others in their wellbeing journey.

Watch Jenny’s story on YouTube:



Follow Be Well on social media



@bewellwigan



@BewellW



@BeWellWigan



Image courtesy of @mayhapcoffee Instagram

Tipples and treats on a trek through Tyldesley

A community-led project to revive the heart of a Wigan Borough town centre – coupled with the work of some enterprising entrepreneurs – means Tyldesley has moved quickly up the list of places to visit.

There’s a thriving scene of independent businesses bringing a fresh flavour to the high street in more ways than one.

Plus, its historic buildings with their charming architecture, including eye-catching sash windows and intricate mouldings and brickwork, have been lovingly restored.

The Borough Life team couldn’t wait to find out more so we paid a visit on a sunny Saturday in April.

Hearty portions, pancakes and more

For speciality coffee and a hearty brunch, Mayhap (below) is a must. Let’s just say you’ll never find minimalism and Mayhap in the same sentence.

From its vibrant, rustic décor to their modern menu packed full of generous portions served with a slice of good-old fashioned friendly customer service.



We were feeling savoury during our brunch stop-off and went for the chorizo hash; a Mediterranean medley of rich flavours featuring sour-dough toast topped with eggs, pesto, spinach, chorizo and potato seasoned with chilli. But it would’ve been a crying shame to visit and not try one of their popular pancake stacks.

So, the breakfast pancake was promptly ordered and arrived in all its buttermilk fluffiness with a fry-up trio of eggs, bacon and sausage topped with syrup.

Brunch is always better with a side of people watching and it was great to see families, friends and couples with their dogs (yes, it’s dog friendly) enjoy this new addition to Tyldesley’s high street.

Holistic health for furry friends

The next stop on our Tyldesley tour is The Dogs Deli (pictured right), a natural pet food shop stocking a wide variety of high quality food mainly for dogs but also rabbits, wild birds, hedgehogs and rodents.

Owners Emma and Jon Fernandez established the business in 2016 and are passionate about animals and canine diets.

Only stocking natural products, Emma explained that they're "picky about what we feed dogs" and returning customers mainly shop for the variety of raw food stocked in the freezers.

The Dogs Deli also specialise in holistic health, offering consultations for pet owners that cover canine care from weight management, allergies and even behavioural management all linking to diet.

You'll also find the couple's own brand of high-quality kibble; 'Amigo', the name inspired by Jon's Spanish roots. What sets this kibble apart from most? The higher percentage of meat, which is



nutritionally better for your furry friends. We did spot some products that you may not see in your typical pet-food shop, the most peculiar being a deer leg!

There are items you can pick up for yourself too like local chicken eggs, duck eggs and even quail eggs.

Time for a tipple

Thirsty from our Tyldesley-trekking, our next visit was The Markland (pictured above right). This bar is hard to miss with its name adorned in bright lights behind the bar - radiating through the windows and inviting you in.



The vibe feels modern industrial like the bars you might find in Manchester or Liverpool, with dark walls that contrast with exposed brick and stylish lighting.

The Markland is another dog friendly place on this high street, serving a range of beers, ciders and cocktails with a focus on whiskey.

The Markland offers the best of both worlds, perfect for a quiet Saturday afternoon drink but ideal if you're wanting a night out of toe-tapping to live music and a couple of espresso martinis that might get you up dancing.

Heritage project's impact

If you take a wander down Elliot Street and within Tyldesley's town centre conservation area, the impact of the Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) is clear to see.

Led by community organisation For Tyldesley CIC, the project is approaching the final year of its four-year action plan.

To see a progress report on what the project has delivered visit fortyldesley.co.uk





Sarah McCaig from Olive Owl Flowers

A blossoming idea to spread kindness is a life-saver

It started out as a kind act of generosity. It very quickly became a lifeline for someone when they needed it most.

Now, this initiative kick-started by a homegrown borough businesswoman is set to start a wave of positivity across the country.

Sarah McCaig is the founder of Olive Owl, a Wigan-based florists that brings vibrancy and colour to the borough's flourishing cohort of independent traders.

Earlier this year, to mark International Women's Day (IWD), she placed bunches of flowers at various locations

to celebrate the brilliant women in her hometown. But Sarah had no way of knowing just how important this act would prove to be. Shortly after, one of these blooms was discovered at a borough train station by mum-of-three Michaela, who was at crisis point.

Weighed down by suicidal thoughts, the simple message accompanying the flowers resonated with her; an affirmation that she mattered and would be able to ask for help.

This is where the #PetalsOfPositivity movement was born.

"When I placed those bunches, I had no idea the impact they would have," explains Sarah.

"I wanted to do something to help celebrate IWD, but they ended up doing something much more in saving a woman's life.

"When I received a message from Michaela about what had happened, I was blown away. I knew immediately that I could do something more."

Sarah hopes the message of #PetalsOfPositivity can become a nationwide mental health initiative and is encouraging her



fellow florists to join in. And her inspirational new friend Michaela (pictured above) is helping to spread the message, as her circumstances will be familiar to many.

“I was really hesitant to share this raw and upsetting time in my life, but my hope is that my vulnerability will encourage others to do the same,” Michaela says.

“I had been suffering with post-natal depression and it had spiralled. When you’re feeling suicidal, it’s almost impossible to think rationally.

“It was something about Sarah’s flowers and note that told me I mattered and kept me safe until I felt able to reach out for help.

“I am indebted to Sarah and my kids still have a mother thanks to the kindness she showed that day. I know that #PetalsOfPositivity will be a fantastic force for good.

“We’re all so busy day-to-day that sometimes we forget kindness and lose sight of what someone may be facing.

“However, it should be number one on our list of priorities because of the incredible impact it can have.



A little bit of kindness can go a long way.”

Fellow florists across the UK – including floral artists based in Liverpool, Manchester and Birmingham – have signed up to help spread Sarah’s message and will be placing free blooms with positive quotations in their communities.

From the day the seed was planted just a short time ago, #PetalsOfPositivity has come into bloom at a remarkable rate. But for Sarah, this is very much just the start of something special.

“I am forever grateful that it was Michaela who came across one of the bunches that day and I am in awe of her strength – she’s an inspiration to us all,” she says.

“I want to use this opportunity to ask other florists up and



down the UK to join me, we’re lucky to be surrounded by beautiful blooms every day, and it’s a small joy that we can pass onto others.

“Although I recognise it’s not going to fix the issues some people are facing, it could just be the lifeline they need to break their mindset and ask for help.”

If you’d like to get involved with **#PetalsOfPositivity** contact Sarah by email on **hello@oliveowl.co.uk** or send her a direct message on the Olive Owl Instagram page.

As part of its Be Kind movement, Wigan Council marks kindness day every year and promotes a number of initiatives to encourage people like Sarah to be kind. Visit **www.wigan.gov.uk/BeKind** to find out more.



Reach out to friends, family or a professional if you are struggling. You don’t have to go through it alone. Call Samaritans on **116 123**, any time - day or night.





Care to join us? There are so many ways to join one of our teams

A caring way to launch a new career

Jump-starting your career can be a daunting task, but for dozens of young people new pathways are being created into one of the most rewarding areas of work.

Through borough-wide partnerships with the NHS, Wigan and Leigh College and Edge Hill University, rising numbers of residents are getting the skills they need for a career in social care.

Alex and Ruby are two of the shining stars already making a difference.

For Alex France, a six-month apprenticeship scheme with teams at Wigan Council was his first step on the ladder that has led to a permanent position at The Zone day service at Robin Park.

The 23-year-old worked within the council’s supported living service and respite care during his apprenticeship, helping people with learning disabilities and autism.

“It has been a great way to ease into my role and it has been a nice learning experience,” he explains.

“Each team has been understanding and offered support and direction.

“Towards the end of my apprenticeship, I applied through the council’s Care To Join Us recruitment programme and was successful in obtaining my permanent position.

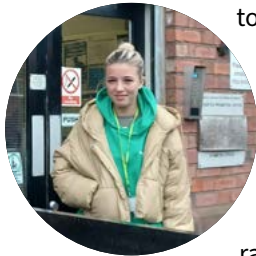
“It was gratifying to know the team were pleased with my performance when on placement, showing my hard work paid off.”

Alex’s route is just one of the many ways for residents to gain experience and set them off on the right track for a career in care.

The council and care providers offer a huge range of placement opportunities for young

people studying T Levels and BTEC qualifications in health and care at our local colleges.

During her first year, Ruby Morris (pictured left), a T Level student at Wigan and Leigh College, gained not only an





Alex France and Daniel Dowd, Zone Manager, at The Zone, Robin Park

inside-look into the many different areas of social care, but also how residents with complex needs are supported throughout the borough.

“The whole experience so far has not only given me an insight of future careers but has shown me a realistic way of how people are living in our world.

“I found it really interesting learning about the homeless provision, how they are supported and how services help to move individuals into more settled accommodation.”

Another route available to residents is Step Into Care, a pre-employment programme, which provides a taster of social care through a mix of classroom learning and on-the-job experience.

The programme provides an excellent opportunity for those interested in social care to gain an understanding of the sector, as well as gain some practical training so that they can make an informed decision about whether it is a career they wish to pursue.

Step Into Care is run in collaboration with the council and is a prime example of the local authority’s commitment to fostering local talent.

With these initiatives and several more, Wigan Council is not only creating employment opportunities but also ensuring the provision of high-quality care for its residents.

To register your interest for Step Into Care visit <https://bit.ly/4a2olw7>

One of England’s top providers for supported living

The delivery of more than 30 new supported living apartments in the last 12 months has placed Wigan Council as one of the leading providers in the country.

The authority ranks second for the proportion of adults with a learning disability who live in their own home or with family. A further 14 apartments are planned to be completed by the middle of next year.

Supported living accommodation gives people their own tenancy, with the support of workers who are on-site should they need them.



Councillor Keith Cunliffe, cabinet portfolio holder for adult social care, said: “These apartments make such a big difference to the tenants who are able to live independently in their own homes, while still having extra support when they need it.

“I could not be prouder of all the hard work by the council’s adult social care team, as well as our fantastic partners who have helped to deliver units built to the highest standards.”

One of the most recent to be completed is Eastdale in Ince (pictured).

Watch a video about the development bit.ly/EastdaleYT



There’s a **CARE** role for everyone

#CareToJoinUs

www.wigan.gov.uk/caretojoinus

Wigan Council



FAB scheme is creating hundreds of roles

A flagship project has seen dozens of young people take the first steps of their career. Launched last year, the Future Apprentices for Business (FAB) programme helps borough firms to ‘grow their own’ workforce, thanks to grants provided by Wigan Council.

A total of £1.5m has been invested into it so far – following further commitments in this year’s budget – and the results are already impressive.

So how does it work? To get involved, a business must have a location in Wigan Borough, employ fewer than 250 people, and be setting up a new apprenticeship employing someone aged 16 to 24 who lives in the borough.

The minimum grant available is £3k, with an enhanced £5k package on offer to businesses who select their apprentice from the council’s talent pool of enthusiastic young people who are ready to learn.

Leigh-based solar panel experts Perfect Sense Energy welcomed Cameron onto a Level 3 Digital Support Technician apprenticeship last autumn, with Wigan and Leigh College providing his training.

Technical manager Ryan Thomas (pictured right) is a former apprentice.

“We’re keen to offer local people opportunities to join the business where we can, and Cameron (pictured below) is just the latest in a long line,” he explains.

“I joined the company as an apprentice so that enables me to support from my own experiences and he can see first-hand the great opportunities for progression.

“Cameron has made an ideal start with us, showing passion and willingness to learn. That will stand him in good stead for the future. He’s picked up things really quickly and we can’t imagine not having him in the business.”

Embrace Wigan & Leigh is one of the charities that are part of the FAB network.

They provide support for disabled people and their families. McKenzie (pictured above) joined their team in 2023, chosen through the talent pool.

“We were looking for an apprentice to help create a more diverse and inclusive team,” explains community manager Kate Spragg.

“It’s been so rewarding to see McKenzie grow and develop. The support we’ve received through the FAB scheme has been fantastic and I’d really encourage anyone thinking

about taking on an apprentice to go for it.”

Could an apprentice be the right fit for your business? Visit www.wigan.gov.uk/FutureApprenticesForBusiness





Marking 50 years of Wigan Borough



www.wigan.gov.uk/WiganBorough50





Images taken from Forward Together exhibition at Archives: Wigan and Leigh

Emerging from the big ‘shake-up’: The origins of Wigan Borough as we know it today

Fittingly, as is the case for most big projects, it all started on a Monday. Monday, April 1, 1974, to be precise.

The areas now covered by our borough stopped (for administrative purposes) being part of the county of Lancashire and the Metropolitan Borough of Wigan was formed.

Similar changes were happening up and down the country, all because of the Local Government Act 1972.

Five decades down the line, these new boundaries and biggest shake-up of the local

government system since the previous century continues to divide opinion.

But what everyone can agree on is the date is one of huge cultural significance for our borough and it provides a chance to reflect on what has been achieved over the last 50 years.

Why did the changes happen?

The Local Government Act 1972 attempted to streamline the local authority system across England and Wales, reducing the number of districts and boroughs (outside of London) from

1,245 to around 400. There was general agreement in Westminster that the structure of local government required changes, although previous reform proposals, prior to the 1972 Act, had not been successful.

It was passed under Edward Heath’s Conservative Government of the time and received Royal Assent (final confirmation that the proposals would be taking place) in October 1972.

It created new Metropolitan counties (including Greater Manchester and Merseyside) and elections to the new authorities were held in 1973.



RAC Rally at Haigh Hall



Heinz factory workers



Mesnes Park



What did it mean here in Wigan Borough?

On a local level, it saw 14 authorities merged into the new organisation.

This included the County Borough of Wigan, the Municipal Borough of Leigh, and the urban districts of Abram, Ashton, Aspull, Billinge and Winstanley, Atherton, Golborne, Hindley, Ince, Orrell, Standish and Tyldesley, and parts of the Wigan Rural District such as Haigh, Shevington and Worthington.

The outputs and services provided by these separate authorities therefore needed to be combined so a working group was set up in the years leading up to 1974 to help with the transition.

It was a huge administrative task, with papers, reports, records and documents needing to be shared from all areas of the borough, many of which are available to view at Archives: Wigan & Leigh.

Many of those services, such as education and schools, housing, libraries, welfare and waste collections, remained the same for residents given that it was

only the management of them that had changed. The first elections for the newly formed Wigan Council were held on May 10, 1973, with 72 seats up-for-grabs.

What was being said at the time?

Understandably, the new administrative areas were not wholly accepted by everyone (particularly those who feel strongly about the traditional county identities) and continue to be a source of controversy to this day.

Back in 1974 though, public officials encouraged their residents to embrace the new changes. As recorded in the pages of the Leigh Journal in that first week in April:

“This is surely an historic event in the history of Leigh, but we must not dwell on the past,” said Councillor Fazakerley. “We should look to the future and hope those who have been elected to represent Leigh will strive for the best for the town. Leigh has always been a town to be proud of, so let us look to these people to keep up the tradition.”

Meanwhile, Atherton representative Councillor Ken Hanney was also quoted in the Leigh Journal: “I started last week feeling slightly depressed at the thought of it being the last one of Atherton Council’s existence, but now the depression is beginning to lift.”



Appley Bridge in the snow



The symbolism behind the coat of arms



The black diamond shapes are designed to signify the borough's coal-mining heritage.



A sparrowhawk perches proudly atop of Atherton's own Coat of Arms and is a symbol of the Lilford family of Atherton.



The red roses represent the borough's links with Lancashire, having been part of the traditional boundaries of the county.



Lions feature prominently in Wigan's Coat of Arms, representing the town's historical loyalty to the Crown.



The crown, castle and 'Wiggin' tree are taken from the former Wigan crest.



The motto, 'Progress with Unity' references the motto of Leigh 'To make progress steadily'.

The formation of Wigan Borough and the amalgamation of the 14 districts meant there was one big task in particular for those in charge of the new authority.

Each of the areas had its own heraldic symbols or coat of arms, each one representing something highly significant about its history.

The new borough would require its own representation though, meaning those tasked with creating it were not short of inspiration.

As tradition dictates, the national College of Arms in 1974 produced the borough’s ‘new’ Coat of Arms, incorporating many aspects of the areas that had joined to form the Wigan Borough.

Progress with Unity

To mark the 50th anniversary, Wigan Council has refreshed the Coat of Arms and from May onwards you will start to see it in many more places around the borough.

The same applies to the motto that was assigned in 1974; Progress with Unity. It

has emerged as a shared vision for the council and its partners and will return to prominence for years to come.

“The formation of this borough is, of course, an important part of our shared history and it provides an opportunity to reflect on the last 50 years,” says Councillor David Molyneux MBE, Leader of Wigan Council.

“In preparation for the anniversary, through the work of our teams to reconnect with our traditional crest and banner, the ‘Progress with Unity’ message is as relevant today as it was then.

“It represents what we’re trying to achieve as Wigan Borough; recognising that we have districts, communities and neighbourhoods with their own unique identities but that we’re proud of what has been achieved together and will continue to work in partnership in the future.

“Our cultural heritage has always been important to us but this year hands us a unique opportunity to reflect on its significance and how those messages resonate today and for our future.”



From top left to bottom right - Wigan, Orrell, Wigan R.D.C, Standish, Ashton-in-Makerfield, Atherton, Hindley, Golborne, Abram, Ince-in-Makerfield, Tyldesley, Aspull, Wigan Borough, Leigh, Billinge and Winstanley

In pictures: Five decades of Wigan Borough

Marking the 50th anniversary of the borough is a perfect opportunity to reflect on the events and developments that have formed a part of our shared cultural history.

As it states in Archives: Wigan & Leigh, history is all around us. It's in the home we live in, the places we visit and the lives of our ancestors.

Since 1974, there have been spectacular achievements and times of celebration. There have also been periods that require solemn reflection.

They're all part of our heritage. This timeline will therefore either jog your memory or help you to learn something new about the communities that we're proud to call home.

1994

Shevington Parish Council celebrated its centenary.

1998

Wigan-born band The Verve perform their iconic concert at Haigh Hall.



1992

Bickershaw and Parsonage Collieries close in Leigh on 13th March 1992. They were the last coal mines in the area.



1992

Wigan & Leigh college formally founded after the merging of Wigan College of Technology with Leigh College.



1987

Queen Street railway arches, Wigan, are restored and transformed into business space.

1988

Wigan Borough officially twinned with Angers in France.

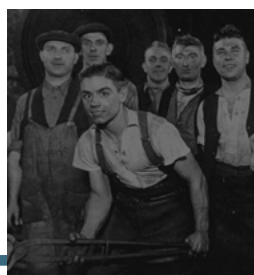


1999

JJB Stadium (now DW Stadium) opened.

2001

Peter Kane Square was opened in Golborne. It was named after boxer Peter Kane, who became the world flyweight champion in 1938 aged 20.



2005

The ruins of a Roman bathhouse was discovered in Wigan.



2008

Leigh Sports Village officially opened by Queen Elizabeth II.

2009

Low Hall, Platt Bridge was announced as the latest nature reserve in the borough.



2012

Heather Frederiksen, from Leigh, wins Gold in the 100m backstroke at the 2012 London Paralympic Games.



2013

Wigan Athletic win the FA Cup with a famous 1-0 victory over a star-studded Manchester City at Wembley.



1974

Wigan Metropolitan Borough is created. Our first mayor was Councillor Robert Matthew Lyons, who stood for Ashton-in-Makerfield.

1975

The newly founded Wigan Borough Archives service finds a permanent home at Leigh Town Hall.



1976

The first conservation areas are drawn up for Haigh and Standish. In Standish this includes St Wilfrid's Church, which dates back to the 1580s and is Wigan Borough's only Grade I listed building.



1977

Howe Bridge Sports Centre, Atherton was opened by the Duchess of Gloucester.

1978

Three Sisters, Ashton-in-Makerfield opens and the first kart race was held in November. The area was formerly spoil heaps from Garswood Colliery.



1979

Ten men were tragically killed and one seriously injured in an explosion at Golborne Colliery.

1986

Queen Elizabeth II opened Wigan Pier and visits 'The Way We Were' exhibition space.



1983

An archaeological dig on The Wiend revealed Victorian, Georgian and Roman pottery.



1984

Towns across the borough are part of the Miners' Strike.

1983

Wigan Hospice formally opens at the former vicarage in Poolstock. It originally had just five beds.



1983

Wigan Council buys Low Bank Ground, an outdoor education centre in the Lake District.

1981

Wigan Casino – spiritual home of Northern Soul – closes.



2014

Elton John performs at Leigh Sports Village.



2015

Sir Ian McKellen awarded a Believe Star.



2020

Keely Hodgkinson, from Atherton, breaks record to win silver at Tokyo Olympics.



2022

Wigan and Leigh Flashes were awarded National Nature Reserve status.

2023

Leigh Leopards won their first Challenge Cup title in 52 years against Hull KR at Wembley.



2024

Wigan Warriors become World Club Champions for the fifth time.

New exhibition marks borough's history and future

If the last few pages have whetted your appetite for local history, you're in luck!

A new exhibition focused on the story of the last 50 years of our borough is now open.

Forward Together is being hosted at Archives: Wigan & Leigh in Leigh Town Hall to celebrate the people, places and communities that have shaped the character of the borough since its formation in 1974.

The free exhibition, which will be in place until September, has been curated alongside students from Wigan and Leigh College, using the extensive photographic archive stored at the archives.

Councillor Chris Ready, cabinet member for

communities at Wigan Council, said: "It's really special to be able to mark the history of the whole borough, and the unique identities of its towns and districts.

"The exhibition is a really important part of our year of activities marking the 50th anniversary of the formation of Wigan Borough, since the Local Government Act brought together a host of local government districts.

"The thing I'm most excited for in the exhibition is the fact it will shine a light on the voices and experiences of real people."

Alongside the photographs on display, visitors to the exhibition will have the chance to share their memories and stories in an

oral history project which will be shared and also go on to make up part of the Archives' collection.

Coun Ready added: "Archives: Wigan & Leigh is home to over 100,000 images and holds over 800 years of local history.

"We're proud that our team of archivists work all year round and that this exhibition will really bring to the fore the journey we've been on, and help us to progress with unity in the next 50 years."

The project is supported by The National Lottery Heritage Fund and Open Eye Hub.

The exhibition is open at Archives: Wigan and Leigh, Thursdays and Fridays 10am - 4pm, and Saturdays 10am - 2pm.



Forward Together

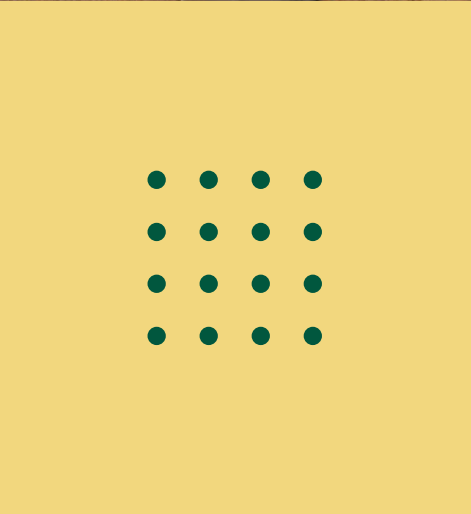
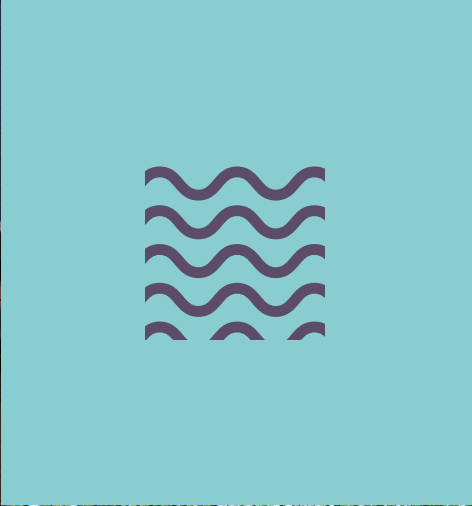
Wigan Borough
50th Anniversary
Exhibition, Archives
Wigan & Leigh

28th March - 28th
September 2024
Thur - Fri 10am - 4pm,
Sat 10am - 2pm

Special thanks to Tom McGrath at Archives: Wigan and Leigh for his help bringing the 50th anniversary project to life

AM ARCHIVES:
WIGAN & LEIGH

the soul of
the north





Formed in 2017, Stanleys are Jake (guitar), Tom (vocals), Harry (bass) and Rob (drums and vocals)

Set to make history as part of a hero's homecoming

In July, over a five-night stretch at Robin Park Arena, a new chapter is going to be written into the borough's musical history.

More than a quarter of a century since The Verve played their legendary gig at Haigh Hall, Richard Ashcroft returns to his hometown for a two-night special.

Alongside him are local heroes The Lathums, with Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds and James

Arthur completing the line-up of headline acts for the first three days.

For these generational gigs there's even more of a hometown feel, as The Lottery Winners (from Leigh) and Stanleys are also set to take the stage.

The gravity of the event is certainly not lost on Stanleys drummer and vocalist Rob.

"When we saw those gigs announced, it was something we were gunning to play,

straightaway," he explains to Borough Life.

"It was a bit crazy at first because you don't see gigs like that going on in Wigan very often, we didn't know what to make of it.

"When Richard Ashcroft was confirmed, we put our name in the hat wherever possible and then getting the word through that we were actually going to do it was amazing.

"To be going on with someone like him, who's so influential to us all as

Images @stanleysband Instagram

musicians, it's something extra special and it feels almost historic. As Wiganers, it's an honour."

Stanleys will be showcasing their distinct sound influenced by 60s guitar music and 90s Britpop on Sunday, July 21.

It'll be the second night for the former Verve frontman, as an extra night was swiftly added due to overwhelming demand.

"We all met at Winstanley College, that's why we're called Stanleys, and obviously Richard Ashcroft also went there, so it feels like there's something intertwined with who we are," Rob says.

"Growing up, I started listening to The Verve before I even realised they were from Wigan and then you think of it as like; 'well, these are people like us.'

"It's surreal to think of the Haigh Hall gig, I think we all know someone who was at that one.

"I feel like people are already talking about this one in a similar way. So, seeing our name on that bill, being in the same ballpark. It's crazy, really.

"We're seeing our name on the posters around, on bus stops and things around the town, it just feels really strong as a Wigan band to be alongside Richard Ashcroft."

The Robin Park Festival has the potential to be etched in the borough's cultural history for decades to come and



could represent a high-point of the thriving music scene of recent years.

The Lathums have made a name for themselves across the world and The Lottery Winners carved out their own piece of history by becoming the first Leigh band to have a number one album.

"We like to speak to all of the bands (on the local scene), we all go out for a drink together," says Rob.

"The Lathums have looked after us and we've always played gigs with bands like the Lottery Winners. It just

and Stanleys are about to go on stage in front of a hometown crowd. How are they feeling?

"You never know, from those big gigs we've done before, how you're going to feel until the day. You might be feeling nervous in the build-up but I think whenever we get to the side of the stage, it's just go time for us.

"It's a good feeling to know that we're going into it confident with our set, knowing it inside and out what it's worth on that stage.

"There's been a great culture of everyone working together with those bands and up-and-coming bands, there's a real tight-knit community'

shows what people from around here are like, we've got a culture of looking after each other and everyone's in it together."

Fast forward a few months. It's the last night of the five-day festival

"We know we'll see familiar faces in the crowd, it's a family affair, isn't it? So, you know, we've put in the work and we'll enjoy it."

www.stanleysband.co.uk



Robin Park Arena will be transformed for five nights in July

‘It’s going to be absolutely historic’

For the highly anticipated five nights in July, Robin Park Arena will undergo a major transformation.

It’ll be swapping front row forwards for front row seats, extra-time for encores and flying wingers with headline singers. Home to Wigan Warriors since 2019, the main training pitch that usually

plays host to Matty Peet’s squad in preparation for Super League matches will welcome 11,500 gig-goers per night.

It is set to provide a major boost to the local economy and is hoped to provide a template for future events in the borough.

As part of a collaboration between Warriors, SJM

Concerts – one of the UK’s largest concert promoters – and Wigan Council, the Robin Park music series is already putting Wigan Borough on the map ahead of an amazing summer.

“The vision for Robin Park has always been to create a welcoming space where people feel an integral part of our community,” explains Kris Radlinski, chief executive of Wigan Warriors and a driving force behind the events.

Since 2019, the Arena’s facilities – including a range of sports pitches, athletics track and conference lounges - have been available to the community in addition to providing for the club’s first team and academy.

In recent years, the number of visitors using the site has doubled, Kris says, with



Kris Radlinski, Image courtesy of Wigan Today

the summer music series representing another significant step forward.

“This is a realisation of a goal we’ve pursued for nearly a decade. We’re proud to be working in partnership to bring these prestigious acts to the town,” he adds.

“The date of 24 May, 1998, remains etched in the memories of many Wiganers, myself included, as a cultural pinnacle when The Verve electrified Haigh Hall.

“It was a moment that Wigan created as a lasting ‘I was there’ memory for the town. Fast forward 26 years and one of the

most iconic rock n’ roll singers of all time, Mr Richard Ashcroft, is set to make a triumphant return.

“I’d like to express deep gratitude to Simon Moran and Steve Walton from SJM for trusting us with the responsibility of hosting this monumental occasion.”

To put it simply, for fans of music across the borough, it sounds like it’s going to be epic.

We’ll leave the last word to Kris: “It’s an extraordinary event. Be sure not to miss this. This is really happening!”

At the time of Borough Life going to press, there were still tickets available across the five nights.

The Lathums



“This will be the gig of our lives. We never left Wigan but, when we’ve been on the road for such a long time and found so much joy in other places, it feels like this one is overdue.

“Nowhere does a welcome like the Wiganers, so for anyone who haven’t felt the love, come along and join us.

“The Lathums won’t let Wigan down and Wigan won’t let you down.”

Richard Ashcroft

“After 25 years, I’m back playing in my hometown. Looking forward to an amazing two nights in Wigan.”

Lottery Winners - Thom Rylance



“There’s not really anything better than supporting your songwriting hero on your doorstep. I think it’s going to be absolutely historic.”

THE HOMECOMING

RICHARD ASHCROFT

PLUS SPECIAL GUESTS

CAST

RED RUM CLUB

MAXWELL VAREY

SATURDAY ONLY

THE ZUTONS

theroystondub

STANLEY'S

SUNDAY ONLY



SATURDAY 20 JULY **SOLD OUT**

EXTRA DATE ADDED DUE TO PHENOMENAL DEMAND

SUNDAY 21 JULY 2024

ROBIN PARK – WIGAN

TICKETS AVAILABLE FROM
GIGSANDTOURS.COM - TICKETMASTER.CO.UK
RICHARDASHCROFT.COM

To make sure you don’t miss out, visit:
www.gigsandtours.com and www.ticketmaster.co.uk



What's on in Wigan Borough?

Events spotlight

Anniversary of the
80th
D-DAY LANDINGS

80th Anniversary of D-Day

Saturday 8th June
10am – 3pm
Join us for a family-fun day to commemorate 80 years since the D-Day landings.
📍 **Mesnes Park**
🎟️ **Tickets: None required**



Be Well Memory Walks

Sunday 9th June, 11am
📍 **Pennington Flash**
Sunday 22nd September
📍 **Haigh Woodland Park**
Our Memory Walks bring people together to raise awareness and funds for the Alzheimer's Society.
🎟️ **Tickets: www.eventbrite.co.uk**



Tour of Britain

Sunday 9th June
The world's top female cyclists will be racing through Leigh in the final stages of the Tour of Britain.
Keep an eye out on Wigan Council's social media and news channels for further details about the event, race routes and competitors.
📍 **Leigh Sports Village**
🎟️ **Tickets: None required**



ARMED FORCES DAY SHOW YOUR SUPPORT

Armed Forces Day
Saturday 29th June
10am – 4pm
Show your support for the men and women who make up the Armed Forces community.
📍 **Leigh Civic Square**
🎟️ **Tickets: None required**



Proms in the Park

Join the Tyldesley Brass Band for two fantastic evenings of fanfare, flag waving and fireworks.
Wigan - Saturday 31st August, 6pm - 10pm 📍 **Mesnes Park**
Leigh - Saturday 7th September 6pm – 10pm 📍 **Pennington Hall Park**
🎟️ **Tickets: www.eventbrite.co.uk**

Haigh Woodland Park www.facebook.com/haighwoodlandpark



Picnic Brass

26th May, 16th June, 21st July, 25th August, 8th September, 1pm and 2.30pm each day
A family-friendly afternoon at the popular brass concerts. In association with the Friends of Haigh Woodland Park.
🎟️ **Tickets: Free event – Parking charges apply**



Artisan Markets

3rd Sunday of the month
June - November, 10am-4pm
Dozens of market stalls trading in a variety of unique goods, food, and drink. Including baked goods, locally grown produce, handmade gifts, artwork and more.
🎟️ **Tickets: Free event – Parking charges apply**

Foodie Friday

Last Friday of the month
May - October, 6pm-10pm
The now legendary Foodie Friday nights will be back...bigger and better than ever before! There'll be many of your favourite street food traders to choose from, as well as some newbies and of course, the usual quality musical entertainment.
🎟️ **Tickets: Free event – Parking charges apply**

Live Music Event

Saturday 29th June, 10am-4pm
An afternoon of wholesome entertainment from some of the areas most vibrant entertainers.
🎟️ **Tickets: Free event – Parking charges apply**

Museums, Archives & Libraries



Catch-as-Catch-Can Wrestling

10am – 4pm Thursday – Friday
10am – 2pm Saturday

Discover the history of the unique Catch-as-Catch-Can wrestling style, and the stories of the fighters keeping the sport alive.

✦ *Archives Wigan and Leigh*

🎟️ *Tickets: Free, drop in*



Chance Encounter: Jeannette Orrell & Len Green

Until Saturday 22nd June

10am – 4pm Tue – Fri
10am – 2pm Sat

Meet two artists originally from Leigh who have established national careers. Jeanette Orrell's reflective nature inspired textiles and drawings are presented with Len Green's evocative and vibrant paintings.

✦ *The Turnpike Gallery*

🎟️ *Tickets: Free, drop in*



What's in Store? Showcasing the Extraordinary to the Everyday

10am – 4pm Tuesday – Friday
10am – 2pm Saturday

Interactive and family friendly exhibition, crammed with amazing artefacts from the museum collections.

✦ *Museum of Wigan Life*

🎟️ *Tickets: Free, drop in*

Dads and Diddies

Every Saturday
10am – 11.15am

✦ *Lamberhead Green Library*

🎟️ *Tickets: None required*



Bits n Bobs with Thrive CIC

Every Wednesday
10.30am – 11.30am

Enjoy a different story every week with crafts, music, games, and plenty of fun! Perfect for age 2+

✦ *Hindley Library and Community Centre*

🎟️ *Tickets: £1 per child*

Booking essential by calling 01942 255287



Museum Minis

Every Wednesday from 5th June
10.30am – 11.45am

Join us for a fun and relaxed session full of engaging storytelling, songs, and craft activities. Suitable for ages 0 – 5 years.

✦ *Museum of Wigan Life*

🎟️ *Tickets: £1.50 per child includes drinks for child and parent/carer.*

Booking essential



Turnpike Tots

Every Thursday (term time only)
10.30am – 11.30am

✦ *The Turnpike Gallery*

🎟️ *Tickets: Free event – Booking essential - trybooking.co.uk/BOMV*

LibraryFest

Saturday 15th June
10am – 1pm

See libraries in a different way and discover the unexpected with taster sessions galore.

✦ *Leigh Library*

🎟️ *Tickets: Free, drop in*

SATURDAY FAMILY WORKSHOPS



Saturday Family Workshops

Saturday 25th May, Saturday 8th June and Saturday 22nd June
11am – 1pm

Join us every other Saturday for free family fun in the gallery. Suitable for children aged 5+ and their families.

✦ *The Turnpike Gallery*

🎟️ *Tickets: Free, drop in*



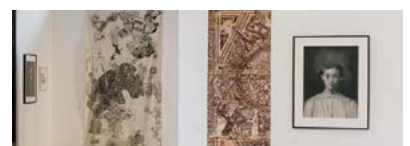
SEND Friendly Family Day at the Archives

Saturday 1st June and Saturday 3rd Aug, 12pm – 1.30pm

This session is specially designed for families who may prefer a quieter, calmer environment. Taking place in the Leigh Town Hall there will be a relaxed tour of the Archives, open-ended play objects to explore, as well as a creative 'making' activity.

✦ *Archives Wigan and Leigh*

🎟️ *Tickets: Free to attend, booking essential via Wigan Council Eventbrite <https://bit.ly/ArcSEND>*



Trinity Buoy Wharf Drawing Prize

Saturday 13th July – Saturday 14th September
10am – 4pm Tue – Fri
10am – 2pm Sat

The UK's most prestigious open exhibition for drawing with 120+ works selected for this exhibition.

✦ *The Turnpike Gallery*

🎟️ *Tickets: Free, drop in*

Community



Leigh Feast

**1st Saturday of every month
May - Oct, from 2pm**

A new pop-up event for 2024, showcasing the best of Leigh's hospitality and entertainment.

📍 Leigh Town Centre
🎟 Tickets: None required



Afternoon Classic Film Club

**Last Friday of the month
1pm**

Check out the film listings
www.leighfilmsociety.com

📍 The Turnpike Gallery
🎟 Tickets: Free entry, donations welcome



Wigan Jazz Festival

11th - 14th July

Includes Jeff Hooper & His Trio, Paul Higgs and Pavane, Ben Holder Quartet, Wigan Youth Jazz Orchestra & many more.

📍 The Village On The Green
🎟 Tickets: Prices from £18 to £125
www.wiganjazzfest.co.uk/programme-2024



Wigan Little Theatre

**Last Sunday of the month
12.30pm - 3.30pm**

Check the Wigan Little Theatre website for performances -
www.wiganlittletheatre.co.uk

📍 Wigan Little Theatre
🎟 Tickets: www.ticketsource.co.uk/wigan-little-theatre-box-office



Sunday Jazz Club

**Last Sunday of the month
12.30pm-3.30pm**

Bringing local, national and international jazz to the North-West of England for over 30 years.

📍 Whelley ex-Serviceman's Club
🎟 Tickets: Book at wiganjazzclub.co.uk



Wigan Pride

Saturday 10th August, from 12pm

Get your rainbows ready and prepare to celebrate the borough's community spirit in style: Wigan Pride will be back this summer. New for 2024 will also be a celebration of the arts from across the region in Believe Square.

📍 Wigan Town Centre
🎟 Tickets: None required



Carnivals and festivals

Golborne Carnival

2nd June, 12pm - 6pm
📍 Leigh Street Park
🎟 Tickets: None required

Ashton Big Family Festival

15th June, 12pm - 5pm
📍 Jubilee Park
🎟 Tickets: None required

Shevington Fete

Saturday 22nd June, 11am - 4pm
📍 Gathurst Lane, Shevington
🎟 Tickets: None required

Atherton Carnival

23rd June, 12pm - 6pm
📍 Meadowbank Field
🎟 Tickets: None required

Wigan Rotary Community Day

6th July, 9am - 4pm
📍 Standishgate
🎟 Tickets: None required

Pride in Leigh

27th July
📍 Pennington Hall Park
🎟 Tickets: facebook.com/prideinleigh

Atherton Proms

17th August, 6pm - 11pm
📍 Atherton Park
🎟 Tickets: None required



Wigan 10k

Sunday 1st September

The epic 12th Wigan 10k, organised by Joining Jack and sponsored by HW Moon Toyota Wigan, will return to the streets of Wigan. Entries open now.

📍 Mesnes Park
🎟 Tickets: www.wigan10k.co.uk



Wigan Diggers Festival

Saturday 7th September
11am – 11pm

Celebrate the life and influence of Gerrard Winstanley and the 17th century Diggers' (True Levellers) movement he inspired.

📍 Believe Square, Wigan
🎟 Tickets: None required



Wigan & Leigh
Short Film Festival

20th – 21st September

We celebrate and showcase up-and-coming talent from across the world, screening everything from comedies and dramas to documentaries and animation.

📍 Leigh Spinners Mill
🎟 Tickets: <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/leigh-film-factory>



Wigan Comic Con by NWCC
events

Saturday 28th September, 10am

Rub shoulders with your favourite heroes, take selfies with your beloved characters, and indulge in all things comic book related.

📍 Robin Park Leisure Centre
🎟 Tickets: www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/wigan-comic-con-2024-tickets-834372740327



Last Night of the Proms

Saturday 28th September,
7.30pm

Featuring the ever popular Pemberton Old Wigan DW Championship Band.

📍 St Michaels & All Angels Church
🎟 Tickets: £13 (Children under 16 free)
01257 400962 or 07986 321728 for tickets

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