

BoroughLife

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Wigan Council

The Leader's column



Welcome to the Winter 2024 edition of Borough Life.

We are reaching the final few weeks of a milestone year, one in which we have been marking the 50th anniversary of Wigan Borough. It has also seen us launch our new Progress With Unity approach; reaffirming our commitment to working alongside our communities to create the best opportunities and setting us up for a bright future.

This edition of Borough Life highlights some of the projects that bring Progress With Unity to life and the amazing people that make our borough so special. As ever in the winter edition of our magazine, we're able to reflect on some of the biggest moments of the year. In particular, we press the replay button on the unbelievable Robin Park summer music festival gigs where so many of you saw some of the biggest artists in the UK – including hometown hero Richard Ashcroft – at an amazing venue. And, given it has been 50 years of the borough, our archives service has been considering what will be remembered from the past 12 months by future generations. Elsewhere, we provide updates on the major redevelopment projects that are transforming our town

centres and shine a spotlight once again on the community heroes who triumphed at the Our Town Awards. There's also an update visit at Haigh Woodland Park to see the progress on the multi-million-pound transformation project and plenty of news from across our district centres. To wrap up this winter edition is the ever-popular What's On guide that provides a handy overview of activities and events across the borough over the coming months. I hope you enjoy this edition and I hope you have a relaxing holiday season and Happy New Year! Councillor David Molyneux MBE
Leader, Wigan Council

D Molyneux

Borough Life is published by Wigan Council and distributed to all households in the borough. This edition was published on 11 November 2024. The magazine is printed on paper from renewable resources. It is written, edited and designed by Wigan Council's Public Relations Team. 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, sign up to the weekly My Borough Life email update. Visit: www.wigan.gov.uk/boroughlifeneewsletter For general comments email: boroughlife@wigan.gov.uk



On the cover

What a year it has been! 2024 was always going to be a milestone 12 months for our borough but there were a few surprises that have made it extra special. Some of these events and achievements will certainly live long in the memory, thanks to Richard, Gregg and Keely, among others. When it came to choosing what should be our cover image, we couldn't narrow it down to just one of those things. So, we decided that a compilation would be the way forward.



Check out the BoroughLife podcast

Don't miss the monthly episodes with hosts Rosie and James, available on all major podcast platforms. Linktr.ee/wigancouncil An accessible version of our magazine is available to view online on our Borough Life Plus page. www.wigan.gov.uk/BoroughLifePlus



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Your latest news round-up.

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It's that time of year when it's hard to keep track of what day it is and what's happening when! Here's our usual pocket guide to opening times and dates for key services.

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Golden tributes to Keely's triumph

The golden makeover to Keely Hodgkinson's star is now on show on Leigh Civic Square, reflecting the hero-athlete's gold medal success.

Margaret Galvin and Angela Pike from Leigh Harriers joined the Mayor of Wigan Borough, Councillor Debbie Parkinson, cabinet members and chief executive Alison Mckenzie-Folan while the new design was unveiled.

The new star joins the amazing golden phone-box in Atherton as a permanent reminder of the Olympic triumph.

At a recent meeting of the full council, Mayor Parkinson thanked everyone involved in the phone-box project, including Atherton

North ward councillors who contributed Brighter Borough funding, and fellow community representatives and businesses.

Congratulations to everyone involved.



New chapter opens with library card project

School-starters will receive a library card as part of a new Wigan Council scheme to help families access wide-ranging support.

All reception pupils will be given the cards to encourage more residents to visit the borough's amazing library network.

Each of the borough's 15 library locations give children opportunities to borrow books and resources free of charge and offer fun classes alongside regular advice and support sessions for all the family.

Leader of Wigan Council, Councillor David Molyneux MBE, said: "Our libraries are the heartbeat of our local communities

and offer so many opportunities to families across the borough.

"We hope this scheme will see our new school-starters have easy access to the wealth of books and e-books available and encourage their whole family to also sign-up.

"Remember, our library cards here in Wigan Borough are free for all ages and we have wonderful teams ready to welcome you to their library community, unlocking amazing learning and leisure resources."

For more information and details of what's available at your local library, visit www.wigan.gov.uk/libraries



Around the borough

In **Golborne**, the first new train station in Greater Manchester for 25 years has moved a step closer. A planning application was submitted in September by the GM combined authority for the £32m development.

In **Tyldesley**, a new parking facility off Astley Street will soon be installed to support the Guided Busway. The new travel hub will feature 100 new park-and-ride spaces.

A new Family Hub in **Atherton** opened its doors earlier this year, offering wide-ranging support and classes all under one roof. Please check out their Facebook page for all the latest updates.

In **Whelley** and **Standish**, upgrades will mean 4km of paths will now become high quality, hard surfaces and be added to the region's Bee Network. This project includes an extension of the Whelley Loop Line and work on Standish Wood Lane.

A newly restored war memorial garden has opened at Smithy Green, **Ince**. The improvement works include new landscaping features with striking military silhouettes around the central monument, which has been updated.

New accessible toilet and changing facilities are now available at **Platt Bridge** Community Zone – which is also the home of Embrace Wigan and Leigh - as part of the national Changing Places scheme.

The latest library in the borough to benefit from new green-energy features such as LED lighting and solar panels is **Shevington**. The new technology will help cut energy usage.

Be Well members can now download the Be Well app



Book faster and easier

Quickly find and book your favourite activities.



Digital access control

Fast check-in when you arrive using smart technology.



Check availability

Easily browse activity timetables across our centres and community venues.



Control your account

Manage your membership or update your personal profile.



Don't miss a thing

Get updates on activities and be the first to learn about new classes and offers.



www.BeWellWigan.org

Popular parking offer extended

Getting organised with your shopping for the festive season and supporting local businesses is now even easier in Wigan and Leigh town centres.

In addition to free weekend parking, a majority of council owned car parks, along with some roadside bays, are now free to use after 3pm each weekday. This offer is available through until Friday, 3 January.

The offer includes free after 3pm weekday parking and free weekend parking on most Wigan Council town centre car parks and designated roadside pay and display bays (excluding Wigan Lane). For more details visit:

www.wigan.gov.uk/carparking



Festive Bin Collections

There are changes to your refuse and recycling collections over the festive period.

Usual collection day	Collection day w/c 23/12/24	Collection day w/c 30/12/24
Tuesday	Mon 23 Dec	No change: Tue 31 Dec
Wednesday	Tue 24 Dec	Thurs 2 Jan
Thursday	Fri 27 Dec	Fri 3 Jan
Friday	Sat 28 Dec	Sat 4 Jan

Green bin collections will be suspended from 29 December until 10 January. They will resume either w/c 13 January or w/c 20 January, dependent on the area you live.

www.wigan.gov.uk/recycling



Milestone reached for Here for You

A further multi-million pound milestone has been reached by Wigan Council's flagship cost-of-living crisis support campaign.

More than £5.2m of previously unclaimed financial support has now been accessed by local people thanks to Here for You.

Launched in 2022, the campaign includes a regular community event schedule helping raise awareness of what benefits residents may be entitled to.

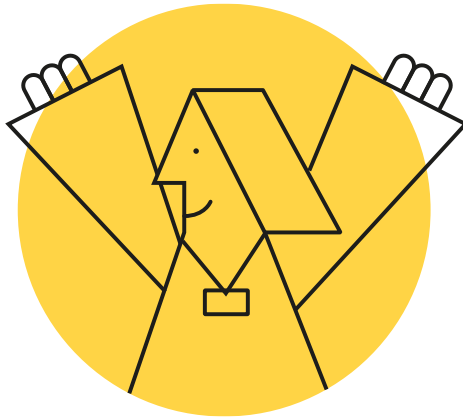
The latest milestone includes 370 people who have claimed £2m of Attendance Allowance and more

than 160 pensioners who are now receiving a share of almost £800k through regular Pension Credit payments.

Councillor Susan Gambles, cabinet member for welfare, said: "This additional income has made a life-changing difference to thousands of households.

"We couldn't be prouder of our teams' efforts to raise awareness of what our residents are entitled to and offer expert guidance and support."

Here for You sees council officers – such as welfare support, housing



and community teams – work closely together to identify opportunities to help residents with cost-of-living crisis related issues.

Let us be

Here for You

We know that many people are still facing the cost-of-living crisis every day. It can be tough to ask for help but we're here to lend a listening ear and to point you in the right direction. We can help you maximise your income, manage debts, keep warm and make savings day to day.

Visit: [Wigan.gov.uk/HereForYou](https://www.wigan.gov.uk/HereForYou) or talk to us on **01942 705221**

Purple Flag flying high in town centre for the third year in a row

Wigan town centre will continue to proudly fly the Purple Flag after retaining its prestigious international accreditation.

The scheme recognises town centres that meet high standards of safety and offer a vibrant night out for all visitors. Wigan was first awarded Purple Flag status in 2022 as a result of Wigan Council working with partners such as Greater Manchester Police and private businesses.

Overseen by the Association of Town and City Management

(ATCM), Purple Flag requires places to meet a set of rigorous standards, as well as identifying further opportunities to enhance the evening and night-time offer.

Assessors were particularly impressed with the strong partnership working, the focus on regeneration projects and the various safety campaigns.

Councillor Yvonne Klieve, lead member for district centres and night-time economy at Wigan Council, said: "I am absolutely thrilled that we have retained

our Purple Flag status. It reflects the hard work undertaken by many council teams, partners and local businesses. All our partners are very passionate about continuously improving the town centre."

Purple Flag – similar to Blue Flag status for beaches and Green Flag for parks – aims to raise the standard and broaden the appeal of town centres.

For more information about our town centre safety schemes: www.wigan.gov.uk/CallItOut

'Wheely Smart' boat is lasting legacy for Helen at Low Bank Ground

A new wheelchair-accessible boat named in tribute to a former Olympic swimmer and much-loved Wigan headteacher will help people with disabilities enjoy thrilling adventures in the Lake District.

Adapted powerboat 'Wheely Smart' is the latest arrival at Low Bank Ground – the Coniston activity centre where generations of Wigan Borough residents have discovered a taste for the outdoors.

Part-funded by The Wheelyboat Trust and other donors, it has been named in honour of Worsley Mesnes Community Primary School headteacher Helen Smart who tragically passed away last year.

Helen's family and friends were joined at an official launch and naming ceremony by some of her

former school colleagues as well as Inclusion Champions from Wigan-based Happy Smiles CIC, who were able to enjoy the vessel's maiden voyage on Coniston Water.

Councillor Chris Ready, cabinet portfolio holder for communities and neighbourhoods, said: "Our new Wheelyboat is absolutely

fantastic and I'd like to say a massive thank you to The Wheelyboat Trust and all the other donors who have helped make this possible."

For more about what's on offer at Low Bank Ground: www.bewelloutdoors.co.uk



Park's tennis makeover looks smashing

Newly improved tennis facilities at Pennington Hall Park are set to be a game-changer for local sports lovers following a £30k makeover.

The courts at the popular Leigh park were officially opened in August after being brought back to life with extensive renovation works.

Court surfaces have been repaired, re-coloured, washed and treated while new nets and net sockets

have been installed along with a brand-new, secure access gate linked to an online booking system.

As well as being available for hire, the facilities will also host regular free park tennis sessions for adults and children led by Wigan Council's Be Well park tennis coaches.

www.bewellwigan.org



New era arrives with key missions

Wigan Council's new 'Progress with Unity' approach is underway. The masterplan to create a fairer and more prosperous borough is the culmination of a research project with local organisations, businesses, partners, independent experts and the community.

Two key missions have been identified that the council and its partners are committed to delivering; create fair opportunities for all and make our towns and neighbourhoods flourish.

www.wigan.gov.uk/ProgressWithUnity





Reflections on a milestone year



As the 50th anniversary year of Wigan Borough draws to an end, **Dr Tom McGrath** from Archives: Wigan & Leigh reflects on how the events of 2024 will be remembered for years to come.

In the last issue of Borough Life we looked at some of the key moments over the past 50 years which have shaped the borough and the communities within it.

Much of the material we used came from the collections of photographs, newspapers,

and official papers held at the Archives.

We care for 800 years' worth of documents relating to the Wigan Borough, and we're always taking in more.

From our point of view, therefore, the 'Forward, Together' exhibition which was co-curated by photography students at Wigan & Leigh College was certainly a highlight of the year.

The students chose archival images, including some of the collection of local photographer Frank Orrell,

which were used to showcase how life, work and play has changed, or stayed the same, over the past 50 years.

The exhibition also presented the opportunity to add new items to the archives such as photographs the students had taken of recent events, like the Coronation of King Charles III. We also recorded oral history interviews with residents who witnessed the change in local government in 1974.

2024 was also a year of sporting successes. In recent months, Keely Hodgkinson's star on Civic Square in Leigh was given a golden upgrade.

This followed the Atherton born athlete's success on an historic night in August, winning the 800m final at the Paris Olympics.

Keely was not the only athlete from the Wigan Borough to represent Team GB at Paris, as Gregg Warburton, from Leigh, was part of the wheelchair basketball team that won silver at the Paralympics.

There were also multiple celebrations across the year for Wigan Warriors who won the World Club Challenge in February, the Challenge Cup in June, League Leaders' Shield in September and the Super League Grand Final in October.

Two places of reflection were opened at the end of September in Lilford Park, Leigh and Mesnes Field, Wigan.

These tranquil spaces were designed for the public to sit, relax and reflect on the years since the COVID-19 pandemic. These sites of reflection are part of a larger project looking back at this period in our history. The Archives established a collection on the pandemic from 2021, which contain diaries, newsletters, signage, and other items from that time.

It was important that these were collected at that time, so that future generations can understand more about that landmark period which we lived through.

Finally, a highlight from the archives recent donations in 2024 was a collection of 13 photographs of Makerfield Mill, Ashton taken by Keith W. Wright in 1991.

These photographs give a

fascinating insight into life in the mill shortly before its closure.

Although only a few decades old, the photographs have already been popular and we have even taken them out to our reminiscence sessions at local care homes to help spark memories.

There are so many other moments to celebrate from across the borough this year; from the Robin Park festival, Flashes Festival, Pride events and Light Night parades, and each will leave its legacy in its own way.

What would you choose to look back on as a highlight of 2024?

For more information visit archives.wigan.gov.uk



Be Well's Gill Healey celebrates with Margaret for her 100th birthday

Margaret brings up her ton with plenty of fun

Asstley resident Margaret Littler celebrated her 100th birthday in style... with a little help from Be Well. Just six weeks before her big day, Margaret had been referred for support by the NHS Community React Team as she was unsteady on her feet.

But with a helping hand from Gill, a specialist wellbeing coach from Be Well's active ageing team, she was able to achieve her goal of having a dance at her party.

"It was really good," Margaret says of her special birthday bash at Leigh Cricket, Tennis and Bowling Club. "We had a lovely chicken dinner and there was wine on the table, of course!

"There were around 60 of us altogether and they came from all over; Blackpool, the North East, Ireland. It was so good to see everyone.

"We had a DJ and, yes, I did manage to have a dance – though my family insisted on holding both my hands. But I'm not as helpless as I look. If they'd have let go, I would have been raving!"

Born 28 September, 1924, Margaret's resilience a century on is remarkable – bolstered by her recent programme of simple, home-based strength and balance exercises (pictured below).

"She's come on so much since I first met her," says



Gill. "When we first met, she was holding on to the dining table to get up from her chair but now she can get up unaided. She is absolutely marvellous for her age."

Gill has come for her latest appointment bearing a bouquet of flowers on behalf of the Be Well team, while Margaret was thrilled to receive a "lovely" birthday card from King Charles and Queen Camilla.

But the greatest gift of all has been her health.

"At my party, my little great granddaughter, who's about six, said to me: 'Grandma, you're 100 years old... and you're not dead yet!' I said 'isn't that good!' and she said 'It's God!'"

Margaret, however, tells Borough Life the secret of her longevity isn't anything as mysterious as divine intervention.

"It's movement," she says. "You know how they talk about 'the joy of movement'? Well, it's true!

"I've always exercised. I used to play cricket, and when the kids were young we used to go skating and swimming. Not that I could really do it... but you have a bit of fun when you can't do it!

"I've always wanted to be fit. I didn't want to be slim, I wanted to be fit. I used to go to the gym until I was 90, and I've always done something.

"The last thing I did for exercise was Tai chi, so that's something I'd like to do again.

"Having Gill come and help me do these exercises has been really important. I still want to be fit. I want to be on the dance floor... not just on the floor!"

Do you or someone you know need a little help to stay active in later life? You'll find self-help guides, plus information on strength and balance classes and other activities, at home and in the community, at [bewellwigan.org/active-ageing](http://www.bewellwigan.org/active-ageing)

Paul's recovery is a proper feel-good story

Resilient resident Paul Sutton is getting his fitness journey back on track – just six months after quick-thinking gym staff saved his life.

Paul, 59, suffered a cardiac arrest at Robin Park Leisure Centre in April, seconds after stepping off a treadmill following a 5k run.

Thankfully, Be Well's highly-trained gym team sprang into action to deliver CPR and defibrillator shocks that kept him alive so he could be rushed to Manchester Royal Infirmary for emergency heart surgery.

"I ended up having four stents fitted and I've even got my own defib now, an ICD, in my chest," explains Paul, who'd only joined the gym in February after a high blood pressure scare.

He'd made remarkable progress in the space of two months, going from 17st 8lbs to a much leaner 15

stone through a combination of diet and exercise.

And, after medical reassurance that his heart attack was simply "the luck of the draw", he's determined not to let his setback stop him being healthy and active as he approaches his 60th birthday.

"I did ask the doctor whether I could have been overdoing it but they said no, it was just one of those things and I was lucky I was here when it happened."

All Be Well fitness instructors receive training so they know exactly what to do in the event of such an emergency, and for Robin Park staff Gus O'Donnell, Darren Bibby, Declan Goodfellow, Daniel Hardman and Chris Rigby it proved invaluable.

Paul says: "If it wasn't for their quick thinking I wouldn't be here, so I'm incredibly grateful."



The Be Well team and Paul (second from right)



From top left: Leigh Town Centre, Ashton Town Centre, Galleries demolition, Cotton Works, Ashton, Civic

Big projects, key updates

Major investments totalling millions of pounds are driving exciting projects across our borough. They're transforming our town centres, creating innovation, jobs and opportunities meaning an exciting future is on the horizon.

Here is the latest on some of the biggest projects - led by Wigan Council or by partners, striving to make our borough a great place to live, work, study, invest and visit. For more information visit: www.wigan.gov.uk/Council/Projects

Our Future Ashton

Tell me more...
The £6.6m Our Future Ashton Project, funded by central government, will see exciting improvements to Ashton town centre.

The project will create a new public square with market stalls, introduce greenery and public realm improvements, as well as public art and enhanced shop frontages.

What's the latest?
Public consultation has been taking place during 2024, ensuring residents, visitors, business owners and other stakeholders have their say, which is a crucial part of the plans.

What will I see next?
Publication of the detailed plans are scheduled for the first half of 2025 ahead of construction works getting underway to deliver the restored and revitalised public space.

Cotton Works

Tell me more...
Wigan-based regeneration specialists, the Heaton Group, have launched a masterplan for its £180m regeneration of the 17-acre Eckersley Mill site now known as "Cotton Works" in Wigan as an office, leisure and residential complex.

What's the latest?
With Historic England support, this sensitive conversion of Mill One will transform it into a thriving complex that is perfect for 21st century work.

What will I see next?
Mill One at 'The Cotton Works' will see a food hall and tap room opening on the site next spring, with the upper three floors to be used as offices which will be topped off with a roof top bar and function space. cotton-works.co.uk



CG image of the Wigan town centre development

The former Galleries

Tell me more...
This £135m redevelopment will bring new shops, bars, restaurants, cinema, bowling alley, climbing wall, over 400 new homes, a Hilton hotel and more to Wigan town centre.

What's the latest?
Cityheart and Galliford Try are now building the new 90,000 sqft market hall and rapidly progressing plans for further construction phases.

What will I see next?
Works are well underway for the New Market Hall, bringing employment activity and a variety of trades to the town. See our social media channels for a fly-through of the redevelopment plans.

Leigh

Tell me more...
More than £32m is set to be invested in Leigh town centre over the next decade, including the Market Hall, Civic Square, grants for shopfronts and general public realm improvement projects.

What's the latest?
We have been out talking to local people about their ideas to improve Civic Square, supporting local businesses to apply for shopfront and building grants, and exploring ideas to create more space for pedestrian and cyclists on the town centre road network.

Separately, the council has supported the independently chaired Leigh Town Board to understand the community's priorities for spending £20m Long Term Plan for Towns funding.

What will I see next?
Works on several schemes are set to get underway next year; keep an eye on the council's social media for updates. The Leigh Town Board will be refining proposals for the investment they are leading to reflect new government guidance and gearing up to work closely with community.

Civic

Tell me more...
Capital & Centric is spearheading the transformation of the former council office in Wigan into new town centre workspaces.

What's the latest?
Works are well underway and it's set to open in 2025 with lots of features including a coffee shop, mini cinema, a rooftop terrace and office space designed for exciting start-ups and small businesses.

What will I see next?
As the renovations to the building continue, prospective tenants for the office spaces are being encouraged to get in touch. The first workspaces are set to open in 2025. For more information, visit www.capitalandcentric.com/civic



Little Amal visits Trencherfield in 2021

The Fire Within continues to burn brightly

Back in 2019, Wigan Borough’s five-year masterplan to bring arts and culture into the spotlight of centre-stage was launched. This means that this year all the pioneering work of the cultural manifesto can be viewed from start to finish – and what a journey it has been!

Many of you will be familiar with The Fire Within (which was the title given to the strategy), or, if you’re not, there’s a big chance you will have visited one of its events or programmes.

From the dazzling scenes of Light Night and the visit of Little Amal to the transformation of Archives: Wigan and Leigh, there have been too many highlights to mention.

There’s little doubt that both front of stage and behind-

the-scenes, it has had a huge impact on our borough.

If we rewind back to May 2019, the first chord was played at the Fire Within cultural hub located in what was The Galleries shopping centre.

It was a breathtaking experience walking in for the first time, observing the eye-catching artwork and gazing at the iconic Emoji Stage.

Did you know that bands like the The Lathums, Lottery Winners and Stanleys used it as rehearsal space in their early days ahead of chart-topping, headlining big gig glory?

“I’ve never seen anything like this before,” was one line of feedback that summed up the views of many. The Fire Within HQ had started the buzz and was putting the borough on the map.

Continuing along the musical theme, if we view the HQ as the lead singer that was initially taking the limelight, the community outreach aspects of the Fire Within plan was the rhythm section driving everything forward.

Since 2019, more than £36m of external funding has been secured to boost programmes across the borough. And in 2021, Arts Council England named Wigan Borough as one of only seven Priority Places in the North West, which brings a focus for additional national investment and engagement.

So, what was the result of all this? Well, let’s break it down.

The increased investment and ambition have meant key facilities such as Archives: Wigan and Leigh, The Turnpike Gallery and Leigh Spinners’ Mill



Fire Within HQ



The Early Doors Club



Light Night

are going from strength to strength. Thousands of school-children have been introduced to cultural programmes, such as the one linked to the Women’s Euros - or visited performances, events or exhibitions held in their local community.

It means thousands of local artists and performers have been given a chance to showcase their work and talents to a wider audience.

For example, projects like The Early Doors Club have supported small venues to host grassroots artists while also providing an economic boost in the wake of the pandemic.

Meanwhile, dozens of artists will have been provided with direct commissions and many more have been provided with training opportunities.

And our wonderful cultural organisations – such as Everyday (formerly Wigan STEAM), Leigh

Netherlands fans turn Leigh orange in 2022



Film Society, Thick Skin Theatre, Curious Minds and WigLe Dance, to name a few, have forged ever-stronger bonds, bringing fresh collaborative works and longevity for the future.

A lot has been achieved in the last five years. But there’s always more to come. All this work has identified areas for improvement, many of which fit with the aims of the council’s over-arching Progress With Unity plans.

For example, there will be deep community consultation so that the voice of residents’ is heard when it comes to what people want from future programmes.

But, for now, we can reflect with pride on the huge impact of The Fire Within.

It has put Wigan Borough on the arts and culture map, we can’t wait for what’s to come next and the flames are still burning brightly.

Key figures

£60m was invested in Wigan Borough’s cultural sector between 2019-24. Of this £24m came from local sources and £36m external. This equates to £1.50 of investment leveraged into the borough for every £1 of local funds spent.

More than 300,000 residents have engaged with council-led activity and events

The next steps...

A refreshed manifesto is due to be launched soon, so keep your eyes peeled.

It will build on the success of The Fire Within and make sure our cultural and heritage work is taken to the next level.

- Among its key priorities will be;
- Ensuring opportunities are provided for young people
 - Investments in local talent and providing spaces for it to thrive
 - Working alongside our communities to ensure your voice is heard

Help us to shape the next phase of the cultural programme
bit.ly/WiganCulture





Getting ready for the James Arthur gig

How beautiful life can be

In our spring edition of Borough Life, we said the five-night music festival at Robin Park Arena was all set to make history. All we can say now a few months on, is: Wow! It exceeded all expectations and will be a milestone event that will be remembered for decades to come. Thousands of you sung, danced and jumped around as we were treated to epic performances night after night. We particularly enjoyed home favourites Lottery Winners and Stanleys bringing the borough together with their feel-good sets. And The Lathums stepped up into the role of headliners on home-turf like the absolute legends that they are.

Oh, and, Richard Ashcroft, Noel Gallagher and James Arthur were pretty good too! Councillor Chris Ready, cabinet member for communities and neighbourhoods, said: “The joint venture between Wigan Warriors and SJM Concerts, working alongside the council, has certainly set out a template for future events on the site and we can’t wait to see what comes next. “Congratulations to everyone involved, it was a week that will live long in the memory for thousands of people.” The Borough Life team enjoyed the experience so much that we couldn’t resist reliving it in this edition. So, here’s a selection of our favourite photos from the epic gigs.



Lathums fans



Lottery Winners



Richard Ashcroft

Reunion plans sealed in Wigan? A few weeks after Robin Park the world was gripped with the news of the Oasis reunion and reports suggested Noel and Liam settled their differences during a series of late-night phone calls. In one exchange with the crowd on-stage, Noel said: “No, no-one sings quite like R-Kid,” suggesting that it was on his mind at the time. Can we claim that Wigan played a part in the reunion? Definitely maybe!



The Lathums



Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds

50k+ attendees over the five nights

An extra 30k visitors to Wigan town centre

Estimated £1.2m boost to the local economy



External works take place to restore slates on the roof of the hall

Unveiling a new era for Haigh

With a multi-million-pound restoration programme well underway at Haigh, we couldn't be more excited to see how things are moving on.

Milestones are coming thick and fast at the site as master plans to transform Haigh Hall into a nationally significant arts, culture and heritage destination are realised.

Lovingly described as the 'Jewel in Wigan's Crown', Haigh Hall is close to the hearts of many local people, and we share their pride and passion for the site.

For more than a year, the hall has been hidden underneath its scaffolding while its transformation and vital works to the roof and external façade take place.

Soon, the scaffolding will come down as the project moves into its next phase where plans for inside the hall will be developed alongside our partner, AtkinsRealis.

Our dedicated multi-disciplinary teams continue to work hard to make the ambitions at Haigh a reality.

Did you know? AtkinsRealis, the renowned engineering firm who are leading on Haigh's internal design, recently won the Stirling Prize for their work on the Elizabeth Line in London. This prestigious annual award recognises the UK's best new architecture.

Horticulture plans blossom



Amphitheatre for a Tree

You might have noticed some changes by the hall already. Multi-award-winning landscape architect and local resident, Michael John McGarr, has provided the vision for a new formal garden called Amphitheatre for a Tree (pictured above).

Rooted in symbolism, nature and community, with layered seating surrounding a tree set to amplify breathtaking views across the town, the focal point of the garden is a Handkerchief Tree which was kindly funded by Wigan Rotary Club as part of its centenary year celebrations.

The inspiration behind the garden was an 18th century painting of Sir Roger and Lady Bradshaigh at Haigh Hall which illustrated formal gardens and beautiful landscaped stepped lawns with amazing views.

Restoring the walled gardens

Head of horticulture, Dr Sylvia Travers, is working hard with a team of gardeners, volunteers and students to breathe new life into the estate's Victorian gardens, bringing them back to their former use.

The inspirational horticultural vision will see the kitchen garden grow to feed local people once more through the hall's future hospitality offer.

In the walled garden, and pending planning permission, new glasshouses (pictured below) will become home to community events including horticultural, social, learning and commercial opportunities.





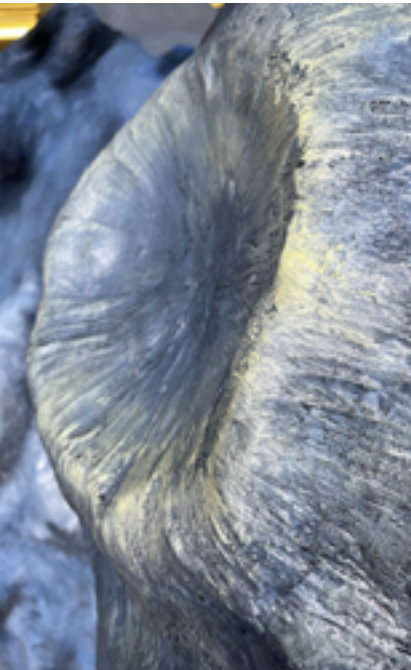
Play trail will be out of this world...

Children and adults alike will be sure to enjoy a brand new play trail inspired by Haigh's strong links to astronomy as it opens at the end of 2025.

With the help of more than 80 local school children, the play trail has been developed by artist David Bethell.

It will feature giant comets (pictured below) that can be climbed on and explored.

Also due to open in 2025, a Woodland Hub offering outdoor adventure activities – plus a coffee kiosk for your caffeine hit – will bring a currently underused part of the estate back into use by encouraging visitors.



Plantation Gates



Plans to restore the Grade II* Plantation Gates and Lodge works are expected to be underway by the end of 2024, offering a focal point for visitors entering the grounds of the estate from the Royal Albert Edward Infirmary side of Haigh Hall.

Mowpin Lodge Gates



The design was in your hands, and you chose one which reflected Haigh's 900-years of rich mining heritage.

The gates, featuring a miner's shovel and pickaxe, were cast at the end of 2023 at the local Haigh Foundry – quite a remarkable sight.

The new gates will be installed at Mowpin Lodge entrance in the coming months.

Watch a video of the gates being cast: www.youtube.com/WiganCouncil

Bothy yard and cottages

Funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, the old Bothy cottages will be restored to create a multi-use community space.

The outdoor area (pictured below) will support horticultural activities and a revamped pavilion will offer more opportunities in this section of the grounds that was once the Haigh zoo.

Repairs to the ornamental pond and priority upgrades to the footpath network will also form an important part of this project.



All aboard the Woodland Railway!

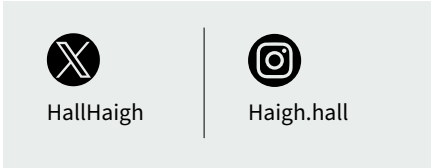
In September, Wigan Council announced plans to invest £380k to get the popular woodland railway back on track since its temporary closure in 2020.

The railway first opened back in 1986 and takes a 1.6k route through the upper plantation woodlands at Haigh. When it was last open in 2019/20, it carried more than 20,000 passengers – so we know it's a much-loved attraction.

Thanks to the hard work of the volunteers in the Haigh Woodland Railway Supporters Association, work has been ongoing in the background to ensure that the investment can have an immediate impact to bring the railway back to life.

Keep up to date with all the developments at Haigh Hall by following the X and Instagram accounts. To sign up to an email newsletter, visit our website: www.wigan.gov.uk/News

You can find out more about the Haigh restoration project here: www.wigan.gov.uk/Haigh-Hall



Thank you to our funding partners:



Supported using public funding by
ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND



Care To Join Us? There are so many ways to launch a career in care

A snapshot into care

In every corner of our communities there are unsung heroes making a big impact in the lives of those around them. They make a valuable contribution, putting a smile on the faces of those they care for and consistently placing others above themselves. Careers in the adult social care sector can be challenging, often supporting elderly and vulnerable individuals. But they are also hugely

rewarding, and our borough could not function without the dedication and commitment of our carers. Throughout the care sector in this borough alone, there are many roles and responsibilities across a wide-range of different settings and locations. Likewise, there are many different routes into these rewarding careers. And that’s why Wigan Council and its partner organisations have a number of tailor-made schemes available that

are helping our residents gain the skills and experience they need. In the following pages, the Borough Life team meets with five dedicated individuals who perform different roles and have had varied introductions to their careers. We asked them what they value about their jobs and why they would recommend what they do to others, to provide a snapshot into life in a caring role.



Shauna Barton, 36, is the CEO of Care Choice North West and has worked in the sector for 17 years.

Inspired by her mother who was a support worker in Wigan, Shauna’s passion for care began at 14. “The incredible impact my mother had as part of the lives of the individuals she supported gave me the desire to help people,” she explains. Starting as a carer with no business experience, she founded Care Choice North West in 2015. Today, it is one of Wigan’s largest care companies with 250 staff. Shauna has proudly completed numerous qualifications and is pursuing a diploma in leadership and management.

“I am dyslexic and have ADHD; I view my unique perspective as a strength that enhances my ability to lead a company that delivers exceptional care.

“The joy of seeing the smiles of the individuals we support is profoundly rewarding and I credit the success of Care Choice to my dedicated team.

“Many people think care is solely about personal assistance, but I believe it goes much deeper. “It’s about changing lives and experiencing personal growth.”

Warren Porter, 36, is a support worker at Cherish UK and has been working in care for almost three years.

“The best bit about the job is seeing people I support smile when I arrive,” he explains. “You really can make a difference to someone’s life by just being there for them.” For Warren, the biggest myth about working in care is that it means dealing with ‘difficult’ people. “They are just people in the community like you and me who want to enjoy every day as best they can,” he says. “I would recommend this job for anyone who wants to make a real difference in their community and isn’t interested in the boring nine-to-five job sitting behind a desk all day.”

Gemma Raymond, 39, is a Team Leader at CareTech with eight years of experience.

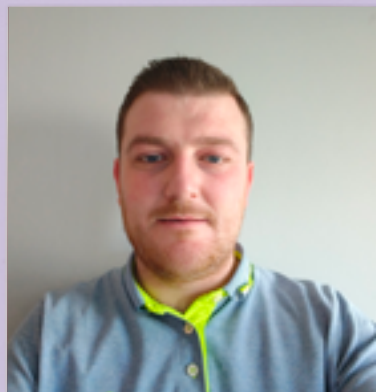
CareTech is an organisation that provides supported living help for residents, helping them to live as independently as possible. Her journey began by helping her family, which inspired her to pursue a career in care. “One big myth about working in care is that it is all about doing things for the individuals,” she says. “This is not the case at all. I am very privileged in my role to be able to support both the individuals and the staff to have positive outcomes every day.” Gemma told us that her favourite part of the job is that no two days are the same and she is able to help people she supports to live their best lives.



Carers help residents in many different ways



Natasha Sharp



Dane Ramsdale

Natasha Sharp, 35, is a dementia support worker at the Heathside Residential Home in Leigh.

She is part of a dedicated and highly-skilled team at the Plank Lane facility that supports around two dozen older people and also provides a reablement service.

“I find it very rewarding; I love supporting our residents,” she explains. “I know I am making a difference to people’s lives and helping others. It’s not just personal care, we’re able to have fun and encourage our residents with activities, such as dancing. We give comfort and are like a family.”

Natasha has been working within the care sector for two years. She would recommend it as a career because of the experience of making that important difference in someone’s life.

Dane Ramsdale, 32, is a Mobile Support Worker with Wigan Council with three years experience.

“I got into care as I wanted a career change after working in retail for 16 years,” he explains. “I knew care would be the best move after being told by many people that I should go for it.”

A mobile support worker is a real all-rounder, helping residents in a variety of ways across a range of care settings.

It didn’t take long for Dane to appreciate just how fulfilling the job can be, feeling like he is making a difference every day and seeing the smiles on people’s faces.

It is a career he would recommend to everyone.

“It’s very rewarding and can make you feel great, especially when you have made a real positive impact to someone’s day.

“There is nothing better than helping and supporting people whilst gaining valuable life skills along the way.

“Care workers have high levels of emotional intelligence which allows them to listen, engage with people and build relationships.”

Pathways into care

If this snapshot into careers in adult social care has inspired you, there are lots of ways to take that all-important first step.

For those still at school and considering their options, Wigan and Leigh College offers a range of qualifications. All include work placements with local employers with lots of options.

Or you can apply for roles through Wigan Council’s campaign Care To Join Us? There are a range of roles with the council or local providers.

www.wigan.gov.uk/caretojoin

Wigan Council offers Step Into Care traineeships for 16-18 year olds, and for adults, we offer pre-employment programmes to give a taster of care before applying.

Alternatively if you’ve left university and are looking for roles such as social worker, occupational therapist, registered manager or speech and language therapist then take a look at www.greater.jobs/wigan

It is also worth keeping an eye on opportunities with our partners at NHS Wroughtington, Wigan and Leigh (WWL).



Here at Wigan Council we’re helping folk to live their best lives.

We are caring, listening, fixing and helping.
We are making a difference.

To find out more about how you can use your unique skills to make a difference in our borough visit:

wigan.gov.uk/makingadifference



Wigan
Council



Care To Join Us?



Merly's Kitchen + Connolly Ltd in Astley

Perfect partnerships formed through community spirit

A new initiative designed to link up community-minded businesses and grassroots organisations has had an amazing debut year. Community SOS has seen dozens of projects that make a real difference delivered with the helping hand of firms who are looking to give something back. The support can range from redevelopment, repairs and maintenance works to financial advice or training. Whatever is required, the Community SOS team are the experts in making those all-important match-ups. Councillor Chris Ready, cabinet member for communities and neighbourhoods,

said: “Our voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) sector here in Wigan Borough give so much. And we’re also blessed to have many businesses that prioritise their social value work and like to make important contributions. “The projects supported through Community SOS range in size and type, but they have all made a real difference. We can’t wait to see how it progresses next year.” Here are some of the success stories from the first year of the Community SOS scheme. If you would like to get involved in the scheme for 2025 or to find out more, e-mail: matchmyproject@wigan.gov.uk

Aspull Olympic Wrestling Club + Rothwell Plumbing Services

When the well-renowned club was struggling with a hidden leak, RPS engineers Ged and Danny stepped in. After learning about all the amazing work the club does in the community; supporting young people and producing its fair share of wrestling champions, they did more than just fix the leak. They re-fit all the pipework and replaced and re-fit the radiators

in the wrestling room, making the space safer and more comfortable for the athletes to train. Club director Andrea Wood said: “They went above and beyond. I can’t even begin to say how thankful we all are and what an incredible job has been done. “Thank you to everyone involved, we are beyond grateful.”



Heath Street Methodist Church + Connolly Ltd

A meeting room at the Golborne and Lowton site needed a makeover after suffering with some damp issues. After Connolly’s had finished, the flexible space was completely redecorated with

extra storage and furniture added. This all means that church volunteers now have a new space for their community partners and groups to all use.

Merly’s Kitchen + Connolly Ltd

This match-up saw Connolly’s step in when the team at Merly’s – a community interest company based in Tyldesley – was looking to transform their garden allotment. The work will help Merly’s keep their food pantry well stocked

and establish a mental health awareness area. Founder Samantha Lowry said: “Connolly’s has worked with us to build an amazing asset for which we are very grateful and will benefit the community for years to come.”



Garswood Hall Bowling and Community Club + Jewsons

This much-loved location offers a warm and friendly atmosphere for visitors and is the home of a social isolation project. To help with the extension of the club, an outside area

required clearing and levelling off. Builders merchants Jewsons offered their support to clear the site, paving the way for the club to move a big step forward with their plans.



The Little Green Platter Company

New and old favourites are the hallmark of Orrell

Known for its traditional links to farming, coal mining and even the production of nails and bolts, it's now a different kind of grafting, crafting and making that makes Orrell stand out.

Popular food spots, independent retailers and a healthy portion of creativity provide a diverse offer for visitors.

We just had to pay a visit and the Borough Life team's trip to the town started with a visit to **The Old Bank** on the busy Church Street.

If your vibes are brunch, this cozy café makes for the perfect late brekky, serving their breakfast menu up until 2.30pm (perfect for late-risers) along with a generous selection of

pastries and freshly brewed coffee.

We were stuck between breakfast and lunch so ordered both (why not!?), opting for the Aussie breakfast bagel delicately stacked with halloumi, sausage, bacon, fried egg topped with avocado (yes, we did finish it all!).

The lunch of choice was a hot beef and onion baguette served with a mountain of



The Copper Tap

wedges and a generous pot of gravy....yum!

The Old Bank now lives beside **Upper Crust Pizza**, a family-owned business which opened in 2021 serving freshly made Neapolitan style pizza... not to forget their delicious chocolate Nutella doughnuts.

If you're making a night of it, you only need to take a couple of steps over the road where you'll find **The Copper Tap** which has regular live music and a selection of drinks and popular cocktails if you're in fine fettle for a fun night out.

Our next stop was **The Little Workshop** and if the shop window dressed in seasonal gifts isn't enough to immediately entice you

in, just wait until you see the magic inside.

They specialise in locally made gifts, upcycled furniture, bespoke items and offer a range of creative workshops for adults and children. These are hosted by local crafters and makers from jewellery making, to mosaic signs and even candle making.

Owner Samantha will soon be celebrating their five-year anniversary and says her customers often come for a workshop and stay around for lunch and dinner nearby; something that wasn't possible a few years ago.

"Lots of people comment on how just having a couple of hours out learning a new skill is very relaxing for them," Samantha explains.

Creativity oozes through this unique space and all of the shop's fixtures are made from repurposed furniture with a table at the back sat next to a display of colourful fabric where workshops are hosted.

Just a short trip up the road is a delicatessen of dreams. **The Little Green Platter Company** (pictured below) creates stunning handmade grazing boards, platters and



For the Spring 2025 edition of Borough Life we will be visiting Atherton and would love to hear your suggestions. Contact: BoroughLifeMagazine@wigan.gov.uk

Upper Crust Pizza



The Old Bank



boxes that look like pieces of art and are (almost) too pretty to eat!

They've recently opened a graze bar, where you can call in and tuck into a graze box there and then!

The menu also offers all your seasonal and hearty favourites with a range of homemade soups, fresh breads and even hot-pots.

A new space upstairs, designed to host artisan cheese and wine experiences is scheduled to open in 2025, so watch this space!

And with that our trip draws to a close. We've only just scratched the surface with

Orrell, there's loads more places making their name, from a range of pubs, cafés and restaurants.

Here's an added list of some of our favourites:

- The Posthouse Orrell: Bar and Kitchen.
- One Ten Rotisserie and Deli: Breakfast, lunch and takeaway.
- Greenslate Community Farm: Working farm that's open to visitors and hosts activities.
- Straw Bale Café at Greenslate Farm: Serves all day breakfast, afternoon tea, toasties and sandwiches.



The Little Workshop



All of the winners on stage



Fur Clemt volunteers



Worsley Mesnes Primary School staff

Pride in Our Town

Glitzy and glamour was the order of the night with an extra-large portion of community pride as the Our Town Awards 2024 was hosted at the Edge conference centre in October.

In what has been a special anniversary year for the borough, it was an especially difficult task for our judging panels as the standard of nominations across all the categories was higher than ever before.

From awe-inspiring groups to super-schools and amazing individuals and carers with hearts of gold, each and every one is a brilliant role model.

Alex Winstanley from Happy Smiles CIC claimed the coveted Leader’s Award for his social enterprise’s incredible disability and inclusivity advocacy and the huge impact they’ve made across the borough and beyond.

He said: “It’s amazing to win this award and be recognised among such incredible people. “There’s so many incredible people in our borough and it’s a bit surreal to be honest. I’m a really passionate Wiganer, and I love our borough and I love the people in it.”

Find out more:
www.wigan.gov.uk/OurTown



Dave Guest, Alex Winstanley and Councillor David Molyneux MBE



Nicol Mere staff



Julie Baxter, Reece Sumner, Karen Campbell and Elena Waywell

Winners:

- Leader’s Award:**
Alex Winstanley and Happy Smiles CIC.
Highly commended - Volunteers of Wigan and Leigh Hospice
- Business of the Year:**
Tim Hilton - JJH Builders.
Highly commended - Karl Mather (KDM Electrical), Applecast
- Neighbour of the Year:**
Sharon Smith.
Highly commended - Kris Thomas, Christopher Hill
- School of the Year:**
Nicol Mere Primary School.
Highly commended - St John Fisher, The Aspire Federation
- Unsung Hero:**
Andrea Jukes.
Highly commended - Angela Brown
- Volunteer of the Year:**
Victoria Davies.
Highly commended - Fur Clemt, Mavis Grundy
- Community Initiative:**
Daisy Chain Stitchers.
Highly commended - Winstanley Walkers, Yellow Door Library
- Environment Award:**
The Bridgers.
Highly commended - Friends of Low Hall, Friends of Ashton Community Garden, Oliver Dutka
- Unpaid Carers Award:**
Gabrielle Edwards.
Highly commended - Kieron Sales, Paul Selby, Jean Atherton
- Young Person of the Year:**
Reece Sumner.
Highly commended - Elena Waywell, Glyn Ellis, Frankie Parkinson
- Special recognition award:**
Worsley Mesnes Primary School



Paul Banks from the Digital Wigan team shows Michael and Victor the basics of coding at Golborne Library

Taking steps towards a brighter digital future

For several years dedicated teams in Wigan Borough have been helping thousands of residents unlock their digital skills. It's not only helping people build their confidence with technology that can support them with their everyday lives, it's also tackling social isolation and building new communities. One such project is the ground-breaking Building Opportunities programme. "It's not necessarily about getting qualifications," explains Josh Hill, a digital inclusion project lead at

the Rebuild With Hope Foundation. "It's about re-engaging people, bringing them back into the community and helping those who might have become isolated to get out and about again. "It's a safe space to meet others, get informed and build confidence." The Rebuild With Hope (RWH) name will be familiar for those who have visited their flagship store in the heart of Wigan town centre. Building Opportunities is a programme run by the RWH Foundation – the charity behind the store – offering

opportunities for digital inclusion. Josh and colleagues are part of the Digital Communities Partnership, a group led by Wigan Council but made up of a selection of local organisations all focused on improving the borough's digital skills. "The digital world is now hard to ignore," he says. "If you want to move your money, you'll need an app. Many will even need an app to request holidays at work. "It you haven't grown up with this technology it can be a daunting task. And, it's ever-evolving.

"Even people who have taken the time to educate themselves previously can feel left behind when the technology moves on." Building Opportunities offers workshops, mentorship programmes, skills development sessions and practical training. The training covers basics such as getting the best out of your mobile or how to use a laptop or tablet for e-mails, through to more complex skills. At a recent session, Josh teamed up with Wigan Council's Digital Wigan team who brought along their virtual reality headsets for everyone to try, both for entertainment purposes and basic confidence building. "The number of completely digitally excluded people is reducing," says Josh. "But most people are probably a little bit digitally excluded in some way. "For example, you might be able to make a brilliant video on your mobile phone but might not know how to use the in-built mouse on your laptop, or you might be great with e-mails, but struggle when it comes to ordering a food shop online. "The training isn't about creating digital wizards; it was about helping everyone get by in daily life." Stephen Kelly, a warehouse supervisor, joined one of the sessions to learn new skills. "I live in a first floor flat with my sister," he says. "But she's recovering from a hip operation, and she really needs to be on the ground floor. "I'm looking after everything for her and it's all online now; looking for a new flat, renewing prescriptions.

"In the future I'd like to progress at work, possibly into management, but a lot of training is online, and I'm sick of paying to print things off." At the end of this course, the Digital Wigan team gifted the participants with reconditioned laptops that had been provided through funding from the Device Bank at the Good Things Foundation. Other community initiatives across the borough will also be receiving the free laptops over the next few months. "This training and now the laptop will make a massive difference to me," Stephen adds. "I'll be able to do so much more from home." Fellow group member Mark Armstrong is a musician who says he has previously not been comfortable with modern technology. "I've always hated it," he says. "I was never interested in it at school, I don't even have a TV or radio." Mark was drawn to the Building Opportunities programme initially through the yoga and mindful meditation courses. The friendly, informal atmosphere of the group encouraged him to complete the digital course, much to his own surprise.

"I think my attitude has changed, I've learned there are programmes that will help me to produce my music." Another group member, Stephen Sharples, has used the sessions to build his confidence after a challenging few years. He volunteers at RBH and is also a single parent who cares for his mum. "Sometimes I've felt like it's been me against the world," he says. "But in the last 10 months I've achieved more than I ever thought possible. "I've been a shy person all my life, but this project got me up and out again. "I've changed since being here. I've become more outgoing as I've been meeting people every day. I'm focused on the future now. I have a paid job and I'm getting my driving licence and one day I'd like to be self-employed. "The laptop I've received today will make a huge difference to my family's life. I'll be able to help my daughter with her homework. I feel like it's another step towards a better future for us." The Building Opportunities Programme is funded by WEA (Workers Educational Association) and GMCA (Greater Manchester Combined Authority).

www.wigan.gov.uk/DigitalWigan



Alex Yoxall from Digital Wigan and Josh Hill present course participants with their laptops

What's on in Wigan Borough?

Haigh Woodland Park

www.facebook.com/haighwoodlandpark



Drive-in cinema at Christmas

Sunday 22nd and Monday 23rd December
From 4pm

The ever popular drive-in cinema returns with Elf (22nd) and The Polar Express (23rd) as the main attractions on the giant screen. The Kitchen Courtyard will also be open for festive treats and youngsters can pay a visit to Santa's Grotto.

✦ **Main car park**
✦ **Tickets: £36 for a family car.**
✦ **Book through Eventbrite**

Winter Wakening – Lino Printing Workshop

Saturday 18th January
10.30am – 12.30pm

Taking inspiration from nature, create card designs, gifts for loved ones, or something special for yourself with talented artist Emma Saunders. All materials included.

✦ **Stables classroom**
✦ **Tickets: £15**

Poetry Workshop with Cathi Rae

Sunday 9th February
1pm – 2.30pm

Join poet, body positivity model and campaigner against ageism, Cathi Rae to explore other people's stories through poetry.

✦ **Stables classroom**
✦ **Tickets: £3**

The River and The Fool – History Walk

Sunday 2nd March
10.30am – 12pm

Artist and researcher Anna FC Smith takes you on a journey through history and folklore connected to Haigh and the River Douglas. The walk draws together facts and myths, linking Wigan's last fool, Thomas Skelton and his mischievous last Will and Testament with stories of boggarts, bones and polluted waters.

✦ **Plantation Gates**
✦ **Tickets: £3**



Bump & Buggy

Each Friday, 10.30am

A leisurely stroll around pram friendly paths through Haigh. Everyone is made to feel welcome. Stop off for a brew and a chat after your walk.

✦ **Visitors centre**
✦ **Tickets: Free, just drop in**

Historical Fiction Writing Workshop with Julie McKiernan

Sunday 2nd March

1pm – 2.30pm

Historian and writer, Julie McKiernan hosts a masterclass on how to write historical fiction inspired by true stories.

✦ **Stables classroom**
✦ **Tickets: £3**



Haigh Woodland Park Run

Each Saturday, 9am

Park Run is a way of getting fit and enjoying great outdoor spaces.

Starting from the Courtyard Terrace, you can run or walk the route through Haigh.

✦ **Courtyard Terrace**
✦ **Free, registration is required:**
www.parkrun.org.uk



Boggarts and Beasties – Children's Drama Workshop

Sunday 13th April
10.30am – 12.30pm

Join Lisa Lundie for drama games and fun! We'll be creating scenes exploring boggarts, beasties and mermaids. Suitable for ages 7-11.

✦ **Stables classroom**
✦ **Tickets: £5 per child**

Museums, Archives & Libraries



Turnpike Tots

Each Thursday: 9th January to 6th March, term time only
10.30am-11.30am

Turnpike Tots is a creative play session for little artists aged 0-5 years and their grown-ups!

✦ **Turnpike Gallery**
✦ **Tickets: Free, booking essential through Eventbrite**

Home: Ukrainian Photography, UK Words exhibition

Open until Saturday 25th January
Tuesday to Friday: 10am – 4pm
Saturdays: 10am – 2pm

This exhibition showcases diverse works from Ukrainian artists who offer distinct ways of seeing and thinking about 'home'.

✦ **Turnpike Gallery**
✦ **Tickets: Free**

OPEN 2025

Friday 28th February to Saturday 19th April
Tuesday to Friday: 10am – 4pm
Saturdays: 10am – 2pm

The OPEN exhibition presents exciting new artwork by artists living or working in the borough.

✦ **Turnpike Gallery**
✦ **Tickets: Free**

Wigan Libraries

Monday 6th January to Friday 21st February

Celebrate World Book Day with a borough wide illustration competition in conjunction with children's book illustrator, Nicola Slater. The competition is open to everyone aged 4-16. The winners will be announced on World Book Day, Thursday 6th March.

✦ **Free to enter, follow @WiganLibraries for more details**



Wigan Library Chess Club

Each Saturday, 10am – 1pm

Suitable for all ages and abilities, everyone welcome.

✦ **Life Centre North**
✦ **Tickets: Free**

Antony Johnston creative writing evening

Thursday 6th February, 8pm

Join Antony Johnston, the author of The Dogsitter Detective series, as he talks about his career with a Q&A session for all aspiring writers, followed by a fish and chip supper.

✦ **Leigh Library**
✦ **Tickets: £9, reserve through Eventbrite**



Wild Workshops

Monday 17th February
10.15am – 11.15am

See mini-beasts and small animals as you've never seen them before.

✦ **Golborne Library**
✦ **Tickets: £4.50, book through Eventbrite**

Children's Animal Illustration Workshops

Monday 17th and Wednesday 19th February, 10.30am – 11.30am

Join a local artist and learn expert tips on a range of creative tasks, including painting, collage and polymer clay.

✦ **Tyldesley Library, Monday**
✦ **Leigh Library, Wednesday**
✦ **Tickets: £4.50, book through Eventbrite**



Out Of This World

Saturday 22nd February
10.30am – 12pm

Join children's author Dan Worsley and embark on an extra-terrestrial storytelling journey. Perfect for 7 to 11 year olds.

✦ **Golborne Library**
✦ **Tickets: Free**



Festive Family Fun Day

Saturday 7th December
10am – 2pm

Kick off the holiday season with a day of festive family fun, crafts and activities for the whole family.

✦ **Leigh Town Hall**
✦ **Tickets: Free, book through Eventbrite**



Leigh Town Hall Tours

Last Wednesday of each month
11am

Explore the rich history and architectural marvels of the iconic town centre building with a guided tour from one of our resident experts.

✦ **Leigh Town Hall**
✦ **Tickets: Free, book through Eventbrite**



Chinese New Year celebrations

Saturday 22nd February
10am – 1.30pm

Celebrate Chinese New Year with music, dancing and traditional crafts. Watch a daring martial arts display in the Grand Arcade, see the amazing Chinese lion dancers on Market Place, before a special finale at the museum.

📍 **Museum of Wigan Life**
🎟️ **Tickets: Free**

Sewing machining for beginners

Saturday 1st March
10.30am – 1.30pm

Have you ever wanted to learn how to use a sewing machine? Have you a machine that you have never used? Come along and learn how to thread a machine, do basic stitches and skills.

📍 **Museum of Wigan Life**
🎟️ **Tickets: £15, book through Eventbrite**



Collectors' Showcase

Saturday 15th March
10.30am – 1.30pm

Local collectors show off their amazing treasures and wonderful curiosities, all with a story to tell. Our experts will be on hand to discuss their displays and share their knowledge.

📍 **Museum of Wigan Life**
🎟️ **Tickets: Free**

Community



The Really Awful Orchestra

Friday 13th December, 7.30pm

An orchestra made up of people who have come together through their love of music. Their concerts are full of joy and have become a favourite for lovers of music up and down the country.

📍 **St Michael & All Angels Church, Swinley**
🎟️ **Tickets: www.musiccontinuum.co.uk**

An Evening of Christmas Music

Friday 20th December, 7.30pm

A variety of light and traditional Christmas music performed by local musicians in aid of The Christie.

📍 **Trinity United Reformed Church, Wigan**
🎟️ **Tickets: £5 on the door**



Leigh Film Factory

Various viewings and events

Providing an affordable, accessible and welcoming space where everyone can enjoy a quality cinema experience. Visit the website for details on all upcoming viewings.

📍 **Spinners Mill, Leigh**
🎟️ **Tickets: www.leighfilmfactory.com**

Wigan Little Theatre

Wednesday 22nd January to Saturday 1st February

The Revlon Girl: a rich drama about grief, greed and make-up.

Wednesday 5th March to Saturday 15th March

Saturday Night at The Crown: A down to earth northern comedy.

🎟️ **Tickets: Book through www.wiganlittletheatre.co.uk**



Sunday Jazz in Wigan

Sunday 26th January, 12.30pm

The Anchormen Jazz Orchestra with vocalist Alan Cross will provide an afternoon of big band swing, featuring some of the best jazz musicians in the north.

📍 **Whelley Ex-Serviceman's Club**
🎟️ **Tickets: £13**
www.wiganjazzclub.co.uk



Early Doors Club

Friday evenings (various)

Hosted on rotation at The Snug in Atherton, The Coffee Stop in Leigh, St George's in Tyldesley and Hideout in Wigan, Early Doors Club showcases live music and entertainment from the best local artists. As the name suggests, the early evening start times create a brilliant start to your weekend.

📍 **Various venues**
🎟️ **Tickets can be booked through The Early Doors Club page on Eventbrite**



Run Wigan Festival

Sunday 16th March

The HW Moon Toyota Run Wigan Festival is a fantastic day for all the family. Sign up for the 5km, half marathon or Family Mile or come down to the town centre to cheer on all the runners.

📍 **Mesnes Park, Wigan**
🎟️ **Tickets: Free for spectators, registration required for runners: www.runwiganfestivals.co.uk**



Leisuretec presents: Russell Watson

Saturday 29th March

Performing live in Wigan, for one night only. Don't miss out on the chance to see one of the world's greatest classical singer.

📍 **The Edge**
🎟️ **Tickets: www.quaytickets.com**

Sporting fixtures

Leigh Leopards leighsportsvillage.co.uk	Wigan Athletic wiganathletic.com/matches	Wigan Warriors wiganwarriors.com/fixtures

Find out what's going on in Wigan Borough

at eventbrite.co.uk and search Wigan Council

- ◆ Outdoor Activities
- ◆ Haigh
- ◆ Museums
- ◆ Archives
- ◆ Turnpike
- ◆ And much more

SCAN ME

Find out what's going on at Wigan Libraries

at eventbrite.co.uk and search Wigan Libraries

SCAN ME



Don't give up giving up

Quit smoking
with the Be Well
Stop Smoking
Service

- Face-to-face appointments
- Group sessions with friends or family
- In-person sessions at community venues
- Phone or video call appointments
- Nicotine replacement therapy

Scan the QR
code to read
Marie's story

Marie was a heavy smoker for 45 years... but she's finally quit with the help of our friendly health advisors.

"If I can do it, then you can too! For me, the thought of not smoking was more daunting than the reality. I took it day-by-day and, before I knew it, the days were turning into weeks, then into months.

"If you have tried to quit in the past, don't be disheartened that it didn't work. Life gets in the way, people have lots of things going on in their lives. When you're ready to, give it a go and try again!"

www.bewellwigan.org/stop-smoking

GET VACCINATED. GET WINTER STRONG.

If your child is 2 or 3 years old you can book a flu vaccination appointment at their GP surgery



Find out if you are eligible for a free NHS flu jab by contacting your GP or visit www.nhs.uk/vaccinations/flu-vaccine

Winter services

Winter Opening Hours

Leigh and Wigan Life Centres (including Register Office and Libraries)

Wigan and Leigh Life Centres will be closed from 4pm on 24 December, 2024 (Christmas Eve) and will re-open at 10am on 2 January, 2025.

Customers can still access welfare support by visiting www.wigan.gov.uk/welfaresupport or calling **01942 705221** between 9am and 5pm on 27, 30 and 31 December 2024.

Registrar appointments will be available by appointment in Wigan Life Centre 10am-4pm on 27, 30 and 31 December 2024.

Wigan and Leigh Libraries will close at 4pm and Community Libraries will close at 2pm on 24 December (Christmas Eve) 2024 and will re-open on 2 January 2025.

Cemeteries

All cemeteries will be open to visitors during daylight hours over the holiday period. Burials will take place from 9am – 11am on 24 December 2024. No burials will take place on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day. Burials will take place from 12 noon to 2.30pm on 27 and 30 December 2024 and on 2 January 2025. Normal bookings will be resumed on 31 December and then from 3 January 2025 onwards.

Crematorium

Cremations will take place on 24 December 2024 and 31 December from 9am with the last cremation service being 11am. The chapel and office at the crematorium will be closed Christmas Day, Boxing Day, 28, 29 December 2024 and New Year's Day. Normal services will take place on 27 and 30

December 2024 and from 2 January 2025.

Bereavement Services Office

During the festive period, you can contact the Bereavement Services Office by calling **01942 489003** the line will be open 9am-4pm on 23, 27, 30 December 2024 and 9am-12noon on 24, 31 December 2024, closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

Recycling Centres

Will be closed Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day. Open every other day from 9am to 5.45pm. The sites are exceptionally busy during the festive period so please try to sort your waste before attending site, minimise your number of visits or delay your visit until the new year. For more information visit www.wigan.gov.uk/recycling

Refuse and Recycling Collections

Check the table on page 5 for changes to your refuse and recycling collections over the festive period.

Green bin collections will be suspended from 29 December until 10 January. They will resume either w/c 13 January or w/c 20 January, dependent on the area you live.

To check bin collection days over the festive period, refer to your bin collection calendar or visit www.wigan.gov.uk/recycling

Please put your bin out by 6.30am on your collection day. Collection times may vary due to traffic conditions. For any changes due to severe weather check social media or call our telephone helpline **01942 404364**. For more information visit www.wigan.gov.uk/winter

Winter services

NHS / Health services

Health services are here for you this winter. Please consider accessing the following options first and always leave A&E for serious injury or life-threatening emergencies only.

Pharmacy

All local pharmacies will be on a rota basis over the Christmas period. Search for NHS Find a Pharmacy at www.nhs.uk

Ensure you have enough remedies such as paracetamol in your house for coughs and colds.

Leigh Urgent Treatment Centre

General health advice and treatment for minor injuries or ailments including, cuts or minor burns, fractures, sprains, and x-rays (of upper / lower limbs), emergency contraception and sexual health.

No appointment is necessary. Open 7am to 9pm, 365 days a year at Leigh Health Centre, The Avenue, Leigh, WN7 1HR, **01942 483453**.

GP and Dental Services

If your GP or dentist is closed, please contact:

NHS 111 for confidential health information and advice, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week or online at www.111.nhs.uk

GP evening and weekend appointment service on **01942 482848**. Appointments 6.30pm to 8pm and on weekends and bank holidays 10am to 4pm except Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

GP out of hours service, available by calling **NHS 111** is open 6.30pm to 8am and all weekend (Fridays 6.30pm to 8am Monday), including all bank holidays.

Greater Manchester Urgent Dental Care Service on **0333 3323800** (8am to 10pm every day, including weekends and bank holidays).

While You Wait

If you (or someone you care for) are waiting on delayed medical care, you are likely to have concerns and questions.

The NHS in Greater Manchester is offering further information and advice, along with handy resources to help you manage your physical and mental wellbeing on the Greater Manchester While you Wait website. <https://whileyouwait.org.uk>

Mental Health Crisis Line

Contact Wigan Borough 24/7 mental health crisis line for all ages. Freephone **0800 953 0285**

Drug and Alcohol Support

If you are concerned about your own, or someone else's, alcohol or drug use this Christmas, you can reach We Are With You in Wigan and Leigh on **01942 487578** or you can talk anonymously to a trained advisor via the online web chat service - just go to www.wearewithyou.org.uk

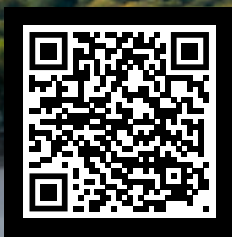
We are With You are open throughout the Christmas period with the exception of bank holidays.



These details are correct at the time of going to press.

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weekly newsletter

BoroughLife



www.wigan.gov.uk/boroughlifenewsletter



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BoroughLife podcast

