

BoroughLife

ISSUE 76. WINTER 2025



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Wigan
Council

The Leader's column



Welcome to the Winter 2025 edition of Borough Life.

As the colder months settle in, it's heartening to see how our borough continues to come together with warmth, resilience and a shared sense of purpose.

This edition shines a spotlight on some of the incredible work happening across our communities. One of the most impactful campaigns this season is Be Well's Stop Smoking initiative, which is helping residents take positive steps towards healthier lives.

With tailored support and accessible resources, it's a great example of how we're working together to improve wellbeing across the borough.

We also take a closer look at the growing momentum behind community wealth building. This approach is helping to ensure that investment and opportunity stay rooted in our local areas, supporting businesses, creating jobs and empowering residents. It's a powerful reminder that when we build from within, everyone benefits.

There are exciting updates from our town centre developments, with major milestones being reached in Wigan, Leigh and Ashton. These projects are transforming our public spaces, boosting local economies and creating vibrant hubs for people to live, work and enjoy.

Mental health remains a key priority, and we're proud to highlight the work of several community groups who are making a real difference. From peer support networks to creative wellbeing projects, these groups are offering lifelines and building connections that matter. Their stories are inspiring and show the strength of compassion in action.

As always, Borough Life is packed with ways to get involved, stay informed and celebrate everything that makes Wigan Borough special. I hope you enjoy this edition and find plenty to be proud of and hopeful about as we head into the new year.

David Molyneux
Councillor David Molyneux MBE
Leader, Wigan Council

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On the cover

They have put a smile on millions of young faces down the years so it seemed only fitting to have Phil Fletcher and Hacker T.Dog on our front cover following their big day.

Phil and Hacker received their Believe Star in August (and not a moment too soon, according to Hacker!) and we loved this happy and smiley image. We wish them all the best as they em-bark (geddit?) on their new role as Blue Peter presenters.

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](https://linktr.ee/wigancouncil)

An accessible version of our magazine is available to view online on our Borough Life webpage. www.wigan.gov.uk/BoroughLife



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I'm the star of the show, cockers! Hacker and Phil's Believe Star fame



Much-loved puppeteer Phil Fletcher was honoured with a town centre Believe Star in August.

Creating scores of puppets throughout his career, Phil's most beloved character is Hacker T. Dog, who has become a sensation for his chaotic interviews with film stars and celebrities.

A popular feature on CBBC, the lovable puppet has also presented shows on the children's television channel and became the 44th presenter of Blue Peter in September.

Hindley-born Phil said: "I'm so proud to receive my very own Believe Star here in Wigan! It means the world to be recognised in my hometown, and it was even more special to celebrate with my family and friends by my side. Their support has always kept me going, and sharing this moment with them made it unforgettable."

Launched in 2012, Believe Stars are the highest accolade awarded to Wigan Borough residents for their success and roles as ambassadors for the borough.



Progress With Unity stadium launches a new era at LSV

The stadium at Leigh Sports Village (LSV) will be renamed the Progress With Unity Stadium, acting as a figurehead for the borough's new movement for change.

The announcement came in the same week in September it was confirmed local favourites The Lottery Winners are set to headline

a blockbuster hometown gig at the stadium in 2026.

Leader of Wigan Council, Councillor David Molyneux MBE said: "It's important to note that Progress With Unity isn't just our initiative, it has partnership working and the strength of our communities at its heart."

"In many ways, Leigh Sports Village encapsulates this approach; it is a complex of facilities to be proud of, hosting professional and grassroots organisations and delivering community-based services."

Home to Leigh Leopards and Manchester United Women, the 12,000-capacity stadium opened in 2008.

Derek Beaumont, owner of Leigh Leopards, said: "The Progress With Unity Stadium is a great facility that we're proud to call our home."

"We've been breaking boundaries on the pitch in recent years, and this is a new milestone at Leigh Sports Village."

"Our partnership working with the council and wider community is stronger than it's ever been. Progress With Unity really aligns with our values as a club."

www.wigan.gov.uk/ProgressWithUnity



Arise, Sir Billy! Knighthood for legend Boston

Wigan Warriors legend Billy Boston became the first knighted player in the history of rugby league in June.

It follows a campaign – with Wigan Council one of its primary supporters – for more recognition of rugby league in the honours system.

Born in Cardiff in 1934, Billy made his debut for Wigan Warriors in November 1953 and scored an incredible 478 tries in 488 appearances for the club.

A statue of the legendary try-scorer stands pride of place on Believe Square in Wigan.

Councillor David Molyneux MBE, said: "We have been part of the campaign to call for more recognition of rugby league in the UK Honours system and this is an important step."

"Sir Billy has represented our borough and the rugby league community for decades and is a definite legend and pioneer of the sport we all love."

"I hope that rugby league now continues to receive the recognition it deserves in the future."



Around the borough

In **Norley Hall**, a much-loved adventure playground has reopened bigger and better than ever. Closed in 2020, the Lamberhead Road facility has been totally transformed with brand new, accessible play equipment – including swings, slides, zip lines and an eye-catching climbing tower.

Plans to deliver a £32m train station in **Golborne** were given the green light in April. With plans to improve connectivity across Greater Manchester, the development will reconnect Golborne to the railway for the first time in more than 60 years.

An exciting new play area is set to be built next to the toddler zone in **Abram Park**. While some popular attractions will remain, a variety of modern play equipment will be installed to create a more vibrant area for children and families.

Residents in **Hindley** are also set to benefit from a new play area at Leyland Park. The existing space will be transformed with a diverse range of play facilities as well as improvements to the surrounding area.

Tyldesley Library is set to reopen after an extensive refurbishment, five years after its closure. Library services will be relocated back to the Stanley Street building following significant investment from Wigan Council.

Work to make **Bryn** train station accessible for everyone will get under way this autumn. The £6.1m upgrade will install two passenger lifts and replace a stepped ramp to provide step-free access to and from the station platforms.

In **Standish** works to expand the Quakers Place car park is underway. This will include three disabled bays, improved surfacing, new time restrictions and tree planting.

Here For You financial support passes £12m

A flagship campaign has redistributed more than £12m to support struggling residents through the cost of living crisis.

Launched in 2023, the Here For You campaign sees council teams looking to identify ways where residents can save money or access extra financial support.

Over the past two years, expert advisors have helped residents access millions of pounds worth of unclaimed support, such as Pension Credit or Universal Credit. Other initiatives have seen school uniforms offered at highly discounted rates to make the return to school more affordable

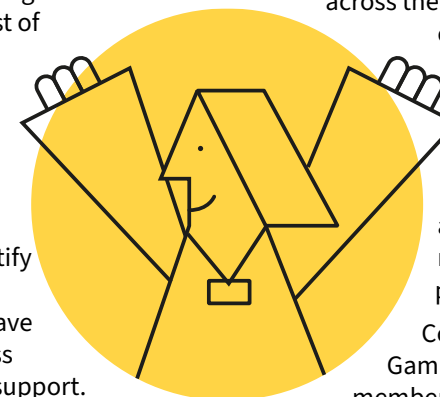
for families.

Intending to reach people across the borough, the campaign has also hosted around 350 events over the past 18 months, attended by more than 2,200 people.

Councillor Susan Gambles, cabinet member for welfare at

Wigan Council, said it has been "inspiring" to hear the impact of this additional support, with the council renewing its commitment to continuing the campaign.

www.wigan.gov.uk/HereForYou



Support for anti-knife crime campaign

Wigan Council will back the Let's Be Blunt campaign as part of its community safety initiatives to address knife violence.

Let's Be Blunt is dedicated to reducing knife crime through practical, everyday actions.

For example, part of the campaign encourages the replacement of sharp-ended kitchen knives with rounder ended alternatives.

It was launched by teacher Leanne Lucas, a survivor of the 2024 Southport attack.

Councillor Kevin Anderson, cabinet portfolio holder

for police, crime and civil contingencies, said the campaign complements Wigan Council's other anti-knife crime initiatives.

And speaking at a recent meeting of full council, he told colleagues he had recently met Ms Lucas and found her passion for the campaign 'truly inspirational'.

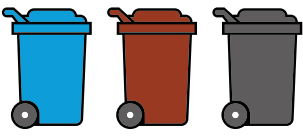
As part of wider anti-knife crime initiatives, knife disposal bins are now available at locations across the borough, including Wigan, Leigh, Platt Bridge and Pemberton.

www.wigan.gov.uk/SafetyPartnership



Christmas Bin Collections Reminder

Blue, brown and black bin collection days may change over the festive period.



NORMAL collection day	NEW collection day w/c 22/12/25	NEW collection day w/c 29/12/25
Tuesday	Mon 22 Dec	No change: Tues 30 Dec
Wednesday	Tues 23 Dec	No change: Wed 31 Dec
Thursday	Wed 24 Dec	Fri 2 Jan
Friday	Sat 27 Dec	Sat 3 Jan

 **Green bin** collections will be suspended from **29 December** until **9 January**. The green bin collections will resume either **w/c 12 January** or **w/c 19 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



Wigan Council

Neighbourhood funding boosts

Several areas across Wigan Borough will receive a significant funding boost as part of a £5bn national government initiative.

The Pride in Place programme was unveiled in September with the aim to provide communities with resources to bring about meaningful change.

The Platt Bridge and Spring View area, in the Makerfield constituency, and the Marsh Green and Laithwaite area, in the Wigan constituency, will each receive up to £20m spread over the next decade.

Residents, businesses and community organisations will help to lead the decision-making process, the government has said.

Wigan Council will also receive £1.5m as part of the programme.

Councillor David Molyneux MBE said: "We've been working with the Independent Commission on Neighbourhoods (ICON) and it's great to see the impact on neighbourhoods for funding streams like this placed on the national agenda.

"Giving residents a bigger say in what happens in their neighbourhoods is in line with this approach, and we're committed to working in genuine collaboration with residents, businesses, community organisations and other stakeholders to achieve our ambitions.

"By working together, we can harness and build upon our existing strengths and rise to the challenges we face to create thriving, resilient and welcoming communities of which we can all be proud.

"We will continue to work alongside our MPs to unlock funding opportunities for our borough."

The Flash comes to life as THE HERDS make a stampeding visit

A striking public art performance with an important message welcomed thousands of visitors to the borough in July.

As part of a huge 20,000km journey from Africa to the Arctic Circle, a herd of life-sized wildlife puppets travelled through Pennington Flash to highlight the impact of climate change, with a warning about animals forced to flee their natural habitats.

Visiting the borough as part of Manchester International Festival, 'THE HERDS' project helps to visualise the climate crisis and understand the collective effort needed to fight it.

Produced by the team behind the Little Amal project, THE HERDS brought together leading artists with arts and educational institutions from across Africa and Europe.



Councillor Chris Ready, cabinet member for communities and neighbourhoods, said he was delighted that Pennington Flash was selected as a stop-off point for the display of public art, which attracted a great response from the public.



Cultural strategy launched with special musical guests

Culture and the arts will remain firmly in the spotlight after Wigan Borough's new five-year master plan was unveiled with the help of The Lathums.

'The Fire Within – The Forge' will guide the work of the borough's thriving cultural sector, building on the success of its predecessor, 'The Fire Within'.

Created in partnership with the community, the cultural strategy will focus on providing opportunities for young people and equipping residents with the right skills to launch careers in the cultural sector.

Councillor Chris Ready, said: "We're very excited about the next five years as this masterplan supports our Progress With Unity missions; creating opportunities and contributing to flourishing neighbourhoods."

The Wigan Cultural Partnership hosted a launch event for the strategy at Wigan Pier, featuring borough organisations Curious Minds, Everything Human Rights and Thick Skin Theatre – and a star turn from local chart-toppers The Lathums (pictured below).

The band played a couple of hits including How Beautiful Life Can Be, the title-track of their UK No.1 debut album.

Derri Burdon, chair of the Cultural Partnership, said: "I'm proud that The Forge is the product of genuine partnership and deep listening. It honours Wigan Borough's resilience and identity, while raising our collective ambition for culture to be a driving force pride, opportunity and regeneration across the borough, for everybody."

www.thefirewithin.org.uk



Development updates



Exciting progress keeps Fettleers in the frame

Visitors to Wigan town centre now have an outline view of the entrance to the brand-new Market Hall. Much of the steel frame for the new facility is visible, with the new entrance opening out onto Market Place.

The new Market Hall will be the first phase of the Fettleers development to open its doors, scheduled to be in operation ahead of Christmas 2026.

Earlier this year, Northern Lights Group, known for running some

of the North West's most popular restaurants and entertainment venues, was announced as the new operator for the market.

Councillor David Molyneux MBE, Leader of Wigan Council, said: "Now the steel structure is in place we're starting to see the facility coming to life, with the market returning to its traditional site close to the middle of the town centre."

"Fettleers is at the heart of the town's transformation and we've

got an exciting time ahead. This phase of the development is already bringing opportunities into the town centre, creating job roles for local people as part of the construction stages.

"We're looking forward to seeing how the plans progress and alongside Cotton Works at Eckersley Mill, the opening of STACK at the Grand Arcade and the Civic, the town is fast becoming a destination to live, work and visit."

Foundations laid as hotel milestone is reached

Another major section of Fettleers has reached a significant point in its history. Works on the 144-bedroom Hampton by Hilton hotel were underway in October with Galliford Try on board as construction partners. It is expected to open in winter 2027.

Owned by Wigan Council and operated by Leaf Hospitality it will offer modern guestrooms, a gym with views across a new public square, dining and meeting facilities and secure parking.

The hotel will be located directly opposite the bus station entrance on New Market Street, in close proximity to both of the town's train stations.



New lease of life at the Pier



The town's most iconic landmark, Wigan Pier, is about to embark on a vibrant new chapter with plans to host a series of exciting events at the venue. This latest announcement builds on the successful first phase of regeneration, where historic buildings have been restored to their former glory.

Recent works have focused on essential maintenance and safety improvements to prepare the space for temporary event use. This has included general repairs and improving accessibility with the installation of ramps.

Pier 4 and 5 will be used as the official events space, and will host an eclectic mix of music, theatre and entertainment for all ages.

A grand opening for Civic

Many of you may have already popped in for a coffee or used its office spaces beforehand – but Civic officially opened its doors in September.

The event featured confetti explosions from the newly-renovated rooftop terrace, signifying that the new facility has opened with a bang!

The redevelopment of the striking brutalist civic centre building has been the brainchild of Wigan Council

and social impact developer Capital&Centric.

It is now home to a café-bar, social and work-spaces and creative studios, alongside the rooftop terrace and even a mini-cinema.

Tim Heatley, co-founder of Capital&Centric, said: "This is what regeneration should look like. Creating places where people actually want to be."

"Civic has always had a special place in Wigan's story, but it

needed a new chapter. We are bringing workspace, food and culture together under one roof, because building communities should be fun and surprising. Wigan deserves something bold, and that is exactly what this is."

Workspaces for businesses and enterprises of all sizes are available at Civic and anyone who is interested is encouraged to find out more at:

capitalandcentric.com/civic



Development updates



Civic Square makeover is on the horizon

Major milestones and significant progress are the orders of the day on the many schemes contributing to the multi-million-pound transformation of Leigh town centre.

First up, works are all set to be underway on the makeover of Civic Square. In September, it was confirmed that civil engineering giant Bethell Group were chosen as the contractor for the project.

It will see the space revitalised as a community and cultural events venue with new landscaping, celebrating Leigh's history and heritage.

At the same time, works will be carried out along Market Place, with new and improved crossings, wider pavements and landscaping to reconnect Civic Square with the wider town centre.

Wigan Council is also looking to take on new powers to tackle empty shop fronts and properties in the town centre.

The move would help the local authority trigger rental auctions for commercial properties where the landlords fail to engage.

This could see vacant units given a new lease of life – keep an eye out in the next edition of Borough Life for further updates.

Town board refreshed

Leigh is set to receive £20m over the next decade as part of the government's Pride in Place programme.

The cash can be spent on a wide range of projects all relating to creating thriving places and building stronger communities.

Last year, more than 1,500 people shared their views on what the funding should be spent on.

The Leigh Neighbourhood Board, which now has a new chair in local businessman Alex Grundy, will consider this feedback and put a new plan together.

The board includes representatives from public, private and voluntary sectors, all working together with the best interests of Leigh at heart.

wigan.gov.uk/LeighTownBoard



In the zone for major new campus

The announcement of a pair of exciting developments were making headlines in August.

Wigan Council is moving forward with establishing a cutting-edge health and social care training campus in Leigh town centre.

Working alongside partners Edge Hill University, WWL NHS and MP Jo Platt, the purpose-built facility could be a game changer when it comes to creating career pathways as a regional centre of excellence.

Deputy Leader of Wigan Council, Councillor Keith Cunliffe, said: "We're in the early stages of these plans but they're very exciting and could be a once-in-a-lifetime development.

"This campus, in the heart of Leigh, would be a regional and national hub, breaking down barriers to opportunity and



The health and social care training facility already in Wigan

providing a boost to our wider economy."

Alongside this, as part of the Greater Manchester wide 10-year plan, Leigh has been unveiled as a Mayoral Development Zone (MDZ) by

GM Mayor Andy Burnham. Areas that receive this status are supported to foster regional and local partnerships to boost economic growth and unlock any barriers to future development.

An exciting future for the market

It's at the heart of the town centre – a big part of our heritage and even bigger part of our future – and Leigh Market is in for an exciting couple of years.

The refurbishment of the facility is set to start in 2027, creating a more welcoming space for traders and shoppers with repairs to the building.

The market will be relocated to a Leigh town centre location during the works with more details to come. Until then the market is open and trading at its current home in Spinning Gate shopping centre, with a huge amount of products and services with everything from fruit and veg, meat, bread and



sweets, great places for a brew and bite to eat, repair services and homewares, to beauty, games, gifts...even their very own psychic!

Follow us on Facebook:





Development updates

Striking mural that links town to the Titanic unveiled on high street

An astonishing artwork has been completed in Ashton which combines local history with an intriguing link to the Titanic.

After leaving his mechanic job to follow his artistic passion during the pandemic, Scott Wilcock (pictured) has developed a reputation for incredible portraits and murals across the UK.

Under the 'Snow Graffiti' moniker, many of Scott's designs have been created in the borough and the dad-of-three's latest work is a huge three-storey Titanic mural, located on the side of Andy's All Day Breakfast café on Gerard Street in Ashton-in-Makerfield.

Made possible through Wigan Council's Our Future Ashton project, funded by the Government Local Regeneration Fund and as part of Ashton's wider regeneration plans, this mural is the first in a series of public artworks set to be installed.

Developed in consultation with local communities, the programme will celebrate Ashton's unique heritage and cultural character. This inaugural piece recognises a

century-old 'ghost sign' for William Aspinall's Chemist and the White Star shipping company, which operated the RMS Titanic in 1912.

With residents able to purchase ocean liner tickets from the Ashton-based chemist, the mural commemorates the tragic story of the Titanic - which sunk on its voyage across the Atlantic and resulted in the deaths of 1,517 people - while also incorporating elements of Ashton's history and heritage.

Using airbrush and graffiti materials, Scott has brought some of the town's bygone businesses back to life in the striking mural, while also including historical and film references, and depicting characters based on his family and those related to neighbouring café owner Andy Fairman.

Born and bred in Ashton, Scott said: "My family are all from Ashton and have lived here all their lives, so it makes me really proud to see this and include them. People have already been travelling here to see it, so I think it will bring more people into Ashton too."

Our Future Ashton

Works are well underway on the first shopfront improvement scheme, funded through the Our Future Ashton project.

The Cupcakery on Gerard Street is part of the scheme. It opened in 2023 as an independent café selling cake, coffee, meals and well known for family activities and its warm welcome.

The works include an upgrade celebrating the heritage features of the building and a new high-quality façade above the windows.

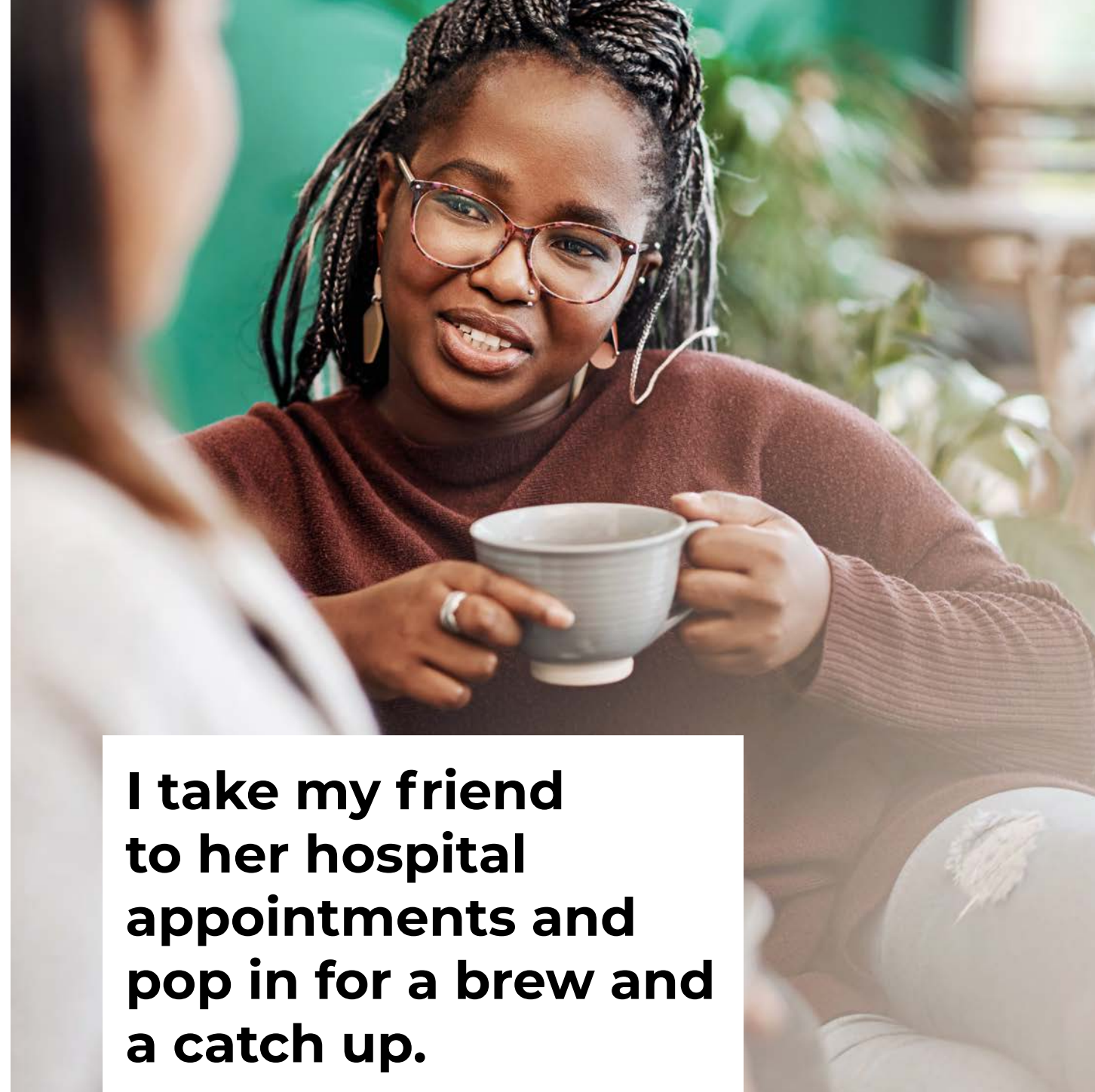
This project is grant funded, with all businesses required to provide a match funding contribution alongside the Local Regeneration Fund investment into our town.

Following in the footsteps of the successful Heritage Action Zone in Tyldesley, this project will help to revitalise the town centre, creating beautiful buildings and encourage people to spend more time in the town.

Around a dozen businesses in Ashton are set to benefit from these works, which are part of the Our Future Ashton project, which aims to make the town centre more attractive, increase visitor numbers and support existing and new businesses.

Other projects include creating a new public square on Garswood Street which will provide a new market offer and space for socialising and events, works to make the streets more attractive, greener and safer, and public art.

 **Funded by
UK Government**



**I take my friend
to her hospital
appointments and
pop in for a brew and
a catch up.**

**I am an unpaid carer
Are you?**

Register as a carer and find out
how we can support you.

www.wigan.gov.uk/SupportForCarers





Haigh Hall looking resplendent in the sunshine

Trains, snails and woodland trails

With key restoration milestones ticked off, eye-catching new public art displays installed and exciting news about an old favourite attraction, there's a lot to talk about at Haigh.

You could even say – and more on this as you read on – that it's gathering momentum at anything but a snail's pace.

Visitors will have spotted that the hall itself is looking resplendent after its extensive exterior makeover.

And now that the 'Jewel in the Crown' is looking all nice and polished, there are big plans on the horizon for the interior works.

Here's a round-up of all the recent activity.

Thank you to our funding partners:



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A fancy face-lift

We all like to look our best, especially if you're welcoming lots of visitors! Contractors HH Smith have done a great job with the outside of the hall with extensive cleaning to restore the stonework. In addition, all window frames have been repaired and are looking brand new (pictured left).

The substantial roof works have included repairs to the three glass domes and the replacement of chimney pots. Rotten timbers have been replaced throughout and the hall has an entirely new slate roof. All ironwork has also been lovingly restored and repainted where necessary.

With the external phase now complete the team will focus on the interior of the hall. Keep your eyes peeled for further updates.

'Snail on Me' makes a splash

September saw the launch of the eye-catching public art display: 'Snail on Me' (pictured below).

Designed by the international artist Duk Hee Jordan, the sculpture explores themes of bio-diversity and climate change.

The artwork was commissioned by UP Projects and part funded by Arts Council England and Arts Fund. It is part of a series called Bodies of Water, a public art initiative that addresses environment issues and the need for more efficient water management. Snail on Me can be viewed everyday in its new home in the lower walled gardens.

Access to public art is an important part of the Haigh transformation with local artists commissioned to host workshops in the lead-up to the launch event.



A big thankyou to our volunteers

Given that an estimated 1,200 hours have been dedicated to the site in the last 12 months, we thought our amazing volunteers deserved a pat on the back.

From the Friends of Haigh Woodland Park to railway and horticulture volunteers plus those on events and site support, we greatly appreciate all your dedication.

We're sure the celebration event held recently won't be the last.



Amphitheatre for a Tree in full bloom

This new garden and event space opened earlier this year and is blooming after its first summer. Although one of the driest springs on record posed a challenge, the garden is thriving, as you can see from these fantastic images. This project is one of the first of many exciting schemes to be completed at Haigh against the backdrop of the multi-million-pound transformation on the

estate. Located adjacent to the Hall itself and also the Kitchen Courtyard, it offers an eye-catching focal point for visitors. Dr Sylvia Travers, Head of Horticulture at Haigh, said: “We didn’t set out to create a garden with crushed bricks, but if we hadn’t they would have gone to landfill. “Gardening is all about adapting to what you’ve got and actually

creating something far better than you hoped. “And just look at what we’ve got - a garden full of colour, texture and hundreds of bees and butterflies.” The centrepiece of the garden is a handkerchief tree with a striking brass crown surrounding its base. The now completed amphitheatre project is funded by Wigan Council and Arts Council England.



You’re hired!

Three new horticulture apprentices have started their training in recent weeks. This represents a major milestone for the site, with training and employment opportunities key to the transformation plan. The level two apprentices will learn from Dr Travers and the team, gaining broad experience in horticulture and playing a key role in the restoration of the gardens, soil health, bio-diversity and the impact of gardening and climate change. Please follow our social channels to see how they’re getting on.



Our apprentices Noah, Catherine and Sam



Old favourite back on track

In a previous edition of Borough Life, we included the brilliant news that the council would be investing £380k to ensure the return of the much loved Woodland Railway to Haigh. This time round, we’re happy to report that the first pieces of new track were recently laid ahead of the scheduled reopening next year.

Keep up to date with all the developments at Haigh Hall by following the Facebook 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/HaighHall


HaighWoodlandPark


Haigh.hall



A decorative feature inside Haigh Hall



Amy Madden in the art therapy room at All Ears

Hope and inspiration from local support services

Every single one of us is likely to encounter a mental health issue, either personally or to someone close to us.

Here in Wigan Borough, there are a range of organisations available to provide vital support.

The stories behind how some of these services started out are fascinating - and at the heart of them is a collection of inspiring women.

We share their stories with the important message that help is out there.

It helped me feel closer to her... and it helped me express myself

One room at the new All Ears Hub in Pemberton is entirely covered in dust sheets and white paper, save for a small easel in the centre of the room, which displays a Jackson Pollock style etching.

It's as if the room is yet to be decorated, as other corners of the hub are beautifully finished, homely and welcoming.

This is the art therapy room, where you can express any difficult feelings by throwing paint at the walls.

"There have been lots of highlights so far," says Amy Madden, who set this all up in July after a successful funding bid.

"But one moment that sticks in my mind is a young man who was trying to process an injustice. He didn't want to speak at first, so we went to the art therapy room and threw some paint around and after that he started to talk about how he was feeling.

"It gave him some space to express something that he might have carried around with him."

Alongside art therapy, All Ears Hub offers talking therapy, a rage room (where you can express anger by smashing up crockery in a safe environment) and training.

It is inspired by Amy's own experiences as she addressed her own mental health issues as a teenager, after losing her best friend Aleysha to suicide.

"After Aleysha died, all I wanted to do was draw or paint, even though I wasn't especially good at it.

"I remember asking my family for only art supplies one Christmas. Aleysha was a creative person, so I think it helped me feel closer to her, and because I didn't want



to talk about how I was feeling at that time, and didn't know how to navigate those feelings, it helped me express myself in a different way."

The service is for people of all ages although Amy specialises in working with children as young as five through to teenagers.

"My aim for All Ears Hub is that young people's first experience of therapy won't be clinical or clouded by them fighting to prove that they are ill enough to warrant support.

"My own experience as a young person was that after waiting for a long time to see a mental health professional, I was denied ongoing support, which can be an unhealthy lesson to learn at a young age; that you need to be

more unwell before a stretched system can accommodate you."

Amy, who went on to gain a counselling and psychotherapy degree before developing All Ears CIC and then launching the hub, believes the value of the service lies in merging creativity with professional mental health support.

"When I set up All Ears Hub, I knew I wanted there to be a creative element," she explains.

"It's not just important for young people, I think creativity can help some adults access their inner child, as our relationship with ourselves and the way we react to things is often rooted in our childhood experiences."

allearsmha.org/Services



Children's therapy room at All Ears

Alongside the anger and sadness, we do have a lot of laughter

It's a cold, grey autumn morning in Wigan town centre and a group from the Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide (Sobs) organisation are gathered on Believe Square.

A new memorial is being unveiled to honour those who have died by suicide. While the occasion is solemn it is also filled with light and hope, reflecting the spirit of the group itself.

“We want people who have been bereaved by suicide to come here on a sunny day, a difficult day, or an ordinary Tuesday and hope you can feel the love and strength of everyone bereaved who stands with you,” says Lisa Edwards, one of the group’s founders.

Lisa is alongside fellow founders Dianne Whittle and Paula Sharples as the memorial is unveiled.

“When we were bereaved by suicide, the Bolton group was our nearest support service and we realised there were lots of people coming to the Bolton group from Wigan Borough,” Lisa tells Borough Life.

“I wasn’t sure I’d be able to set up a Wigan group on my own, but Dianne and husband Mark were willing to help and then Paula got involved and we’ve been running for three years now.”

The group provides monthly meetings and social activities, alongside national support through phone, email, and online forums.

“Everyone who comes to the group is at different stages, for some people everything is still raw and they’re in shock. Others are beginning to understand that life



Volunteers and group members of SOBS with their new memorial on Believe Square, Wigan

has to go on and are looking for hope and ways to move forward with their grief, so we navigate that together,” Lisa adds.

“
You’re not alone, please reach out for support
”

The group balances support and companionship. “Our meetings are for talking, listening, and sharing advice. When we meet socially, like at Christmas meals, we’re just friends, being together. We also arrange gatherings for days we know are particularly hard: Mother’s Day, Father’s Day, Christmas. It helps to lift one another up.”

For group member Paula Lavin, the support has been invaluable.

“I’ve massively benefitted from this. After my bereavement, I tried counselling, which helps many people, but it wasn’t the right fit for me. Walking into your first SOBS meeting, you instantly know everyone understands. You know if you’re struggling, it won’t be long until you’re surrounded by people who get it.

“What’s shared is confidential, and you can speak as much, or as little, as you want. Sometimes just being in the company of others who understand, even in silence, is healing.”

For Lisa, the key message is simple: “To anyone reading this who may have experienced bereavement by suicide, you’re not alone. Please, reach out for support.

“And for all of us, there is another important message: suicide is not a crime. The language we use matters. By saying ‘died by suicide’ or ‘taken their own life,’ instead of outdated, stigmatising terms, we show compassion and respect. We break down barriers, and we create space for honest conversations about mental health and loss.”

<http://uksobs.com>

You know how to listen when someone else is in that position

The volunteers and staff at EPiC HOPE all have lived experience of suicide, which means they can offer connection and empathy in a way that others might not be able to.

The service offers support for people who have suicide in their lives, are in crisis, or are in danger of reaching a crisis point.

Ellie Palma-Cass, the organisation’s founder experienced a traumatic childhood. “I grew up in a mentally challenging environment. Sadly, at age 12, I took my first overdose and since then suicidal ideation has followed me throughout my life,” she explains.

It’s now two-and-a-half years on from Ellie first setting up the community interest company.

It runs Crisis Harbours, where trained peer supporters are on hand to offer support to anyone in crisis, Community Harbours; safe, welcoming spaces, where anyone in need of a supportive chat can call in, along with training opportunities, and social opportunities including walks and talks with the experienced volunteers.

“The most important thing I’ve learned and the message I’d most like to pass on, is how important it is to reach out for help when you need it,” Ellie explains.

“If you’re a person who is prone to suicidal thoughts, it isn’t something that you always recover from. You can be fine for years and then you may have another low point.



Inside one of the Crisis Harbours



Ellie Palma-Cass

“I tell people that this doesn’t mean you have failed. We live in a tough world. Success is getting help when you are struggling. Success for me is at those times when I do still sometimes hit rock bottom, I now know to ask for help.

“
You know when to be quiet and when to say something
”

“That’s why EPiC HOPE is here. We can help you find that tiny sliver of hope when you can’t. And we can hold onto that hope for you until you’re strong enough to remember what it feels like not to want to die.”

Ellie tells us that she didn’t set out to create an organisation like EPiC Hope and it has far exceeded her initial expectations.

“I just wanted to open a little place where people who were feeling suicidal could reach out.

“If you’ve experienced being at that point of despair where you don’t want to live anymore then you know how to listen when someone else is in that position.

“You know when to be quiet and when to say something that might help them hold on to life.”

Ellie’s next venture is a research project on 24/7 community led crisis support in Canada and Finland (both leaders in this field).

She then plans to present her findings to the UK Parliament.

“I’d love to get the funding to provide Wigan with the support we deliver,” Ellie adds. “That would be my dream, being able to offer 24/7 holistic care in the borough.”

<https://epichope.org.uk/>



Sweet chilli chicken bao-bun at Six Six Three

New faves and timeless classics in Golborne

Here at Borough Life, we've been on a mission; to explore the hidden gems, local legends, and delicious discoveries tucked away in every corner of our beautiful borough.

From hearty brunches to sweet treats, we've been tasting, sipping, and soaking it all in, so you don't have to miss a bite.

Our latest foodie-fuelled adventure has brought us to Golborne, a town that's quietly buzzing with character, community spirit, and some seriously good eats.

Our first stop? Ergo; a charming, family-run coffee shop and ice cream parlour that's quickly become a local favourite. Having just

celebrated its first birthday, Ergo is already a staple on the high street, and it's easy to see why.

The moment you step through the door, you're wrapped in the warm embrace of friendly smiles and the comforting aroma of freshly brewed coffee.

The space is cosy yet modern, with a relaxed vibe that invites you in - whether you're catching



up with friends and family, diving into a good book, or setting up your laptop for a productive morning.

We arrived just in time for brunch and we couldn't resist the Eggs California. Picture this: two toasted breakfast muffins, each layered with creamy smashed avocado, juicy tomatoes, and perfectly poached eggs, all crowned with a silky drizzle of hollandaise sauce. It was a plate of sunshine that had our bellies smiling.

Gayna, one of the friendly faces behind the counter, shared how the past year has been nothing short of amazing, with the local community showing up in full force to support them. From young families to retirees, students to remote

A flat white at Ergo



workers, Ergo has become a welcoming hub for all.

But no visit would be complete without a peek at the cake cabinet, a treasure trove of temptation with towering slices of cake, buttery scones, creamy ice creams, and cookie pies. Yes, you read that right. Cookie. Pies. These gooey, decadent delights are impossible to ignore. The Oreo cookie pie was screaming our name, and we're so glad we answered. Rich, crumbly, and utterly satisfying, it was the perfect sweet note to end our visit.

Our next stop was Pimblett's, a local institution that's been serving up legendary pies for more than a century. This family bakery now offers everything from

Dough balls from Six Six Three



build-your-own butties to hearty jacket potatoes. If the queue out the door is anything to go by, they're clearly doing something very right.

We couldn't miss out on one of their famous pies, baked fresh in their own bakehouse and we've only got one word... beltin'.

Just around the corner, we found ourselves at Six Six Three to be pleasantly suprised with its eclectic offering. From breakfast and bottomless brunch to afternoon tea, cocktails, and themed evenings, this place really does it all.

We popped in for some delightful signature cocktails and small plates. Food-wise the dough balls were an easy win, and we couldn't resist

Pimblett's pie perfection



the sweet chilli chicken bao buns fluffy, fiery, and they're totally having a moment right now!

Whatever corner of the borough you're from, don't forget it's packed with brilliant places that deserve a bit of love. Whether they're just starting out or have been part of the community for years, it's easy to overlook what's right under your nose.

So go on, step out of your usual patch and explore somewhere new. And finally, Golborne, we'll see you again soon!

Let us know if you'd like us to visit your local food hotspot for our next edition at **BoroughLifeMagazine@wigan.gov.uk**



From left to right: Nicole, Lou, Gayna at Ergo



The One House Community Centre, Aspull

Investing in our borough and its shared values

A fresh approach to boosting the local economy has seen Wigan Borough ranked as a ‘high performer’ when it comes to backing homegrown organisations.

The council’s focus on Community Wealth Building (CWB) has accelerated in recent years, resulting in some record figures.

At its heart, CWB looks to ensure as much public money as possible is re-invested locally; this might be in businesses, the voluntary sector and community groups.

And working alongside our anchor partners – such as WWL NHS, Wigan and Leigh College and Wigan Youth Zone – our efforts are having a real impact.

For example, in the last 12 months, the total the council paid to small and medium enterprises/businesses (SMEs) increased to **£260m**, a **£30m rise** from the previous year.

Likewise, the total spends for organisations in the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) is **£61m**, a **£13m increase** from the previous year.

But what do these figures mean?

Through its CWB approach, Wigan Council is focusing more so than ever before on spending its funds with local organisations and increasing social value. We’re changing our processes to ensure homegrown businesses take every opportunity to provide local services, including reserving smaller value contracts for local suppliers.

This will help our economy to grow, providing more employment, skills and training opportunities.



Councillor Nazia Rehman (pictured above), cabinet portfolio holder for resources, finance and transformation, said: “Our CWB approach is so important in supporting our Progress With Unity missions; to create opportunities, tackle inequalities and make our towns and neighbourhoods flourish.

“The way in which public money is spent, and who we spend it with - has a huge impact on the health of our local economy and we do more than ever before to ensure we are investing in Wigan Borough.

“The knock-on effects of maximising social value are widespread, and we are proud of the progress that has been made.

“But that’s not to say that we’re stopping there, we know there’s more to do and I’m excited to see how this area will progress in the coming years.”

Independent analysis of the council’s performance in this area – by public sector procurement experts Tussell – ranks the authority as a ‘high performer’.

In terms of its investment in SMEs and the VCFSE sector, Wigan Council ranks in the top quarter of the UK’s 311 local authorities.

Their report reads: “This analysis matters because it reveals how effectively local authorities are directing spend towards suppliers that generate local and social value.

“It highlights which ones are leading the way in embedding both local and social priorities.”

On a mission to create a long-lasting impact

A big part of our CWB approach is the move to Mission-Driven Procurement.

This means that when the council is procuring services, both us and the supplier have social value principles at the forefront of our mind.

Being transparent in this way means everyone is on the same side when it comes to delivering wider benefits to the local economy.

There’s an expectation that suppliers help create fair opportunities for all and help our towns and neighbourhoods flourish.

For example, anyone hoping to secure a contract will be asked questions such as;

- How many local apprentices will be used in the project?
- How much will be spent in the local supply chain?
- What is your contribution to the VCSFE sector?
- Will mental health support be offered to your employees?
- What will be the environmental impact of your operation? Can you take measures to reduce this?

In creating this framework, we’re creating a menu of social value expectations, going far beyond the minimum expectations set out in national guidelines.

And all this is being done with the support of our fellow anchor partners so that the benefits are even more widespread.



Local developments have led to increased opportunities for apprentices and training schemes



Match My Project

Business meets community: a match made in heaven!

More kind-hearted businesses than ever are giving back to the borough thanks to Wigan Council's social value platform, Match My Project. With more than 120 matches leading to direct investment into our thriving community sector – business has never been better. Match My Project launched in January 2025, making it easier than ever for community organisations to request support. From funding for a fresh lick of paint, storage solutions to safety improvements, no ask is off-limits, and businesses

are snapping up the chance to give back to the borough that means so much to them. Let's take a look at just a few of the projects completed after matching through the platform. But first, if you are a business or community organisation who would like to get involved, head to matchmyproject.org/Wigan to sign up and kick start your social value journey. If you are already part of the project and would like to share your story please get in touch at PR@wigan.gov.uk

Platt Bridge Community Centre + Dennis Goulding

This much-loved community centre is a safe, welcoming and fun space with a range of regular activities from bingo to ping-pong! The centre was, however, facing a challenge in the form of a leaking window. Reliant on grant funding, paying out for expensive repairs would have diverted funds away from essential services. Step in Dennis Goulding, a generous local business keen to give back to

their community. The team quickly fitted a replacement window, even spotting and offering to fit a second to avoid the same issue. Sue Hughes said: "They replaced two old frames with modern units and completed the job efficiently without disrupting our operations. We are so happy with



the work. MMP is great, it allows companies who have major contracts to give something back and removes the worry for community groups as they have backing if they need it."

One House x GHE & Lee Russell Decorators

A thriving hub for the local community, the One House is home to a café and food pantry and hosts regular events and activities to bring residents together. A victim of its own success, the café was in dire need of an extraction system. After posting on Match My Project, they were quickly supported by GHE (pictured left), who were out and had fitted the system within a week.

On a roll, the One House also received a much-needed external freshen up with a coat paint from Lee Russell Decorators. The outside is now a true reflection of the wonderful space that the volunteers have created inside. Stuart Howard, managing director, said: "At GHE Electrical Fire & Security Ltd, we were delighted to support One House Aspull because of the vital role they play in bringing people together and improving lives locally.

"When we heard they had been struggling to find tradespeople to help, we knew straight away that we wanted to get involved. Being part of this community ourselves, we see social value as more than just words. It's about stepping up when our neighbours need us. The Match My Project initiative gave us the opportunity to do just that and we're proud to have played a part in supporting such an important community space"

Greenmount Projects + Wigan and Leigh Hospice

The hospice needs to raise £12k every day to sustain their services. As part of their continued commitment to providing a home from home for patients and their families, staff felt that their patient lounge was due some love. This is where Greenmount Projects stepped in. The lounge is now an inviting space where patients, families and staff can gather, enjoy precious moments together and even take part in

a spot of gaming thanks to the newly donated Playstation 5! Clare Cooke, director of business development at the hospice, said: "The support we've had from Greenmount Projects has made such a difference. Our refurbished patient lounge is such a beautiful space for our



patients and their families to enjoy together. We really couldn't be more grateful to Mike and the team who make such a valuable contribution to the hospice and to this community."



Vicky and Wayne with Julie

Quitting together as part of a winning team

They say that quitters never win and winners never quit, but married couple Vicky and Wayne from Pemberton know that simply isn't true. Not long ago, Vicky was diagnosed with COPD – a chronic lung condition brought on by 35 years of smoking cigarettes. Frequently short of breath, plagued with chest infections and “frightened” by her mum’s own struggles

with the disease, she knew she needed to give up for good. So, when her asthma nurse put her in touch with the Be Well Stop Smoking Service, Vicky seized her chance. And so too did Wayne. Just like his wife, he’d been a heavy smoker since school and had never been able to shake the habit, despite his best intentions. But now, with Vicky’s diagnosis, he had added

motivation. So, together, they began their quitting journey... and they simply haven’t looked back! Both have now been smoke-free since February – and, while Vicky’s health has improved massively, that’s far from their only ‘win’ since becoming quitters. “I feel a lot better, I can breathe a lot better, and I’m not coughing like I used to,” says Vicky.

“But it’s the money as well – we were spending about £70 a week. “Instead, we’ve managed to do the house up. We’ve just had a new patio laid, new garden furniture... so it’s all looking ‘posh’ now as our daughter says! And hopefully we’ll get on holiday soon; we’re thinking the Canary Islands this time.” After 13 years of marriage, stopping smoking has also improved their relationship – even if having two quitters in the house has had its moments! “We’ve had a few barneys... but not many!” laughs Wayne. “The first three weeks were the toughest, but it’s helped us get our house in order, and get our lives in order.” “We get on a lot better now because we’ve not got that ‘nangy-ness’ and crankiness from the cravings,” agrees Vicky. “The only thing we argue over is the telly!” They also agree they couldn’t have quit without their Be Well health advisor, Julie (pictured below), who has provided guidance and encouragement at weekly drop-ins in Pemberton. “I’ve tried many times in the past and never succeeded,” Vicky says. “But this time I met Julie and she’s really helped me with all her encouragement and praise – the text messages, the phone calls to see how we are. It’s made a massive difference.” Julie knows exactly what it takes to be a quitter. After all, she’s a quitter herself! She smoked for 16 years until, one day, she found herself horrified by the price of a packet of cigarettes – and decided “enough was enough”. These days, 24 years on from her last taste of tobacco, she’s proud to be helping others become quitters – and winners – too. “I try to tell my clients about my own experiences because I think sometimes it encourages you to hear other people’s successes,” says Julie, whose improved health has led to her running marathons all over the world – including New York, London, Paris and South Africa. “I’m humble enough to know everybody’s situation is different and everybody’s reason to quit is different too. It’s about finding what works for you, and that’s what we’re here to do at Be Well. “As advisors we can give all sorts of support, whether it’s behavioural change or nicotine replacement like patches, inhalators, gums, lozenges...

there’s so many things out there. “We try to help with how to distract yourself, to delay and to think about what you’re doing and not just react to your cravings or triggers, and just basically change your routines. “Quitting smoking is a big journey but it’s so worth it and there’s so much to gain.” Julie’s top tips for success? Number one: “Celebrate your wins!” “Find a target, maybe a nice holiday or whatever,” she says. “Put the money you save to one side and then treat yourself. After all, you’ve done the hard work! “Be kind to yourself, not harsh. Everybody’s quick to criticise themselves, aren’t they? But not so quick to praise themselves for the good work that they’re doing. “That’s why it makes me so proud when my clients get to the other side and they’re actually seeing the benefits of quitting. “My top tip, above all else, would be to get help and take the support that’s there - because whatever you do in life, it’s always better to be supported.”



Winner's Stories



Tom and Stan



Tony



Yvonne and Louise

More than **1,200 people** have been onto a winner with the Be Well Stop Smoking Service since it was launched during Stoptober 2024. Here are just a few of their stories...

Stan

Stan first smoked at 16, but cigarettes really took hold two years ago.

By then he was smoking “at least 40 a day, sometimes 60” and spending £400 a month.

“Embarrassed” by his habit and feeling his health “getting worse”, he got in touch with Be Well and is now smoke-free after forming a winning team with his health advisor Tom!

“Tom’s a great guy and so supportive and motivating,” says Stan. “Having his support made all the difference, being able to feel comfortable and understood.

“The face-to-face meetings, weekly CO readings and check-ins all kept me accountable, and I looked forward to our conversations... not just around smoking but travelling and other interests.

“For the first time since I was a teen I decided to start running again and it feels so

good to not feel burdened with needing a cigarette every hour and not stinking of cigarette smoke when I’m with my partner.

“I really don’t feel like I could have done it without this service helping me. It’s helped me achieve something I thought I could never do.”

Tony

After being told he had a high risk of lung cancer in the next 5-10 years, for Tony it was a classic case of ‘quit while you’re ahead’. Having smoked for 52 years, he’s now spending his cash on seeing the world instead!

“It was costing me £50 a week – that’s more than £2,500 a year. I’m putting that away for holidays now.

“I’ve just been to Greece, a little mountain village in Rhodes, and now the wife’s constantly looking at other holidays. We’re looking at Spain or maybe Portugal next.

“It’s the health gains too. I don’t cough anymore, I don’t get out of breath as much as I did. My dentist has congratulated me too because smoking affects your teeth as well.”

Yvonne

After 50 years of smoking, Yvonne finally gave up cigarettes with the help of her Be Well advisor Louise – and is already celebrating her wins.

“I’ve now got more money every month and my health is better too!” she says.

“I’ve got lower blood pressure, lower cholesterol, and I can walk further without getting out of breath.

“Louise has kept me focused at the weekly drop-ins, and telephone calls when I was unable to attend in person.

“I don’t think I could have done it without the excellent support that’s available.”



Quitters ~~never~~ win.

Everyone's a winner when you quit smoking. You. Your family. Your wallet.

We offer support through:

- ➔ 1-2-1 or family face-to-face appointments
- ➔ Convenient drop-ins at local venues
- ➔ Telephone appointments
- ➔ Video calls
- ➔ Nicotine Replacement Therapy

You're **FOUR TIMES** more likely to quit with the right help

Improve your odds with the Be Well Stop Smoking Service.



SCAN ME

bewellwigan.org/stopsmoking



From top left: St Marys, Meadow View Court, St William's, Furness Court

Opening doors to new living options

Providing the right homes, in the right places that provide for the different needs of our communities remains a key priority for the borough.

Not only are we supplying new homes through our own direct-delivery scheme, Wigan Council is also taking a pro-active approach to working with developers, specialist housing providers and housing associations.

These partnerships ensure real progress is being made with a range of different developments opening their doors every year.

Councillor Susan Gambles, cabinet portfolio holder for housing and welfare, said: "Through strategic

partnerships and community engagement, we're expanding housing options, from ethical lettings to new-build developments, ensuring everyone has access to safe, secure accommodation.

"We're not just building homes; we're building futures. By listening to tenants and investing in inclusive housing, we're tackling inequality and helping our neighbourhoods thrive with dignity and opportunity at their heart."

Here's a rundown of some of the different schemes across the borough, you may have spotted some of them near to where you live.

Meadow View Court, Miles Lane, Shevington

This extra care facility is on the site of a former primary school. The history of the site is reflected in the décor, with old school photos on show. There's also repurposed bricks in the raised beds throughout the gardens.

What's the latest?

The development has created 32 new homes within the extra care scheme, providing housing for older people who wish to live independently, with care and support on site - at the level you need, if and as you need it.

It is ideal for people who are looking to downsize, and want to continue living in their own space, with community and support right on the doorstep.

Tell me more...

Built by M&Y Construction, the site includes ground source heat pumps, solar panels and electric vehicle charging points, it is built to high environmental standards. The development was shortlisted for two awards at this year's Inside Housing Development Awards.

Derby Street, Ince

Another development on the site of a former primary school, this one hosts 47 affordable properties. They are a first for the borough as they have been built to 'Passivhaus' standards, which means they are very energy efficient.

What's the latest?

These homes were funded with a £7.65m investment from Wigan Council along with £2.35m from Homes England. They opened their doors in November 2024 and have welcomed dozens of new families as tenants.

Tell me more...

Passivhaus homes are built in a way that requires little to no



Leader of Wigan Council (right) meets the award winning team of St William's

heating, even in the winter, making them super energy efficient.

They are heated by green methods like air or ground source heat pumps. These homes all have driveways with electric vehicle charging.

Hallbrook Gardens, Standish

This large site will eventually see more than 150 homes - all of which will be available for either affordable rent, rent to buy and share ownership.

What's the latest?

Some of the homes will open their doors this year.

Tell me more...

This site is Torus Homes largest in Wigan Borough and is 100 per cent affordable housing. There's a range of two, three and four bedroom homes available.

Furness Court, Leigh

This Torus Homes site off Plank Lane provides more than 80 homes for over 55s, all for affordable rent.

What's the latest?

This scheme has recently been delivered, with an opening date of February 2025. In total, there's 78 apartments and nine bungalows.

Tell me more...

It's part a £20m scheme and all the units are fully accessible, with the designs incorporating gentle gradients - to remove the need for steps - and wide paths, helping those who require a wheelchair or other mobility aids.

'Sweat equity' scheme, St William's, Ince

This innovative housing scheme in Wigan has a ground-breaking new model of ownership. It sees the buyers - called home partners - commit 500 hours of 'sweat equity' (volunteering with tasks to help build and decorate the buildings) for a discount on their mortgage.

What's the latest...

This award-winning scheme delivered by housing association Prima Group in partnership with the charity Housing People Building Communities (HPBC) has been grabbing headlines recently as the first home-owners have moved in.

Tell me more...

There's 13 apartments and 14 new homes on the disused site of what was St William's Church and Presbytery.

What's on in Wigan Borough?

Haigh Woodland Park
www.facebook.com/haighwoodlandpark



Creepy Crawlies come to Haigh

Monday 27th – Tuesday 28th October, 9.30am – 10.30am (general admission)
10.30am-11.30am (SEND session)

Hands on experience with creepy crawlies in October half term!

🎟️ *Tickets: via Eventbrite*
Adult & Child - £11+fees
Additional Child -£7+fees
Under 2's – Free

Halloween Drive In Cinema

Thursday 30th October

The ever-popular Haigh Drive-In Cinema's return for a Halloween special with Hocus Pocus!

Food and drink available, along with a quiz before the film starts.

🎟️ *Tickets: £35 per car via Eventbrite*

Family Firework Spectacular

Sunday 2nd November
5pm - 8.30pm

Haigh's annual firework display is going to go off with a bang! Expect a huge firework display, fire breathers, stilt walkers as well as a food village. Pontois funfair will be open too, extra cost for this activity.

🎟️ *Tickets: Adults £11.50, Children (4-15) £9.50, Under 3's free via Eventbrite*

Christmas Light Switch on

Sunday 23rd November

Come and see the annual Christmas light switch on in the courtyard at Haigh this festive season.

🎟️ *Tickets: Booking required*

Father Christmas

Friday 28th November – Wednesday 24th December

See Father Christmas in the beautiful outdoor setting at Haigh. SEN sessions run on Sunday 30th November and Saturday 20th December.

🎟️ *Tickets: Booking required via Eventbrite*



Sporting fixtures



Leigh Leopards
leighsportsvillage.co.uk



Wigan Athletic
wiganathletic.com/matches



Wigan Warriors
wiganwarriors.com/fixtures



Community

Leigh Film Society
Afternoon Classic Film Club

The last Friday of every month 1pm

Bring your lunch, relax and enjoy an afternoon of great film company and conversation. Screening a variety of old and new films, welcoming of everyone. We are also dementia friendly.

31st October: The Miracle Club
 28th November: The Railway Children (2022)

🎟️ *Turnpike Gallery, Leigh Film Society*
 🎟️ *Tickets: Free entry, donations welcome*

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: <https://wiganjazzclub.co.uk>*

Unlocked

30th October and 27th November

Tommy Jones of QSOE presents two original artists each month from all genres and walks of life. On the last Thursday of each month you can expect to hear intimate sets from fantastic musicians and creative artists in a relaxed setting.

🎟️ *Bailiff Bar, Wigan*
 🎟️ *Tickets: Free, no tickets required*

Open Mic Poetry

13th November and 11th December

Wigan's longest running and most successful poetry open mic – in conjunction with Write Out Loud. Welcoming established poets and newcomers alike to a friendly and supportive night of words.

🎟️ *Bailiff Bar, Wigan*
 🎟️ *Tickets: Free, no tickets required*



Wigan & Leigh Hospice:
The Christmas Fair

Sunday 16th November
11am - 3pm

Join the festive fun at our annual Christmas Fair and Santa's Grotto. Enjoy a wide range of stalls and entertainments and Santa's Grotto!

🎟️ *Leigh Miners Welfare Institute*
 🎟️ *Tickets: www.wlh.org.uk/event/christmas-fair/*

Wigan & Leigh Hospice:
The Glitter Ball

Friday 21st November

Join us for a night of live music, fun games, exciting auctions, and receive a welcome drink upon arrival, tasty canapes as well as a delicious two-course meal.

🎟️ *The Brick Community Stadium*
 🎟️ *Tickets: call 01942 524203*
www.wlh.org.uk/event/glitter-ball/



Goody Two Shoes – A
Traditional WLT Pantomime.

26th November - 13th December

Family entertainment galore with comedy, music, dance and loads of surprises. Come along and cheer on Goody and protect her from the baddies.

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

Santa's Grotto

23rd November
27th November - 14th December
(Thursday - Sunday only)
18th - 24th December

🎟️ *Grand Arcade, Wigan*

Christmas Light Switch on events

Golborne

Thursday 27th November
5.30pm - 7.30pm

🎟️ *Peter Kane Square, Golborne*
 🎟️ *Tickets: Free, no tickets required*

Tyldesley

Saturday 29th November
4.30pm - 6pm

🎟️ *Tyldesley Town Centre*
 🎟️ *Tickets: Free, no tickets required*

Ashton

Sunday 7th December

🎟️ *Market Place, Ashton*
 🎟️ *Tickets: Free, no tickets required*



Christmas Markets

Pemberton

Sunday 30th November
12pm - 5pm

A range of festive activities across Pemberton including Christmas carols, artisan market, a meet and greet with Santa, food stalls and walk about characters.

🎟️ *Pemberton*
 🎟️ *Tickets: Free, no tickets required*

Standish

Saturday 6th December
11am - 8pm

With craft halls and outdoor stalls selling festive goods and food and drink.

🎟️ *Standish*
 🎟️ *Tickets: Free, no tickets required*

Atherton

Saturday 6th December
10am - 5pm

Various stalls selling christmas items, crafts, tombolas, sweet treats etc

🎟️ *Market Street, Atherton*
 🎟️ *Tickets: Free, no tickets required*

Museums, Archives & Libraries



Drumcroon Collection:
Selected works on paper from 1960's-1990's

Until March 2026,
Tuesday – Friday 10am – 4pm,
Saturday 10am – 2pm

A major exhibition of over 50 artworks, that revives the innovative spirit of Wigan's beloved Drumcroon Education Art Centre (1980-2011) which saw national acclaim for its work in visual arts.

📍 **Turnpike Gallery**
🎟️ **Tickets: Free, no tickets required**

Sketchbook Social

3rd December
1pm - 3pm

A relaxed and social sketching session. Enjoy a brew, mingle with other sketchers, and soak up inspiration from the Drumcroon print exhibition.

📍 **Turnpike Gallery**
🎟️ **Tickets: Free, no ticket required**

Saturday Family Print Workshop

Saturday 6th December
10.30am – 12.30pm

Have a go at printmaking with our friendly artists at The Turnpike Gallery. Suitable for families with children aged 5+.

📍 **Turnpike Gallery**
🎟️ **Tickets: Free, no tickets required**



Family Creative Making

Saturday 6th December
10.30am – 12pm

Join the Archives for a creative making session, using a range of materials and techniques. Each session is different. Suitable for families with children aged 6+

📍 **Archives Wigan & Leigh**
🎟️ **Tickets: £2 +fees, via Eventbrite**

Festive Reminiscence Event

11th December
11am -12.30pm

Join us for a reminiscence event for community members living with dementia. Enjoy archive films highlighting memorable moments from Wigan borough in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s.

📍 **Archives Wigan & Leigh**
🎟️ **Tickets: Free, booking essential**

Bookfest 2

Thursday 13th November
6.30pm – 8.30pm

A book lover's paradise with over 30 stalls featuring adult authors of all fiction genres, nonfiction and poetry, as well as a licensed bar and delicious hot drinks! Treat yourself or loved ones to bespoke signed and dedicated copies.

📍 **Leigh Library**
🎟️ **Tickets: Free, booking essential**



Christmas Book Fair

Saturday 22nd November
10am – 1pm

Meet an array of children's authors and enjoy story times galore along with arts & crafts, digital, sport and science fun – something for everyone! Look out for visits from Father Christmas himself!

📍 **Wigan Library**
🎟️ **Tickets: Free, booking essential**

Events spotlight

Light Up Leigh

Saturday 15th November
11.30am – 7pm

A day of festive fun for the whole family with music, a food & drink market, artisan market and fun fair. During the evening, the lantern parade will make its way through the town centre.

📍 **Leigh Town Centre**
🎟️ **Tickets: Free, no tickets required**

Light Night Wigan

Thursday 20th- Saturday 22nd November, 5pm - 9.30pm
Relaxed sessions at 4pm-5pm (Friday & Saturday only)

This family friendly night out brings together artists from all over the UK and internationally to illuminate Mesnes Park.

📍 **Mesnes Park, Wigan**
🎟️ **Tickets: Booking required at www.lightnightwigan.co.uk**

Frost Festival Wigan

Sunday 23rd November
11.30am – 6.30pm

Festive fun, Santa parade, entertainment on the main stage, walkabout entertainers, food & drink stalls and artisan markets. The day ends with the traditional Christmas light switch on.

📍 **Wigan Town Centre**
🎟️ **Tickets: Free, no tickets required**

Pennington Flash Christmas Market

Saturday 29th – Sunday 30th November

Artisan stalls, hot food, mulled wine, Santa Claus and live music.

📍 **Pennington Flash**
🎟️ **Tickets: Free, no tickets required**

Wigan Christmas Markets

Saturday 22nd, 29th November, 6th, 13th, 20th December

Grab the perfect, homemade gift for your loved ones.

📍 **Wigan Town Centre**
🎟️ **Tickets: Free, no tickets required**

ENJOY FREE FESTIVE PARKING

AFTER 3PM WEEKDAYS* AND ALL DAY AT WEEKEND



www.wigan.gov.uk/carparking

*Free weekday parking after 3pm is available Monday to Friday from **17 November 2025 to 2 January 2026**. To qualify, vehicles must arrive after 3pm. Please note: this offer does not apply to the following car parks: Chapel Lane, Wilton Street and Loire Drive.

These offers apply to Wigan Council town centre car parks and designated roadside pay and display bays (excluding Wigan Lane).



Find out what's going on in Wigan Borough

at [eventbrite.co.uk](https://www.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](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk) and search Wigan Libraries




SCAN ME



Find the foster carer in you

Patience. Compassion.
Life experience.

If you've got these, you've
already got what it takes.




www.wigan.gov.uk/Fostering

SCAN ME



E-Billing

You can now get your Council Tax bill online.

1



Login or sign up to MyAccount - you just need to use your email address.

2



Link your Council Tax account - You'll need your Council Tax reference number found on your Council Tax bill. It's 12 digits and starts with a 4. You'll also need to answer a few security questions.

3



Simply tick the E-Billing signup box to confirm your switch to E-Billing.




www.wigan.gov.uk/CouncilTaxEbiling



Winter services

Winter Opening Hours

Leigh and Wigan Life Centres (including Register Office and Libraries) will close at 3pm on 24 December (Christmas Eve) 2025 and will re-open 9am on 5 January 2026.

Registrars appointments will be available in Wigan Life Centre on 29, 30, 31 December and 2 January.

Customers can still access welfare support by visiting www.wigan.gov.uk/welfaresupport or calling **01942 705221**.

Cemeteries

All cemeteries will be open to visitors during daylight hours over the holiday period.

Burials will take place from 9am to 11am on Wednesday 24 December 2025 and Wednesday 31 December 2025.

No burials will take place on Thursday 25 December, Friday 26 December 2025 and Thursday 1 January 2026.

Burials will take place from 12pm to 2.30pm on Friday 2 January 2026.

Normal bookings apply on Monday 29 December and Tuesday 30 December 2025 and then from Monday 5 January 2026.

Crematorium

The chapel and crematorium office will be closed Saturday 27 December, Sunday 28 December 2025 and Thursday 1 January 2026.

Cremations will take place on Wednesday 24 December 2025 and Wednesday 31 December 2025 from 9am with last cremation service being 11am.

Normal services will take place on Monday 29 December, Tuesday 30

December 2025 and Friday 2 January 2026. Cremations return to normal service from Monday 5 January 2026.

Bereavement Services Office

During the festive period, you can contact the Bereavement Services Office by calling **01942 489003** the line will be open from 9am to 12pm on Wednesday 24 December 2025, 9am to 4pm on 29, 30 December and from 9am to 12pm on Wednesday 31 December 2025.

Recycling Centres

Will be closed Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day. Open all other days 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 6 for changes to your refuse and recycling collections over the festive period. Green bin collections will be suspended from 29 December until 9 January.

They will resume either w/c 12 January or w/c 19 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

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

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.



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BoroughLife



www.wigan.gov.uk/boroughlifenewsletter



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