

BoroughLife

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Wigan
Council

The Leader's column



Welcome to my first edition of Borough Life as Leader of Wigan Council.

It is a privilege to be writing to you and to have the opportunity to reflect on some of the positive progress as we continue to work together to create thriving communities and opportunities for all.

This winter edition showcases some of the projects, investments and achievements that are helping to shape our future. As always, you'll find updates on the regeneration of our town centres,

where significant investment continues to create places where people can live, work, visit and enjoy spending time.

One of the things I am most proud of is the strength of our communities, and this edition highlights the difference that community investment is making in neighbourhoods across the borough.

We're also celebrating a major achievement with confirmation that we have the best adult social care service in the country.

This recognition is a testament to the dedication, compassion and professionalism of our workforce, who provide outstanding support to residents every day and help people live healthy, independent and fulfilling lives.

Providing high-quality homes remains a key priority and you'll

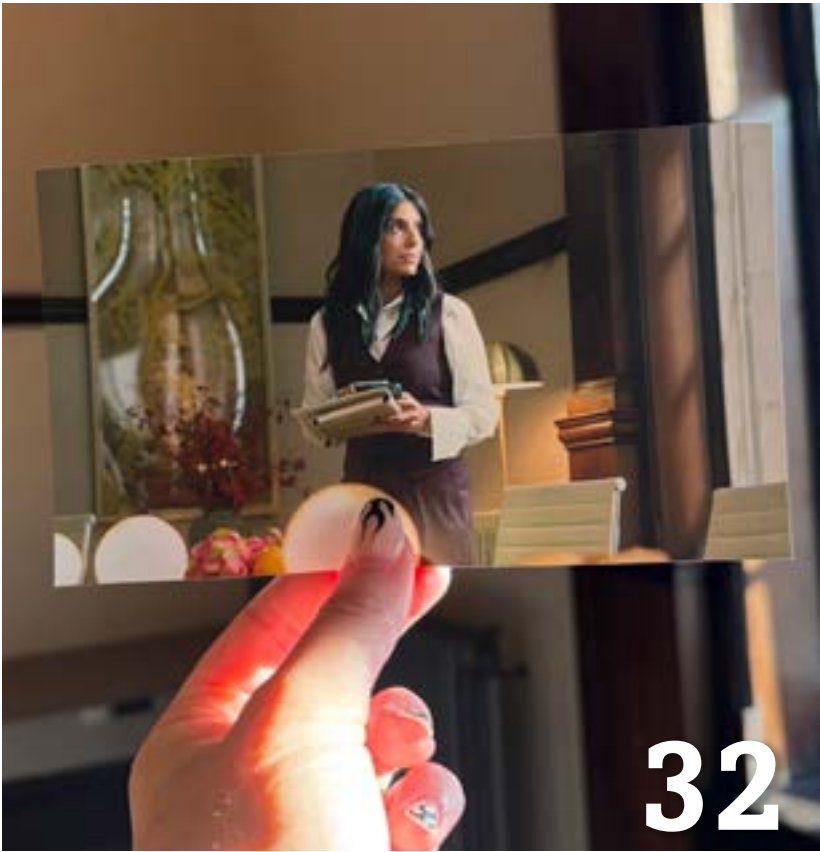
find an update on the wide range of options being developed across the borough.

Whether it's affordable homes, supported living schemes or family housing, we're working to ensure residents have access to homes that meet their needs at every stage of life.

To round off this winter edition, don't forget to take a look at our popular What's On guide, packed with events and activities taking place over the coming months. I hope you enjoy reading this edition of Borough Life.

Nazia

**Councillor Nazia Rehman
Leader, Wigan Council**



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On the cover

There was only ever going to be one choice for the cover of this winter edition. In recent weeks, people across Wigan Borough and far beyond united to mourn the passing of Sir Billy Boston.

This image of his statue at the renamed Sir Billy Boston Square captures the respect, admiration and affection felt for Sir Billy.

Therefore, this edition pays tribute to a man whose impact stretched far beyond sport and whose name will forever hold a special place in our hearts.



Check out the BoroughLife podcast

Don't miss the monthly episodes with hosts Hayley, Lucy 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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Farewell Sir Billy; a fitting tribute to a legend

Believe Square in Wigan town centre has been renamed Sir Billy Boston Square as a lasting tribute to a man who has left a remarkable legacy.

The borough united to say farewell to Sir Billy in September with a funeral service held at The Brick Community Stadium.

Tributes and messages were received from around the world and thousands lined the streets as the funeral cortege travelled a route through the town.

Kris Radlinski, Wigan Warriors chief executive, announced the renaming of the square during a heartfelt tribute at the funeral service.

He said: “For generations, people will pass through there, children will walk with their families, people who never had the privilege to see Billy play will see his name and ask who he was, and another generation will tell his story.”

Sir Billy was among the first recipients of a Believe Star and his statue has been in place since 2016. He became the first person in rugby league history to receive a knighthood in 2025.

“Sir Billy was more than a sporting legend,” said Councillor Nazia Rehman, Leader of Wigan Council.



Sir Billy receives his updated Believe Star with Lady Joan and Councillors Jenny and Andrew Bullen

“He was a pioneer, an inspiration, and someone who brought immense pride to Wigan Borough.

“Following his passing, we wanted to ensure his legacy continues to be honoured in the heart of our town. That’s why we are renaming Believe Square, the home of Sir Billy’s statue, as Sir Billy Boston Square.

“It is a fitting tribute to a remarkable man whose

achievements broke barriers, inspired generations, and will never be forgotten.

“Sir Billy’s devoted wife, Lady Joan Boston sadly passed away just a few weeks before Billy in July. A loving mother, grandmother and great grandmother, Lady Joan will be remembered fondly.

“Sir Billy’s legacy will live on in Wigan Borough, forever.”



New star award for charity fund-raiser



A community champion who has raised nearly £1m for worthy causes received his Believe Star at a town hall ceremony in September.

Mike Sharkey of Greenmount Projects has been a driving force behind the Team Wigan and Leigh charity fund-raising initiative for the last six years. His efforts have supported Wigan & Leigh Hospice,

The Brick and Daffodil Dreams, among others.

He said: “It’s one of those moments where you think ‘is this really me?’

“But I’d like to dedicate it to everyone who plays a part in Team Wigan and Leigh, to Greenmount Projects and to the charities that we support.”

www.wigan.gov.uk/believestars

Green belt sites not right for development

Five sites previously earmarked for development on green belt land will not be taken forward in future plans, Wigan Council’s cabinet have said.

Four of the sites have not been included in the latest Local Plan development blueprint. These are North of M6 junction 26 (known locally as The Bell), Moss Industrial Estate extension, Bridgewater West in Astley and West of Winwick Lane, Lowton.

Meanwhile, cabinet members also outlined their opposition to proposals at West of Gibfield, Atherton and submitted an objection as part of the developer’s consultation process.

Councillor Paul Kenny, cabinet portfolio holder for planning, environmental services and transport, said: “We have listened to your feedback, and the views of our communities have been reflected in these decisions.

“We are aware of the depth of feeling surrounding these four sites. By removing them from the latest version of the Local Plan, we believe we have struck the right balance between supporting economic growth and job creation, providing opportunities for residents, and protecting our environment.

“With Gibfield, we simply do not believe the proposals are appropriate and we will make that clear through the consultation. The masterplan requires the council’s approval and we cannot support it.”

The final version of the council’s Local Plan is currently out for consultation. While the survey will be closed by the time Borough Life goes to print, councillors will have the opportunity to comment on the plan in November before it is submitted to government for review in December.

Around the borough

Waste collection days are set to change for residents in certain areas of the borough this October, following a thorough review of collection rounds.

Less than three per cent of the borough will be affected, with letters and updated bin calendars sent to residents in **Higher Folds, Platt Bridge, Mosley Common, Siddow Common, Astley Green, Bedford, Golborne, and Standish.**

In **Standish**, the playing fields at Ashfield Park and Southlands Recreation Ground, known locally as ‘The Rec’, are being remodelled and re-seeded to create safe, high-quality playing surfaces.

A renowned Wigan Borough scientist has received a heritage Blue Plaque outside his former home in **Golborne**. The plaque marking Dr John Garton’s remarkable career was unveiled at a ceremony on Park Road earlier this year.

In **Ashton**, residents will soon see a supporting structure built around the Grade II listed library building to help shore up the roof ahead of any internal works. Library activities continue to be provided from the Pavilion in Jubilee Park in the meantime.

At **Pennington Flash**, work is underway on exciting transformation plans at the popular Hide Coffee House, with additional indoor seating and upgrades to the service counter.

In **Wigan**, the town centre has retained its Purple Flag status, which is recognition of its commitment to creating a dynamic, secure, and vibrant evening and night-time economy.

For more information on all of the above, visit either www.visitwigan.com www.wigan.gov.uk or www.bewellwigan.org.uk and search for the relevant key words.

Best in the country - it's official! Outstanding rating for key service

Wigan Council received an 'outstanding' rating for adult social care earlier this year, and it has now been confirmed that this was the highest rating across the entire country.

Inspectors praised the way staff build relationships, listen deeply and work alongside residents, families and communities to help people live with independence, dignity and confidence.

Detailed in a report for councillors in September, it has now been confirmed that Wigan Borough's score of 95 out of 100 is the highest of all councils with adult social care responsibility in England.

Deputy Leader Councillor Keith Cunliffe said: "To be recognised

as outstanding is a tremendous achievement, but to receive the highest score in the country makes it even more special.

"This result belongs to everyone who plays a part in supporting



adults across our borough. It reflects years of hard work, strong partnerships and a shared determination to help people live the best lives possible.

"While we are proud of this achievement, we know there is always more to do. We will continue building on this success and working with residents, carers, care providers, the NHS, community groups and voluntary organisations to deliver the best possible support."

Please turn to page 20 for a detailed look at the Reablement Team, who play a big role in the adult social care offer.

www.wigan.gov.uk/CareQualityRating

A record-breaking year for Be Well following refurb programme

Be Well memberships have rocketed to record levels on the back of major investment in facilities.

The leisure centre at Hindley is the most recent to benefit, with an exciting gym refurb and brand-new fitness equipment.

It means all seven Be Well gyms have now had a glow-up – and that investment is already paying off with memberships recently passing 20,000 for the first time ever.

Around 2,000 new members have joined this year alone while total visitor numbers also continue to rise, putting them on track to top the 1.73million visits made by residents from April 2025 to March 2026.

Councillor Chris Ready (pictured), cabinet member with responsibility for Be Well, says the trend "can only be good news for the health of our communities, and when it comes to reducing some of



the pressure on the NHS and other local services."

"I think our residents are becoming increasingly more aware of the importance of being active and the positive impact it can have for our physical and mental health," he said.

"We have many members who are recovering from health setbacks or managing long-term conditions, but for many people it's more about laying the foundations for a healthy, active life, or maintaining strength and mobility as they age."



Another factor in membership growth is the successful Be Well For Less scheme, which offers significant discounts for residents and families on lower incomes – supporting them to be healthy and active through the ongoing cost-of-living crisis.

Councillor Ready added: "The progress made over the past five years has been outstanding and we're determined that Be Well will keep going from strength to strength!"

For more information about Be Well For Less visit www.bewellwigan.org/forless

Signed and sealed - work to start on illegal waste tip clearance

Wigan Council has appointed a specialist contractor to clear the illegal waste site at Bolton House Road in Bickershaw.

Acumen Waste Services Limited will carry out the project, which is being led by the council. Works are expected to start by late October.

Councillor Paul Kenny (pictured), portfolio holder for planning, environmental services, and transport, said: "The scale of the illegal waste site at Bolton House Road has had a devastating impact on the local community, so I am delighted that we are now in a position to appoint a contractor



and take this important step towards waste removal.

"The appointment is a significant milestone, but residents should have never been put into this position, and we will continue to support the Environment Agency's criminal investigation to punish those responsible for this environmental destruction."

Following an emergency response to a fire that broke out and lasted for several days in July 2025, a multi-agency partnership group was set up to manage the illegal waste site, prevent further waste deposits, and minimise

the impact on the public and the environment. This has included partners such as the Environment Agency (EA), the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), the Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), as well as other partners such as United Utilities (UU), Greater Manchester Police (GMP), and Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (GMFRS).

The group has also been working to ensure that all partners are fully prepared to move ahead with safe waste removal, with disposal routes identified and independent organisations sampling the site's waste, water, and odour.

www.wigan.gov.uk/IllegalWasteBickershaw

New policy strengthens actions to tackle anti-social behaviour and support residents

Residents are set to benefit from a stronger, more consistent approach to tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB) thanks to a refreshed council policy.

Approved by the full council in September, the new ASB policy introduces a borough-wide framework that will help ensure incidents are identified, investigated and resolved in a fair, transparent and effective way.

It covers all communities and housing tenures, supporting safer and more welcoming neighbourhoods for everyone. Councillor Kevin Anderson (pictured), cabinet portfolio holder for police, crime and civil contingencies, said: "Everyone deserves to feel safe in their neighbourhood."

"This refreshed policy provides a clear and consistent approach to tackling ASB across our borough, while ensuring victims receive the



right support. By working closely with residents and partners, we can intervene early, resolve issues effectively and take robust action."

The new policy places a greater emphasis on supporting victims. Measures include a trauma-informed approach, personalised support, safety planning and named contacts, helping residents feel listened to and supported.

Improved accessibility commitments will make it easier for residents with additional needs to access information and support, while stronger partnership working between the council and key agencies will help deliver faster and more effective responses.

The policy supports the council's ambition to help all towns and neighbourhoods flourish, ensuring residents can feel safe, supported and proud of where they live.

Here for You support approaches £30m

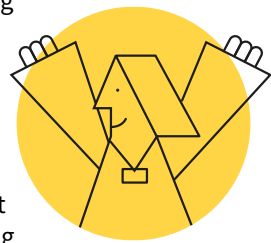
Wigan Council's cost-of-living campaign is approaching another significant milestone. Almost £30m has now found its way into the pockets of residents, all through helping them identify support they may not have known they were eligible for.

Instead of this cash not being claimed, it is now helping our communities live their day-to-day lives and a big portion of it is therefore being spent in our local economy.

Councillor Susan Gambles, cabinet holder for housing and welfare, said: "The impact of this big headline figure can be hard to take in – but these contributions are life-changing."

"It's funding that people didn't know they were entitled to and our teams are on hand to support throughout the process."

Find out more at www.wigan.gov.uk/hereforyou





In the market for some exciting news

The countdown is well and truly on for the opening of the brand-new Wigan Market at Fettle's.

The purpose-built facility is scheduled to open its doors to the public in spring 2027, coinciding with the 150th anniversary of the town's original market opening.

Its eye-catching façade (pictured above), which opens onto Market Place, is becoming a familiar sight. To maintain the historical link, the original heritage arch from the 1877 market will form a centrepiece of the new interior.

There are currently up to 200 workers on site each day to help

bring the project to life, and there has been extensive engagement with current market traders about the transition to the new facility.

Councillor Dane Anderton (pictured), cabinet member for economic development and regeneration, said: "The excitement is building, and every time I visit the market there's something new to see.

The construction phase is creating so many opportunities for local tradespeople, while special attention is being given to



celebrating and strengthening our proud market heritage."

The new facility will provide space for a wider mix of independent retail, fresh food, street food vendors, kitchens, bars, cafés, makers, services, and a programme of events and entertainment.

Councillor Anderton added: "Our current traders are at the heart of the new market and we're working closely with them. We're confident that the market will reflect the very best of our borough."

Hello to the new hotel

Visitors to Wigan town centre will have noticed the Hampton by Hilton hotel dominating the skyline.

A topping-out ceremony was scheduled for October, marking the completion of the highest point of the six-storey building.

With the structure now almost complete, interior works on the 144-bedroom facility are just around the corner.

The hotel will be operated by Leaf Hospitality and is scheduled to open in winter 2027.



Pupils from St Andrews Primary on a site visit with contractors Galliford Try

FETTLERS

fettleerswigan

FettleersWigan

fettleerswigan

Civic Square's makeover is complete and open to visitors

The new and improved Civic Square in Leigh is now open following a major refurbishment programme.

A central part of the town's Regeneration Project, the new-look square has been designed to create a welcoming and vibrant destination that is accessible to all, complete with high-quality paving, new seating, improved landscaping, enhanced lighting, and attractive public realm features.

Councillor Dane Anderton, portfolio holder for economic development and regeneration, said: "We are delighted to unveil the new and improved Civic Square and provide residents with a revamped, welcoming space that reflects the pride that we have in Leigh.

"We have had the help of community groups when it came to redesigning the square, and I am really pleased to see how the



revamp looks and how it will be able to accommodate a variety of events in the future."

Leaning on the expertise of the Leigh, Atherton, and Tyldesley Heritage Group, one part of the revamped square is a heritage timeline designed to feature key events and milestones from the square's past dating from 1762 to the present day.

Elsewhere, a poem created by the Leigh Young Writers youth group, with help from local poets Louise Fazackerley and Natasha Tingle,

has been engraved into the new paving to celebrate the town's history.

The poem and heritage timeline are also available in Braille and British Sign Language to help make the space more accessible to all.

www.wigan.gov.uk/LeighCivicSquareProject



Leigh market revamp on the horizon

Work is scheduled to begin in early 2027 on the refurbishment of Leigh Indoor Market.

During the works, traders will operate from temporary units within Spinning Gate Shopping Centre.

The market hall will remain open throughout the busy Christmas season, so please remember to support our traders and shop local.

To keep up to date with all things Leigh Market: www.facebook.com/LeighMarket



Leigh Market Trader, Lowe's Barbeque

Shop fronts are catching the eye

More than a dozen businesses in Leigh town centre have benefitted from a shop front improvement scheme.

The project aims to revitalise and breathe new life into the high street, helping to attract further investment and encourage more visitors into the town centre.

We think the results look fantastic, and we have had some very positive feedback from local residents and businesses too!



Ashton's artistic new look

A striking selection of murals and mosaics is breathing new life and creativity into Ashton-in-Makerfield town centre.

Forming part of the £6.6m #OurFutureAshton regeneration project, the public artworks have been commissioned to reflect the pride, history and values of the local community.

With community involvement and feedback at the heart of the project, residents can now see George Rose's strikingly bright mural on the steps next to Greensway Shopping Centre, as well as Gavin Renshaw's large-scale public artwork on the side of Scrivens Opticians.

Additionally, Alex Goodwin (pictured) has been transforming businesses' shutters along Garswood Street with vibrancy and colour.

Carrie Reichardt and her team have installed a mosaic incorporating the history and heritage of Ashton, featuring 656 individual names and personalised messages, making it their largest project yet.

With Tasha Whittle appointed as project manager, the public art project follows on from Snow Graffiti's Titanic-inspired work off Gerard Street.

Market Square revamp

Wigan Council has appointed StudioDBD to help develop the design and branding of the new-look Market Square, with a diverse range of traders and community activities set to revitalise the town centre space.

Taking community feedback on board, designers have created a new identity that celebrates local pride, heritage and history, with the tagline 'Made in Makerfield' at its heart. This reflects the fact that Ashton's tradition of making did not end when the pits and factories closed; it continued through the skills, creativity and resilience of its people.



Shop fronts in the spotlight

Along the high street, visible progress can also be seen through the revamp of several shop fronts.

Designed to make the high street more welcoming, the scheme incentivised landlords to invest in their properties by offering match-funded grants to improve the look and feel of town centre buildings.



**“IT ISN'T ABUSE
BECAUSE THEY
DON'T HIT ME”
DOMESTIC ABUSE
ISN'T ALWAYS
PHYSICAL**

**Control is abuse. Fear is abuse.
Isolation is abuse.**

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01942 311365

www.wigan.gov.uk/domesticabuse



**WIGAN BOROUGH
COMMUNITY SAFETY
PARTNERSHIP**

**LOVE IS NOT
ABUSE**





Jean is looking forward to the future in her new apartment

‘It’s like winning the lottery’

At 78-years-old, Jean never imagined she would be homeless.

It very nearly became a reality after she found herself without a home when she was discharged from hospital following gallbladder surgery.

Due to a change in personal circumstances, Jean could no longer be in the property she had been living at, which meant a lifetime of happy memories in Wigan, and cherished family heirlooms were at risk of being tainted and lost to an uncertain and frightening future.

“I had visions of being on the streets”, Jean tells Borough Life. “I didn’t know what was going to happen to me.”

But thanks to quick support from the homelessness team, Jean’s future began to look brighter.

Within a matter of weeks, the dedicated officers, working with NHS partners, secured Jean a place to stay in one of the sheltered accommodation sites across Wigan Borough, giving her the security and stability she desperately needed.

Now, just a couple of months after settling in, Jean has compared her new apartment to winning the lottery.

“I am just absolutely thriving here. I can’t thank Wigan Council enough for what they have done for me. They have saved my life because I genuinely didn’t know where I was going to end up.”

The apartment has done more than just put a roof over Jean’s head, she says the move has transformed her life and given her friends she never thought she would have.

From the moment she arrived, Jean says she was welcomed by fellow residents, many of whom donated furniture and household items to help her make the apartment her own.

“I was welcomed from day one. I’ve made friends for life; everybody has been so kind.”

The sheltered accommodation community offers residents regular activities organised by council staff to feel connected and active.

For Jean, she can’t miss her weekly bingo.

“I often went to bingo with my late husband, and I’ve won more times here than ever before, it’s been brilliant.”

Jean regularly joins friends for Sunday lunch and is even looking forward to a trip to Manchester to see The Jersey Boys.

“I might be 78 but I feel so much younger. I am so happy, so secure, I am enjoying my life now. I just really hope more people get the help I got. Anyone who is homeless they need to get to Wigan Council, they can’t fail.”

Jean’s story is one of many examples of how support services across Wigan Borough work together to prevent homelessness and help vulnerable residents rebuild their lives.

For homelessness support visit www.wigan.gov.uk/Homelessness



Councillor Susan Gambles with the team at Lock 20

Lock 20 is a key asset for young people

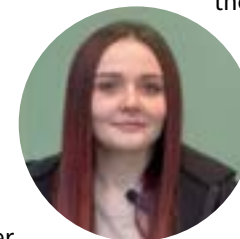
A range of homelessness support is available across Wigan Borough, including a new £7.1m purpose-built foyer for young people.

Lock 20, run by Your Housing Group and supported by Wigan Council, Homes England and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, offers 16-25 year-olds 38 one-bedroom apartments, alongside a gym, games room, training kitchen and shared social spaces.

For 17-year-old Alice (pictured), moving into Lock 20 has been

life-changing. After facing an unstable situation and moving from home to home, she says the support and security she has found there has made a huge difference, helping her learn new skills and feel less isolated.

Residents can stay for up to two years while working towards education, employment or independent living. With 24/7 on-site support and emergency accommodation for those at immediate risk of homelessness, Lock 20 is helping young people build confidence, develop life skills and prepare for a positive future.



Councillor Susan Gambles, portfolio holder for housing and welfare, and chair of Wigan Borough Homelessness Partnership Board, said:

“Jean has been through so much, and I am so pleased she is now happy and comfortable in her new home.

“Helping to end homelessness should be everyone’s business. We came together for Jean, and I want to thank everyone involved for helping to make this happen.”



Be Well boost reveals ‘NEXT GEN’ fitness focus

There’s a growing trend among young people in Wigan Borough that might just surprise you.

Because although it may be tempting to believe lazy characterisations of modern generations endlessly staring at their screens, the truth is rather different.

In fact, increasing numbers of young people are choosing to make fitness and movement a regular part of their routine.

And the reason for this may not be what you’d expect. According to those in the know, it’s not all about body image. Or, if it is a factor, it’s not the main one.

Instead, Generations Z and Alpha are embracing exercise because of the positive impact it has on their confidence, their minds, and their overall health.

“Rather than seeing fitness as purely performance or appearance-driven, many young people now view exercise as an essential part of their physical health, mental wellbeing and long-term lifestyle,” says Jamie-Lee Bowden of health and fitness coaching experts Future Fit Training.

Future Fit work with the borough’s Be Well leisure centres so fitness instructors have the knowledge they need to support their rapidly expanding

membership base, where growth is fastest among under 18s.

No fewer than 5,000 young people now have a Be Well junior or student fitness membership; that’s almost double the number three years ago.

It’s a trend mirrored across the country too. Earlier this year, a report by *ukactive* (the UK trade body for the fitness, leisure and physical activity sector) revealed three-quarters of ‘Gen Z’-ers take part in strength training at least twice a week – more than any other generation. According to Dr Ashley Gluchowski, a clinical exercise physiologist and behaviour change specialist at the University of Salford, the explanation “is likely a mix of curiosity, tangible benefits and social influence”.

“We know from a *ukactive* survey that young people want to be more physically active than they currently are,” she says.

“And providing positive physical activity experiences – with structured support, alongside friends and other people they know, in a safe, familiar environment – are ways young people have told us we can help them to enjoy physical activity.

“Whatever the explanation, we need to ensure we’re fostering those positive experiences with things like: a safe space for meaningful social engagement, encouraging a sense of belonging for all members, the availability of structured support to

facilitate physical activity competence, and allowing young people to choose the activity that feels right for them, promoting autonomy.”

Be Well’s answer is NEXT GEN; a new range of exercise classes built specifically to help young people move more, feel stronger and build confidence.

They each draw inspiration from current fitness trends (think Hyrox, for example) but are adapted to meet the unique needs and demands of the demographic.

For secondary school and college ages, classes focus on improving technique, form and confidence in a safe and structured way.

While for younger children and families, there are fitness, dance and mindfulness sessions that make movement fun while encouraging everyone to get active together.

“The fact that young people are the fastest growing membership sector is something that Be Well must capitalise on and continue to enable so it’s great to hear about NEXT GEN,” says Dr Ashley, who says the shift is good news for the future.

“We know that young people who have positive experiences with being physically active are far more likely to be physically active as adults and older adults, improving their lifelong health, social and mental wellbeing, and quality of life.”



Jamie-Lee agrees: “Creating positive early experiences is key to helping young people build confidence, physical literacy and lasting exercise habits that can continue into adulthood.

“So as youth participation in fitness continues to grow, there’s an increasing need for qualified professionals who understand child development, safeguarding and age-appropriate exercise delivery.”

For 12-year-old Sophie Archer, a member at Ashton Leisure Centre, the benefits have been clear to see.

“I love coming to the NEXT GEN classes at Be Well because they’re fun, friendly and make me feel stronger every week,” says Sophie.

“I’ve made new friends, learned new skills and always leave feeling proud of myself.”

The confidence she’s developed through the sessions has even had an impact beyond the gym.

“Every class helps me build confidence and achieve something new. I have even started to win all the fitness tests at my rugby team, which is great!”

For many young people like Sophie, being active can help develop resilience, social connections, confidence and a sense of achievement.

And with them now accounting for a quarter of all Be Well members, it’s clear Gens Z and Alpha are developing a different relationship with health and wellbeing.

Instead of quick fixes or focusing solely on appearance, many are adopting a more holistic, longer-term approach centred around feeling stronger, healthier and happier.

And with NEXT GEN, they’re being given the opportunity to do just that.



“I think that’s really encouraging,” says Councillor Laura Flynn, Wigan Council’s cabinet member for children and families.

“Rather than feeling pressured to look a certain way, our young people are thinking more about the long-term benefits of being active – and that can only be good news for the future health of our borough.

“Through Be Well and all of our recent investment in our local leisure facilities, we’re really proud to be supporting the next generation to lead healthier, happier and more active lives.”



Borough Life Exclusive!

To celebrate the launch of NEXT GEN, Borough Life readers can get ONE MONTH FREE on a Be Well junior or student fitness membership.

Simply head to www.bewellwigan.org/membership and join using the code BOROUGHlifENEXTGEN at checkout!

Offer expires 31.12.26.



Soup and a sandwich at Caffé Rosso

Swinley serves up an array of sweets, treats and more

The Borough Life team is back out and about discovering the best local food and drink spots. This time, we’re sampling Swinley, one of Wigan’s favourite locations for independent cafés, bars and restaurants. Just a short stroll from the town centre, it’s packed with places to grab a coffee, settle in for lunch, meet friends for drinks or enjoy a meal out. It’s home to well-loved favourites alongside newer arrivals already making their mark. We couldn’t wait to try the highly regarded SIP at

Swinley, which has quickly become one of the area’s firm favourites. From the moment you walk through the door, it feels like somewhere a little bit special. The décor is stylish, with deep red walls, plush velvet seating and ceilings draped in twinkling greenery.



Hot honey pepperoni pizza at SIP

It’s the sort of place you can happily pop in for a coffee after a morning walk, meet friends for lunch or spend an evening enjoying a few drinks and something to eat. It’s owned by the team behind the popular Post House in Orrell, and they’ve brought the same eye for detail here. The menu is packed with choice, featuring everything from breakfast dishes and sandwiches to pizzas, small plates and bar bites. Keen to sample a bit of everything, we ordered a selection to share. With hot honey still having a bit of

Inside SIP



a moment, the hot honey pepperoni pizza was an easy choice and didn’t disappoint. Sweet, spicy and packed with flavour, it was a real winner. Alongside that, we tucked into salt and pepper squid served with a punchy chilli and lime mayonnaise, plus salt and pepper chicken bites with peppers, onions and sesame oil. To balance things out, we opted for a classic Caesar salad. Safe to say there wasn’t much left on the plates by the end.

Now, if you’re looking for somewhere to enjoy a drink, Sherrington’s is well worth adding to your list. A real local favourite, it’s got an impressive range of craft beers.

The bar takes its name from the old hardware shop that once occupied the building, giving a nod to Swinley’s history while creating something completely of its own.

With regular live music, wine nights and events, it provides plenty of reasons for people to keep popping back in.

Next up is a Swinley favourite that’s been serving locals for more than a decade. With a banner proudly displayed in the window reading “10 years doing things properly”, Caffé Rosso has built up a loyal

Sherrington’s Bar



following and it’s easy to see why. Known for its friendly atmosphere and comforting homemade food, it offers everything from soups and sandwiches to platters, afternoon teas and plenty of tempting cakes. With autumn drawing in, we couldn’t resist the soup of the day, a delicious sweet potato and butternut squash soup, paired with a Wensleydale and chutney sandwich. The chicken melt toastie with BBQ sauce also delivered exactly what you’d hope for from a lunchtime classic. Paired with a freshly brewed iced tea, it hit all the right notes. There was still one more place we had to squeeze in. Eros Café, one of the newer additions to Wigan Lane, is already attracting attention for its incredible desserts,

Eros Café



but there’s much more on offer. Inside, you’ll find counters packed with cakes, waffles, churros and chocolate creations, including a giant chocolate Rocher. Alongside the desserts, visitors can also enjoy breakfasts, omelettes and sandwiches. General manager Rachael said: “The desserts definitely catch the eye, but there’s so much more to us than that. We do breakfasts, lunches, sandwiches and plenty of savoury options too, so whether you’re after a quick bite to eat or a sweet treat, we’ve got you covered.” And with that, our visit has reached its climax, but we’ve barely scratched the surface of what Swinley has to offer. We’ll book in for round two... purely in the name of research, of course!



Sherringtonsbar, Eroscafe0, cafferossowigan



Rachael and Julia at Eros Café



The Reablement Team in Leigh Civic Square

A helping hand back to independence

Out in the community with Wigan Council’s award-winning Reablement Team

Danielle Smith and her team love meeting new people.

“We take the time to understand each person as an individual,” she tells Borough Life.

“From our first meeting, we work alongside them, get to know them and help establish the goals that matter most to them.”

The Reablement Team supports people back to independence after a period of

illness, following accidents or operations. Their focus is on a preventative approach, helping to reduce further admissions to hospital which makes a huge difference to the borough’s social care sector.

The team, like all their social care colleagues, are a big part of Wigan Council’s ‘Outstanding’ CQC rating, which has recently been confirmed as the top-rated service in the country.

The inspection report, published earlier this year, praised how the team builds relationships with those they are supporting, helping residents to live with dignity and confidence.

The team’s work with Richard Ogden (pictured) from Leigh brings these qualities to life. After Richard broke his collarbone in a fall from bed in April, the team worked together to provide support that promoted his recovery and independence.

“I had two weeks in hospital and was in horrendous pain,” he explains.

“I was provided with equipment; a crutch to mobilise with, kitchen trolley for transferring my meals and drinks and a perching stool, so I can have a shave and wash at the sink.”

Reablement can be delivered through a range of aids and adaptations, occupational therapy, tips and techniques to promote independence with activities of daily living. They work towards improving indoor and outdoor mobility, personal care, and linking people to voluntary services and their communities.

No two cases are the same, Danielle (pictured) emphasises, and Richard’s circumstances called for flexibility and understanding. Doing what they do best, the team was able to shape their support around what mattered most to him.

Danielle explains: “When meeting Richard, the team considered his accommodation at the hostel and the fact that he shared kitchen and bathroom facilities with other residents. This helped them develop a support plan that reflected his daily environment and individual needs.”

Richard, who is in his 60s and a mechanic by trade, has overcome many challenges in recent years. After experiencing homelessness two years ago, he has

continued to navigate issues relating to alcohol dependency and mental health.

“Addiction comes at a price, and after a while I was no longer able to work, which is how I came to be living in the hostel,” he recalls.

When a new resident is referred to the team. It provides an opportunity to get to know each other and understand what matters most to them

“We understand that it can take time for people to feel comfortable having someone new come into their home,” Danielle says.

“It’s a very personal space, so we make every effort to build trust, get to know the person and develop a positive relationship from the very beginning.

“I’ve had family members who have needed the support of carers and reablement, so I understand how important helping people keep a sense of pride and dignity is.

“We always start by understanding what people can do for themselves and where a little support or the right equipment could help them do more independently.

Often little modifications can have a big impact.

“It may be something as simple as a long-handled sponge or a perching stool can make a real difference,” Danielle adds.

“We take the time to get to know each person as an individual. It might be a photograph on display, a book on the shelf or something else in their home that helps start a conversation.

“Those little things help us understand what’s important to them and builds trust. We want everyone to feel listened to, valued and involved in decisions about their own support.”

The reablement service joined a multi-disciplinary team including Richard’s social worker, Occupational therapist, support worker from With You (drug and alcohol support service) and his support worker at the hostel.



The Reablement Team

“Richard appreciated the support workers visiting him as they were new friendly faces and someone for him to chat to – offering that emotional support as well.” Danielle adds, and Richard agrees.

“I looked forward to their visits as I don’t get many visitors,” he says, “I’m an introvert and I like my own company, but all human beings need company sometimes.

“This is one of the longest periods that I’ve been sober for.

“When I broke my pelvis after a second fall, it was a setback. In the past, I may have relied on alcohol to get through it.

“But I remembered the tips and tricks that the reablement team had given me when I’d fallen previously and I still had the equipment they’d given to me.

“I knew I had to walk and even though for the first two weeks I was in a lot of pain, I stuck with it because I knew I could get better and I am back to walking again now.”

Richard is now looking ahead to the future.

“I know I still have issues to deal with but I’m working to get myself right. Alcohol is a difficult addiction as it’s so available but my attitude to everything has changed.

“I’m taking each day at a time, but I do have a plan for my future. When I feel ready, I would love to work in a supermarket.

“I’d like to move out of the hostel and move to somewhere like sheltered accommodation, where I can be independent, but where there will be people around, a community that I could get involved with sometimes.”

Richard is also keen to encourage others to get the support they might need.

“I hope that by sharing my story, I might help someone else in a similar situation. If you think you might have an addiction, the hardest bit is admitting it to yourself. Then I would advise you to tell someone, maybe go to your GP first, get some help.

“I know some people might be frightened to do that, but I was surprised at how much help there is in the borough.”

Danielle remains in touch with Richard.

“It’s been amazing to see his progress,” she says.

“Richard should be incredibly proud of everything he has achieved. He has worked hard to regain his independence and has been open to trying new approaches that support his recovery.

“He has embraced the advice and support offered along the way.

“I hope he can continue progressing, I’m really rooting for him.”

Find out more at:
www.wigan.gov.uk/ReablementService



All care staff receive the Real Living Wage

Real Living Wage pledge continues to make a difference

Wigan Council’s commitment to ensuring care workers are paid at least the Real Living Wage (RLW) is helping to support a strong, sustainable and high-quality adult social care sector.

More than three years in, the council’s landmark pledge continues to make a real difference for both the workforce and the people who rely on care services.

Around 9,000 people work in adult social care across Wigan Borough and 100 per cent of community care providers commissioned by the council pay the RLW as a minimum.

The commitment extends beyond council contracts, with 92 per cent of local care homes also signed up to the scheme.

It has helped providers attract and retain skilled staff, while ensuring

carers receive fair pay for the vital work they do every day.

The impact has been far and wide. Since the council made the commitment, it is estimated that more than £12m extra has been added back into the local economy and people’s pockets.

The investment is also reflected in the quality of local services.

Wigan Borough continues to have the highest proportion of care provision rated good or outstanding by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in the North West.

Councillor Keith Cunliffe, deputy leader and cabinet portfolio holder for Adult Social Care and Health, said: “Our care workforce plays a vital role in supporting some of the most vulnerable people in our communities. By continuing our commitment to the

Real Living Wage, we’re helping to ensure carers feel valued and rewarded for the incredible work they do.

“This approach benefits everyone. It supports recruitment and retention, strengthens the local care market and helps us maintain the high standards of care that residents rightly expect.

“We’re proud to be leading the way in building a fairer borough where both workers and residents can thrive.

“This has been possible through the council’s transformation of services, with a focus on early intervention and prevention, helping people live independently at home for longer.”

If you’re interested in joining Team Wigan visit
www.wigan.greaterjobs.com

#CareToJoinUs

There’s a **CARE** role for everyone

Wigan Council

www.wigan.gov.uk/caretojoinus

Haigh Hall for all

It's been a record-breaking year with big progress being made across all the projects at Haigh. Here's a round-up of what you may have spotted on site.

Opening gates

The lovingly restored Plantation Gates and Lodges opened to the public in July.

Following an extensive renovation, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Wigan Council, the Grade II* listed buildings now house an art installation and visitor information facilities.

More than 1,900 people visited the lodges during July and August, with visitors praising the transformation. One guest said: "I am blown away by what has been achieved at the Plantation Gates. It is incredible."

The Lodges are open Friday, Saturday and Sunday 10am to 2pm. Opening hours are extended in school holidays. Entry is free.



The Haigh Plantation Gates

All aboard the Haigh land train

One of Haigh's most cherished attractions is back, with the much-loved land train once again carrying visitors through the woodland. Running between the Courtyard and the recently restored Plantations Gates, the train offers a relaxing way to explore the park's picturesque grounds, with four-legged friends welcome on board too.

The train operates Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 10.30am, with the final departure at around 3pm. Extended opening hours in school holidays.

The journey takes approximately 20-30 minutes, and tickets can be purchased directly from the driver by cash or card, with no advance booking required.

Visitor numbers soar

Thanks in part to Plantation Gates and the land train, the site has enjoyed a bumper year in terms of visitor numbers. We welcomed more than 275k visitors between April and July 2026, a 12 per cent increase on the previous year.

In addition to the above, the estate has seen a series of successful events, following a refreshed programme, including events such as Haigh Food Festival.



The Haigh Land Train



Glulam timber pillars at the Bothy Yard

Bothy project milestone

The installation of striking glulam timber pillars that will form the structural framework of the building will have caught the eye.

As the structure begins to take shape, the transformation is becoming increasingly visible.

The next phase of works will include the installation of the elegant curtain walling, followed by the glazing that will eventually flood the space with natural light.

With each stage completed, the new glasshouse moves one step closer to becoming a stunning addition to Bothy Yard, blending contemporary design with the natural beauty of its surroundings.

Haigh Woodland Park



Haigh.Hall

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  [visitwigan.com](https://www.visitwigan.com)



visitwigan



Powering up our communities

A national scheme that will see £20m invested into several local communities across Wigan Borough over the next decade is moving forward at pace.

Pride in Place – announced in late 2025 – is a government backed programme that has community-led investment at its heart.

In the previous edition of Borough Life, we revealed that Platt Bridge and Spring View and Marsh Green and Laithwaite are two of the latest recipient areas.

Each one has an independent neighbourhood board that will oversee these exciting projects. Each board includes a team of committed, passionate and knowledgeable local

people working together in each area. They're all volunteers, and represent the business, voluntary and faith sectors - backed by their local councillors and MPs.

Importantly, they are led by a chairperson with strong ties to each community.

For Marsh Green and Laithwaite, it's Chris Fairhurst, an experienced family lawyer whose maternal grandparents were among the first residents of Norley Hall.

And in Platt Bridge and Spring View, it's Lisa Aldred, a community champion who has contributed enormously to her local area.

Now, with board members at the helm, a flurry of engagement activity is taking

place, ahead of a vision statement - setting out initial plans – being submitted soon.

To help Chris, Lisa and their respective boards gather a wide range of views from the community, residents are being asked to fill in the surveys via the participate platform, accessible in the links below.

The Platt Bridge and Spring View boundary includes Platt Bridge, Spring View Bamfurlong and part of Bryn Gates.

[www.wigan.gov.uk/
PrideInPlacePlattBridge](http://www.wigan.gov.uk/PrideInPlacePlattBridge)

The Marsh Green and Laithwaite boundary includes Marsh Green, Laithwaite, Norley Hall, Worsley Hall and Kitt Green.

[www.wigan.gov.uk/
PrideInPlaceMarshGreen](http://www.wigan.gov.uk/PrideInPlaceMarshGreen)



'We have so much to offer'

Hello! I'm Chris Fairhurst and I'm chairing Pride in Place in Marsh Green and Laithwaite, the boundary of which includes Norley Hall and Worsley Hall.

Back in the '50s, my grandparents became part of a close-knit and proud neighbourhood which helped to shape the area's strong identity – and their passion and pride for this area is something I have carried throughout my life and career.

These areas have so much to offer, and I strongly believe that people living and working locally should be at the centre of decisions affecting their community so they are able to shape their future.

My priority as the Pride in Place project progresses is to ensure that local voices are heard, opportunities are maximised and investment directed towards initiatives that deliver meaningful and long-lasting benefits for current and future generations.



'Heart and resilience'

Hi, I'm Lisa Aldred – the newly appointed chair of the independent neighbourhood board helping to deliver change in Platt Bridge and Spring View.

This is a community that I care so much about.

Despite the challenges we face, this is a community with heart, resilience, and a strong sense of togetherness.

Like many northern towns, Platt Bridge and Spring View can feel left behind at times, affecting opportunities and aspirations.

However, there is huge potential here.

The opportunity that's arisen through Pride in Place gives us the chance to address inequalities, improve opportunities for children and young people, and create a thriving, safe, and connected neighbourhood that people are proud of. I believe in this community and its future.

Pride in Place pioneers in Leigh will deliver on town centre priorities

Leigh town centre was chosen as a Pride in Place area in a previous phase of the scheme.

Its independent board – led by local business owner Alex Grundy (pictured) – is well established and determined to turn investment into visible improvements for the town.

In May, they launched two new funding opportunities designed to support the town's continued regeneration.

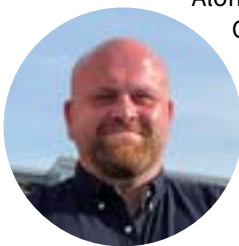
The Leigh Fund will help deliver projects that enhance the look and feel of the town, creating a safer

and more welcoming environment for everyone.

Alongside this, the Community Fund will support grassroots initiatives that bring people together, foster community pride and strengthen local connections.

The board anticipates that the first successful projects will get underway in the coming months.

Find out more about all three Pride in Place projects in our borough by visiting [www.wigan.gov.uk/
PrideInPlaceWigan](http://www.wigan.gov.uk/PrideInPlaceWigan)



Leigh town centre



Impact Fund Phase One

Projects in Atherton, Hindley, Worsley Mesnes, Beech Hill and Ince have either started or are due to get underway, having been identified using government-set criteria and local data.

These include:

Atherton: High street refresh scheme, expansion plans for The Snug, and an extension to the Green Grass Centre.

Hindley: New playground at Salisbury Avenue, new lighting for Hindley Cenotaph, and new parking facilities at Borsdane Woods.

Worsley Mesnes: New playground at Tyrer Avenue, resurfacing of the Carr Lane shops car park, and a new playground at Hawkley Hall.

Beech Hill and Ince: Investment in a new BMX pump track at Ince, new facilities at Beech Hill Playbox, improvement works at Mesnes Park Pavilion, and support for two sporting clubs with new facilities.



Atherton town centre

to community spaces, public spaces and high streets.

Leader of Wigan Council, Councillor Nazia Rehman, said:

“Investing in our communities has consistently been a top priority for this council and the Impact Fund has already started to make a real difference.

“That’s why we are matching the government’s investment to create a £3m programme that will help even more communities benefit. This is a great example of local and national government working together to deliver for our residents.

“This is about much more than physical improvements. It is about backing the people, groups and organisations that make our communities so strong.”

The investment supports the council’s Progress with Unity

blueprint, particularly its ambition to make all towns and neighbourhoods flourish while creating fair opportunities.

The £3m fund is also part of a wider programme of neighbourhood investment across the borough, complementing work through Progress with Unity, community asset investment, neighbourhood reform, Be Well and Live Well services, and community wealth-building initiatives.

Councillor Rehman added: “We have worked together with our borough’s MPs to identify projects that are important to our residents.

“This extra investment has been made possible by the council’s strong financial management and our track record of backing the strength in our communities.”



Engagement at Tyrer Avenue in Worsley Mesnes



Councillor Nazia Rehman meets the Northern Heart and Soul CIC team at Mesnes Park Pavilion



Leader of Wigan Council, Councillor Nazia Rehman views the plans for a new play park at Tyrer Avenue in Worsley Mesnes

Time to double up and widen the reach of impact fund

From high street refurbishments to music venue expansion plans, new playgrounds and community building makeovers, a new fund is having a big impact.

Earlier this year, our borough received £1.5m from central government’s Pride in Place Impact Fund.

With many grassroots projects already underway, Wigan Council has taken the decision to widen the scope of the fund by doubling it to £3m.

The plan is to reach even more communities, following the template of the national fund in focusing on quick improvements



Dorothy and Sam

From Techmates to life-long friends

In the middle of one of the Covid-19 lockdowns, Dorothy made a decision that would change her life. But little did she know that it would also change the lives of many others across the borough. Having recently lost her husband and with no family living close by, Dorothy relied upon a support network from staff and volunteers at Shevington Library. But when that site had to temporarily close due to the pandemic, the then 80-year-old found herself isolated and increasingly lonely; a situation she knew others would also be experiencing.

A lifeline came in the shape of a burgeoning initiative from the council’s Digital Wigan team. Dorothy, through her connections to the library, asked if there was any support available. This is where Sam Boffey – then aged 15 – enters the story. The Digital Wigan team gifted an iPad to Dorothy as part of a project to reduce social isolation. Kind-hearted Sam, who was volunteering with the team, was put in touch with Dorothy to help her set it up. “I hadn’t a clue how to use it or what to do,” Dorothy explains to Borough Life.



“Sam would spend hours showing me what to do; how to send e-mails, take photographs, all the basics I needed.” The device unlocked a new world, helping Dorothy to keep in touch with friends from the library and a wider network of pals. “Living on my own, I needed contact with the outside world. I have no family around me, but having an iPad and phone, I’m in touch with the outside world if I need help.”

Dorothy’s success story sparked an idea within the Digital Wigan team, and with Sam’s imagination the term TechMates was coined. It proved to be an inspired plan because TechMates soon became the team’s flagship project and is now an award-winning one; setting the standard for digital support offers for local authorities up and down the country. From accessing online banking to GP appointments, video-calling friends to e-mailing old colleagues, the trusty team of TechMates got to work with residents of all ages and backgrounds who needed that little bit of support, either in one-to-one sessions or at one of their group drop-in sessions, dubbed TechMate Tea Parties. Over the years, thousands of residents have benefitted from the support and it is now led by



the community with more than 80 volunteers hosting Tea Parties across the borough. From starting out as a volunteer, Sam is now a full-time staff member in the Digital Wigan team. “I’m proud to have played my part in developing something that has had such an impact in our communities,” he explains. “Over the years, Dorothy and I have learned and grown alongside each other. I’m incredibly proud of Dorothy, of everything she has achieved, and of the journey we’ve shared over the past six years. “Here’s to continued learning, new opportunities and seeing where the next chapter takes us both, as neither of us are slowing down.” From that initial first step and being linked up with Sam, Dorothy has been able to maintain her independence and no longer worries about feeling lonely or isolated. She’s truly embraced her new digital lifestyle, having been gifted



a smartphone and data through Digital Wigan’s Access for All programme. “Today I’ve been learning about WhatsApp with my dear friend Bill,” she says. “It’ll be important, I can use it not just for Bill, for everybody else. I can use it for Sam!” TechMates is a friendly digital support service run by Digital Wigan, designed to help people feel more confident using technology in everyday life. With the help of our amazing TechMate volunteers, we offer patient, judgement-free support for anyone who wants to learn, ask questions, or simply feel more comfortable with digital devices and online services. Whether it’s a smartphone, tablet, laptop, or the internet, TechMates is here to help through our award-winning Tea Parties or one-to-one support. For more information, visit: www.wigan.gov.uk/TechMates





The Split Up location shot at Leigh Town Hall

New fund opens doors to the world of TV and film

Young people from across Wigan Borough are gaining experience in the TV and film industry thanks to a new scheme. Wigan Council’s film fund – established last year – sees all fees generated from location shoots reinvested to create opportunities for those wanting to break into the creative industries. Kicking off the fund was the fee generated from the BBC’s production of prime-time legal drama The Split Up, filmed on

location at Leigh Town Hall. Working alongside Northern Heart Films (an independent production company), 10 young people attended a bootcamp series, gaining valuable experience in developing, filming and editing their own documentaries. The next phase saw a selection take on work experience placements within the industry, including two paid employment opportunities as ‘runners’, who are TV crew members who help support production teams.

Orla (pictured right), from Leigh, also earned the opportunity to work on a feature-length documentary following local chart-topping band The Lottery Winners for their homecoming gig at Leigh Sports Village.

“Being part of a production for a band that’s from Leigh, in Leigh, was incredible,” said Orla. “I never realised that I could do what I love so locally. Everything I’d ever seen was in places like Manchester, Leeds or London.

“It has given me confidence, helped me develop new skills and showed me that opportunities like this can exist right where you grow up.”

Filming fees generated from location shoots at local authority owned sites will continue to be reinvested into the Film Fund.

Find out more at: www.wigan.gov.uk/FilminginWiganBorough



Councillor Keith Cunliffe, deputy leader of Wigan Council, said:

“Our Film Fund was created to ensure that the benefits of filming in our borough are experienced directly by local people, and it’s fantastic to see the impact it’s already having.

“We’ve been able to create meaningful opportunities for young people to gain hands-on experience, develop new skills and build connections within the film and screen industry.

“This programme has helped open doors for local talent and shows that exciting creative careers can start right here in Wigan Borough.”

A star turn in legal drama for our town hall

Eagle-eyed viewers of a star-studded BBC legal drama may have spotted some familiar backdrops.

The Split Up, which aired in September, was filmed at Leigh Town Hall (pictured), along with other locations across Greater Manchester.

It’s a spin-off from the hit series The Split, featuring the complicated personal and professional lives of the Kishan family, who run a prestigious British Asian divorce law firm.

Its production saw Wigan Council join forces with Screen Manchester, whose work helps connect film and television productions with locations, facilities and expertise across the city-region.

Screen Manchester’s Bobby Cochrane said: “The Split Up is a fantastic example of what Greater

Manchester can offer a major production. It was a pleasure to support filming across the city and to see partners across GM play their part in bringing the production to life.”

As part of its Film Friendly Borough approach, Wigan Council works alongside organisations such as Filming in England to promote locations across the borough for the TV and film industry.

Chelsea Foster, production liaison manager for Filming in England, said: “It’s been wonderful to see Wigan Borough’s film friendly offer grow. The Filming in England team is proud to work closely with our local authority partners such as Wigan Council in support of promoting fantastic locations. After the Split Up, we’re excited to see what is to come for the borough.”



Councillor Susan Gambles with the council's housing team and construction firm Casey

An inclusive housing plan is building brick by brick

A shared vision to create a wider range of affordable homes in appropriate locations is building towards a significant milestone here in Wigan Borough. With housing and rental markets facing continued pressure up and down the country, Wigan Council has taken a proactive approach. Its own direct delivery programme will see construction start on its 1,000th new council home

in early 2027. These figures include houses, bungalows and apartments, extra care schemes, and supported housing schemes delivered alongside adult services for specialist provision. And this is in addition to its effective partnership working with public and private sector housing providers to ensure a steady supply of affordable homes that meet the needs of our population.

Councillor Susan Gambles, cabinet portfolio holder for housing, said: “Our new Prime Minister couldn’t have made it any clearer; he has put building new council homes at the top of the agenda, along with tackling the cost-of-living crisis and homelessness. “Working alongside partners such as Homes England and the private sector, we are delivering a range of affordable housing options that meet the needs of our residents. “We have a proven track record and, to be clear, we are ready to build. We will continue working alongside the government to deliver even more homes.”

The total number of affordable homes created across the borough through public and private organisations, along with housing associations and registered providers has already topped 2,000 in the last five years.

By building council homes, working with housing association partners and developers to enable them to build affordable and social housing, and attracting external funding into the borough, residents remain at the heart of delivering the right homes where they are needed most.

Whitebeam close bungalows



Works were completed in Pemberton earlier this year and teams are working to build new homes at three different sites in Leigh, right now. These three examples of affordable housebuilding schemes in Leigh can be seen within a few streets of each other.

Work is underway with 41 new affordable homes under construction in West Leigh; nine new-build two- to four-bedroom homes is underway at Briar Grove, while eight bungalows are being built on Yates Street. Nearby, on Keble Grove, work has started on 24 one-bedroom homes.

Communal lounge at Wharfedale extra care



All of these sites are bringing brownfield land back into use and will deliver much-needed affordable homes in the borough. These three sites represent a good mix of housing, with different home types and sizes, delivering homes that we know local people want. These homes, all built as council homes at affordable rent, will be constructed to a high standard, helping to keep energy bills down for tenants. Find out more at www.wigan.gov.uk/Housing

Affordable housing schemes due to be delivered in the next two years

Collier Brook Farm, Atherton
27 homes

Gloucester Street, Atherton
36 homes

Former Newton Labour Club, Scot Lane, Wigan
14 homes

Hemfield House, Aspull
28 homes

Scot Lane, Wigan
22 homes

Christopher Street, Ince
65 homes

Eldervale Extra care

What's on in Wigan Borough?

Haigh Woodland Park	Haigh.Hall
	Sunday 1 November 4.30pm–7pm Haigh’s annual firework display is going to go off with a bang! VIP tickets also available. 📍 Location: Haigh Hall 🎟 Tickets: Eventbrite Sunday 15 November - Sunday 3 January 11am-8pm 📍 Location: Haigh Hall 🎟 Tickets: haighwoodlandpark.co.uk Sunday 15 November, Sunday 20 December 10am-4pm For anyone looking for gifts or a bite to eat, Haigh Artisan Market is the place to visit. 📍 Location: Haigh Hall 🎟 Tickets: Free, no tickets required Sunday 15 November 2pm-5pm Spend a festive day with us as we turn the lights on our famous Christmas tree. 📍 Location: Haigh Hall 🎟 Tickets: Free, no tickets required From Saturday 28 November SEN sessions Sunday 29 November and Saturday 5 December 10am-4pm See Father Christmas at Haigh. 📍 Location: Haigh Hall 🎟 Tickets: Eventbrite
Saturday 24 - Thursday 29 October Session Length: 1 hour First 1hr Session: 10.15am Pick your perfect pumpkin and enjoy plenty of spooky family fun at Haigh this Halloween. 📍 Location: Haigh Hall 🎟 Tickets: Eventbrite Friday 30 October 6pm-10pm Raise a stein and enjoy live music, great food and Bavarian-style Oktoberfest fun at Haigh. 📍 Location: Haigh Hall 🎟 Tickets: Free, no tickets required Friday 30 October 6pm-10pm A fantastic family event with live music, DJ’s and a variety of delicious street food, situated around the gorgeous courtyard. 📍 Location: Haigh Hall 🎟 Tickets: Free, no tickets required Saturday 31 October 2pm-4pm Dress to impress and dance the afternoon away at Haigh’s spooktacular family fancy dress disco. 📍 Location: Haigh Hall 🎟 Tickets: Eventbrite	

Saturday 14 November 12pm–7pm A day of festive fun for the whole family. There'll be music, a food & drink market, artisan market and fun fair. During the evening, the lantern parade will make its way through the town centre culminating in a spectacular finale. 📍 Location: Leigh Town Centre 🎟 Tickets: Free, no tickets required  Friday 20 – Sunday 22 November 4pm-5pm, Relaxed sessions 5pm-9.30pm each night Don't miss this beautiful, family friendly night out, which brings together artists from all over the UK and internationally to illuminate Mesnes Park and Wigan town centre. You'll leave with a heart full of joy and magical memories. 📍 Location: Mesnes Park, Wigan 🎟 Tickets: Tickets are required. Go to lightnightwigan.co.uk Sunday 22 November 11.30am–5pm A day filled with festive fun, themed activities including the annual Santa parade, entertainment on the main stage, walkabout entertainers, food and drink stalls and artisan markets. The day ends with the traditional Christmas light switch on. 📍 Location: Wigan Town Centre 🎟 Tickets: Free, no tickets required

The last Friday of every month 1pm Screening a variety of old and new films, welcoming of everyone. We are also dementia friendly. 📍 Location: The Turnpike Gallery, Leigh 🎟 Tickets: Free entry, donations welcome  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. 📍 Location: Whelley ex-Serviceman's Club 🎟 Tickets: wiganjazzclub.co.uk Second Sunday monthly 11am-4pm Arts, crafts, food and drink. 📍 Location: Cotton Works, Wigan 🎟 Tickets: Free, no tickets required  Saturday 10 - Saturday 31 October 10am-3pm Weekdays / 10am-5pm weekends and school holidays Pick your favourite pumpkin straight from our home-grown patch. Free games, crafting and facepainting, food and drink and visit from our very own Willow the Witch. 📍 Location: Winstanley Park 🎟 Tickets: Free entry, pay for what you pick	 Noir in the Bar: Saturday 31 October Mother Goose: Wednesday 25 November – Saturday 12 December Elsie & Norm's Macbeth: Wednesday 27 January – Saturday 6 February 2:22 A Ghost Story: Wednesday 10 – Saturday 20 March 📍 Location: Wigan Little Theatre 🎟 Tickets: www.ticketsource.co.uk/wigan-little-theatre-box-office Saturday 31 October SEND Session 10.30am-12pm Other sessions 12.30pm-2pm & 2.30pm-4pm Halloween Fun with Willow, dancing, party games, spot prizes all with a little bit of witchy magic! 📍 Location: Winstanley Park 🎟 Tickets: Tickets purchased online £10 pp Thursday 26 November 5.30pm-7.30pm Countdown to Christmas in Golborne with a dazzling new festive display and lights switch-on at 6pm! 📍 Location: Peter Kane Square, Golborne 🎟 Tickets: Free, no tickets required

Aladdin: Friday 27 November – Saturday 5 December Inside Job: Tuesday 26 - Saturday 30 January Neighbourhood Watch: Tuesday 16 - Saturday 20 March Community celebration of diversity. 📍 Location: Lemon Street Tyldesley 🎟 Tickets: tickets@tlt.org.uk Throughout Dec 📍 Location: Grand Arcade, Wigan 🎟 Tickets: None required Saturday 5 December 10am-5pm Shop, browse and indulge at a magical Christmas market packed with gifts, crafts and festive goodies 📍 Location: Market Street, Atherton 🎟 Tickets: Free, no tickets required Saturday 5 December 11am-8pm Standish Christmas Market will return with two performance areas, craft halls and outdoor market selling festive goods and food and drink and much more. 📍 Location: Standish 🎟 Tickets: Free, no tickets required Saturday 19 & Monday 21 December Hand feed the Alpacas, share your wish list, and get creative with our Christmas crafting. 📍 Location: Winstanley Park 🎟 Tickets: Tickets online £18.95 Sunday 14 March From 9am Join thousands of runners for Wigan's biggest celebration of running, with an unforgettable atmosphere for every pace and ability. 📍 Location: Mesnes park, Wigan 🎟 Tickets: runwiganfestivals.co.uk

Museums, Archives & Libraries

**Fridays starting October 2
11am-1pm**

Join in a friendly, supportive group for those who love to sew and share their skills. All levels of experience are welcome. No formal tuition is provided.
📍 **Location:** Turnpike Gallery, Leigh
🎟️ **Tickets:** Free, no tickets required

**Wednesdays 7 October,
4 November, 2 December,
3 February, 3 March
2pm-3pm**

Free social sketching sessions for adults. No tutor but materials and refreshments are provided.
📍 **Location:** Turnpike Gallery, Leigh
🎟️ **Tickets:** Free, no tickets required

**Saturday 24 Oct
7.30pm – 11.30pm**

Get ready for an unforgettable Northern Soul evening featuring three DJs, including the legendary Russell Winstanley.
📍 **Location:** Leigh Library
🎟️ **Tickets:** Eventbrite

**Tuesday 27, Thursday 29 October,
Tuesday 16, Thursday 18 February
10.30am - 12pm**

Enjoy a creative activity with an artist inspired by our current exhibitions programme. Suitable for families with children 5+.
📍 **Location:** Turnpike Gallery, Leigh
🎟️ **Tickets:** Free, no tickets required

**Tuesday 27 October
6pm-8pm**

Step inside Leigh Library for an immersive Halloween adventure filled with live characters, spooky surprises, and family-friendly jump scares... before finishing with a fun-filled Halloween mini disco!
📍 **Location:** Leigh Library
🎟️ **Tickets:** Eventbrite

**Saturday 1st October, 12th
December
10.30am-12.30pm**

Relaxed creative drop-in workshops with artist Sophie Strain for families with children 5+.
📍 **Location:** Turnpike Gallery, Leigh
🎟️ **Tickets:** Free, no tickets required

**Thursday 12 Nov
1pm-9pm**

A beautiful evening of live music, candlelight and remembrance!
📍 **Location:** Leigh Library
🎟️ **Tickets:** Eventbrite

**Saturday 14 Nov
12pm-4pm**

Experience the immersive imagination station and create your own magical den in the Turnpike studio.
📍 **Location:** Turnpike Gallery, Leigh
🎟️ **Tickets:** Free, no tickets required



**Saturday 21 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!
📍 **Location:** Wigan Library
🎟️ **Tickets:** Free, booking essential

Make. Believe.

Until Friday 18 December
A unique immersive exhibition combining community creativity, art, archaeology and hands-on activities for families.
📍 **Location:** Turnpike Gallery, Leigh
🎟️ **Tickets:** Free, no tickets required

The Turnpike Open

**Saturday 23 January
– Wednesday 31 March**

Over 100 artworks by professional and amateur artists living or working in the borough of Wigan.
📍 **Location:** Turnpike Gallery, Leigh
🎟️ **Tickets:** Free, no tickets required

Winter Services



All the information you need this winter season including opening hours, support and contact information:
www.wigan.gov.uk/winter

Find out what's going on in Wigan Borough

Search 'Wigan Council' and 'Wigan Libraries' at eventbrite.co.uk



SCAN ME

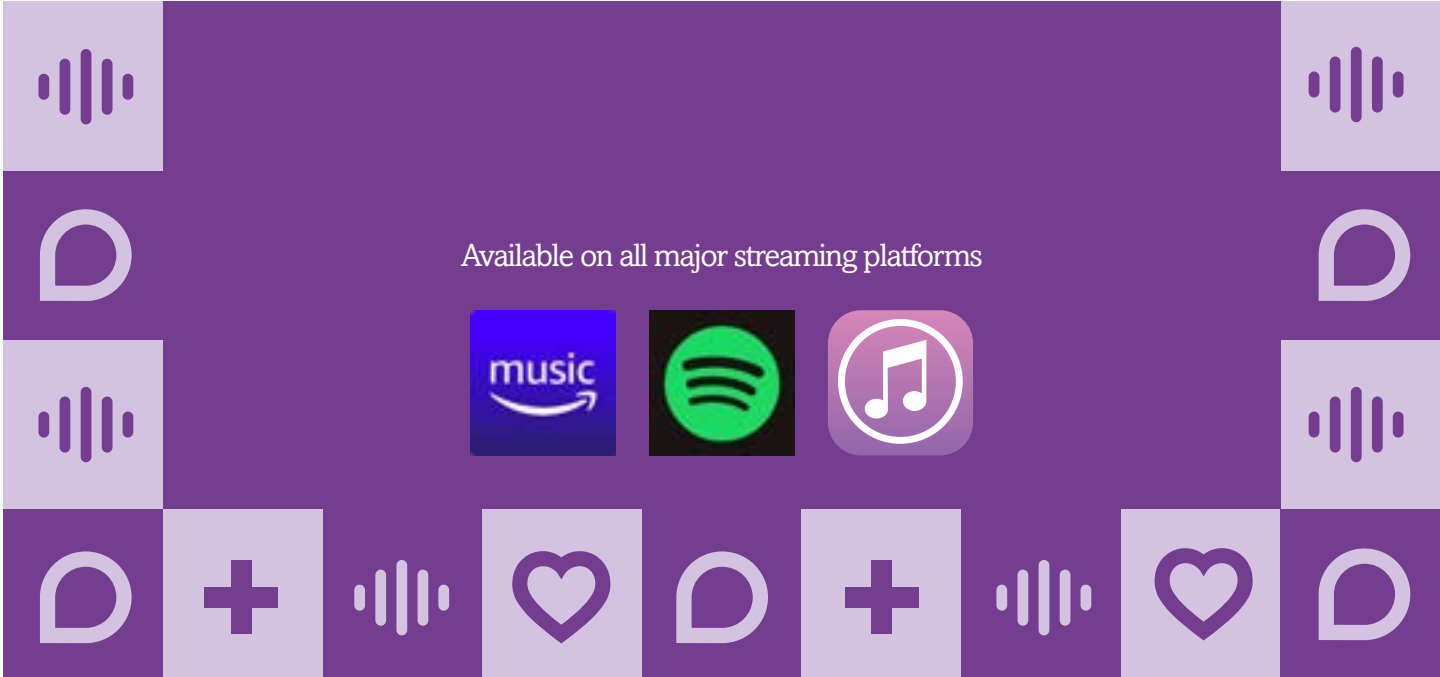


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