

#OurFutureAshton

Autumn 2025

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Welcome

Welcome to the Autumn edition of the #OurFutureAshton newsletter, providing updates for residents, businesses and visitors on the exciting plans for Ashton town centre. We've had a very busy few months over summer and since the previous newsletter. We've been working hard behind the scenes on the final plans and are making great progress. The first of our successful business grants applicants have started work on site, our first public art project is complete, and we have finalised all work from the consultation with residents and businesses on the wider plans.

Public Art Scheme Update

The public art element of the regeneration project comprises five street art commissions designed to enhance Ashton town centre's vibrancy, drive footfall to local businesses, and celebrate local heritage. These artworks will complement the new Ashton Square development and create a place that reflects local heritage and community values for residents and visitors. The first of these has now been completed by Scott Wilcock of "Snow Graffiti" and has already got lots of people talking on social media about Ashton. He has created a breathtaking image depicting the Titanic as a nod to the White Star Line ghost sign advert. The advert is recognised as one of the last remaining ghost signs by the British Titanic Society, which is also going to be restored as part of the works with restoration of the sign set to take place soon. The artwork can be found just off Gerard Street (on the side of Andy's All Day Breakfast)

There's still plenty happening behind the scenes as we prepare to launch the next phase of our public art programme which, along with the restoration of the historic advert, will include a shutter art gallery and several other wall murals to enhance the vibrancy of the entrance to the market. The next steps will consist of recruiting artists, developing initial design concepts, and continuing consultation with local communities and businesses to shape the final artworks. You can expect to see more artwork in Ashton coming to life next year.



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Building Grants Scheme Update:

In our last newsletter, we were excited to announce that we would be provisionally offering grant funding to 16 properties on the high street, subject to planning approvals.

Since then, we have been working very hard with building owners and businesses to commence delivery of our Building Grants scheme.

The scheme aims to provide support for local businesses and building owners to improve their buildings and the overall appearance of Ashton town centre and the Conservation Area.

Since then, our project managers, Creative Heritage, have worked closely with the grant applicants to support them through the grant agreement process.

You will have noticed Cupcakery and Vapour Trader being the first shopfronts to begin improvement works with scaffolding soon to come down to reveal the restored original shopfront that was hiding beneath the modern additions. The second scheme to start on-site will be Indulge Hair which will see changes over the next few weeks.

Overall, 11 of the properties have now secured a place in Round 1 of the scheme, with most of those properties already having secured planning approval. So, you'll be able to start seeing for yourselves all the hard work coming to life in Ashton town centre.

We have also been working with Creative Heritage to launch a bi-monthly blog post that delves into the history and heritage of the buildings in the scheme. The first blog is now live, so if you're interested in finding out more, about the history of Ashton, please visit:

www.wigan.gov.uk/BuildingHistoryBlog

For more info on the Ashton Building Grants scheme or Ashton project please visit:

www.wigan.gov.uk/OurFutureAshton



Ashton Square and Public Realm - Final Designs

Over the past three years, we have carried out extensive consultation and engagement with the local community. This has included a Business Forum and a residents' drop-in session, which provided an opportunity to ask questions and hear about the #OurFutureAshton project. We would like to thank all the businesses and residents who came to listen and speak to us.

As a result of these final consultations, the plans have been amended, responding to some of the concerns raised during the consultation. The main changes are:

- Garswood Street will be kept open as a through route for traffic, and the Gerard Street end will no longer become pedestrianised.
- Additional CCTV will be incorporated into the Ashton Square/market area and work will continue with parking enforcement, and the local police/community teams, to ensure residents feel supported with concerns about illegal parking and anti-social behaviour (ASB) in the area.

Programme update:

The concept design and layout in was fixed and finalised in early May. Since then, we have been working on the detailed design and preparing tender documents for the public realm improvements on Gerard Street and Garswood Street and the new Ashton Square. We're now in the final stages of the planning of this project having recently gone out to tender for a contractor to start work on transforming the town centre!

We have also been having conversations with potential market operators, to look for an operator who shares our vision for the site and can operate a programme of events and placemaking activity, alongside managing the commercial side of things.

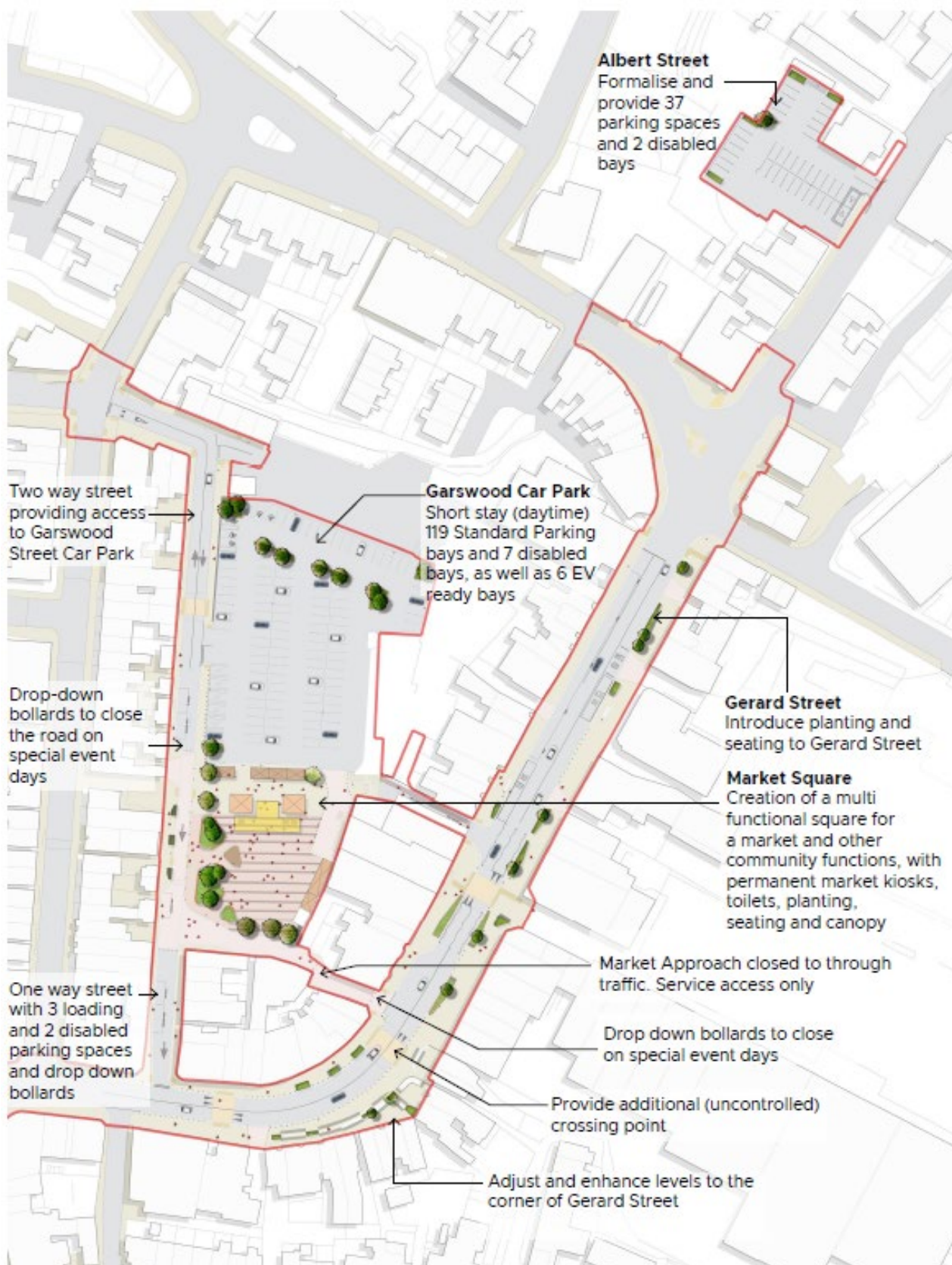
We are therefore now excited to share the final proposals for the Ashton Square and Public Realm projects (see Masterplan on the next page). The tender process to procure a contractor, to carry out the improvements is now underway, and we expect to announce the successful contractor during February 2026.

To keep up to date with progress on our regeneration proposals and to subscribe to these newsletters, please visit: www.wigan.gov.uk/OurFutureAshton.



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Our Future Ashton – Public Realm and Square Masterplan



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