Bolton House Road Newsletter – July 2026

Hello,

Following our previous newsletter sent last month, we wanted to provide you with the latest updates on activity around the Bolton House Road illegal waste site.

Firstly, we want to thank those who attended the residents meeting at Abram Community Centre earlier this month, and we hope that it helped to explain the continuing work that the multi-agency group is undertaking to safely remove the waste.

As some of you may be aware, Sky News has recently published an article focusing on Bolton House Road and other illegal waste sites around the country. We want to use this newsletter to reassure residents that following partnership advice and collective site assessments, the multi-agency group is of the view that the illegal waste site remains a **low risk to the public.**

Multi-agency work:

As stated in previous newsletters, the council has been working with 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 (GMRS) to **manage this illegal site, protect residents, and minimise the impact on the public and the environment.**

As part of the multi-agency work to prepare for safe waste removal, independent qualified organisations have visited the site over the past year to **sample the waste, water, and odour**.

The EA has conducted regular monitoring at and around the site and **has not detected any significant odours** during their inspections that would trigger further action. Likewise, water sampling around the site did **not identify any contamination linked to the site that requires further investigation.**

As the Bolton House Road site is an industrial estate established on a former colliery, geological mapping of the site indicates the presence of thick clay deposits and coal layers beneath the ground. Water or other liquids can't easily pass through clay material so we **do not expect significant pollution from the waste deposits to have entered groundwater.**

Meanwhile, the fire and rescue service and the Council have worked together to help to **manage any potential fire risks** at the site during the warmer weather.

Part of this work has involved GMFRS flying drones over the site to look for any 'hotspots' in the waste and probes have been inserted into the waste at various points to remotely monitor temperature levels.

Water tanks have been put in place around the site to enable the fire and rescue service to act quickly and **prevent the spread of any fire,** with contracts also in place to bring diggers to the site and urgently move waste in case of a fire. **Security** is now on site 24/7, giving the multi-agency group an extra pair of eyes with support to spot any emerging fire risks.

The Environment Agency continues to work alongside the local authority and other partners to **assess any potential environmental impacts and ensure the site is managed appropriately.** The UKHSA works with partner agencies and will provide independent, expert public health advice regarding any potential health risks.

Waste removal:

As mentioned in our previous newsletter, the council has had confirmation that **central government will provide the funds necessary to remove the waste as quickly as possible.**

Following this, we'll ask **specialist contractors** to submit bids in coming weeks, with **hours of operation, site access, wildlife impacts, controlling odour and air quality, disposal routes, and the future of the site post-clearance** all being considered.

Leaning on the expertise and support of the multi-agency group, **Wigan Council is leading the procurement process** and will appoint a contractor that can show it can remove the waste as safely and efficiently as possible. The **waste will continue to be sampled as it is being removed** and the impact on the community will be paramount to the waste removal process.

Following the appointment and any preparations needed on the site, we are hoping that **waste removal will start in the autumn.**

Waste clearance consultation:

As explained, the Council is preparing plans to clear the illegal waste site at Bolton House Road and **would like to hear your views** on how the works should be carried out.

Your feedback will **help inform decisions** on topics such as working hours, traffic management, vehicle routes, and how residents are kept updated throughout the project.

Responses will be reviewed and used to help shape the requirements for the successful contractor, ensuring **local concerns and preferences are considered** wherever possible. To complete the survey, please scan the QR code below or visit the website provided. Thank you for taking the time to share your views.

Ongoing monitoring and criminal investigation:

Closure orders remain in place at Bolton House Road and the neighbouring Old Cricket Ground to prevent access.

The site will continue to be monitored for **illegal activity, safety issues, vermin and environmental impacts** — including during the clearance work.

The Environment Agency continues to lead a **complex investigation** into who is responsible for the illegal waste dumping at Bolton House Road.

A 58-year-old man from the Birmingham area who was arrested in connection with illegal dumping at sites across England, including Bolton House Road, has been released under investigation and is due to return to a police station at a later date. He was **arrested on suspicion of environmental, fraud, and money laundering offences.**

Further information:

While the multi-agency group's view is that the illegal waste site remains a low risk to the public, we recognise that the presence of the site and its management have resulted in disruption to day-to-day life and continues to affect the wellbeing of residents, particularly due to the impact of odours and smoke, as well as the uncertainty in relation to timeframes for works and remediation.

This is why we want to **increase our support for residents, particularly in terms of health and wellbeing**. We are working to provide more practical and personalised support to help residents manage the ongoing impact. This will include access to wellbeing advice, links to health and community services, and opportunities for respite through local leisure and community activities.

Much of this support will come through Angela, our single point of contact who many of you may have met. Angela can be contacted at Angela.Addis@wigan.gov.uk for wellbeing support, advice or information about the illegal waste site, and to complete odour monitoring logs.

The EA continues to gather evidence and members of the public who have information about the waste deposited on the site are encouraged to report any information on its incident hotline on **0800 80 70 60.**

Alternatively, if you want to report a crime or illegal activity anonymously you can ring Crimestoppers on **0800 555 111**. You can report suspicious activity to the police via 101 or the live chat function online. Immediate danger can be reported to the police by calling **999.**

Contact NHS **111** or your GP if you have concerns about your individual circumstances and require health advice.

We will keep you updated via our newsletter, and you can access further information on our Frequently Asked Questions page on the council's website. You can also contact Angela for any further questions you may have.

How to report breaches of the closure and restriction order:

If you see anyone breaching the closure order at the Bolton House Road waste site, please contact the police via 101 or the live chat online.

On the live chat function, we suggest saying something similar to the below:

"I am a resident of Bolton House Road, Bickershaw, Wigan, WN2 4AB. There is an illegal waste site which is covered by a closure order enforced by GMP. There is someone currently on the site. I have been told to alert you as soon as I witness activity of this nature as this is an illegal offence. [We suggest you put in here more detail of what you have seen] ".

You may say something similar to the above when reporting to the Environment Agency. If you see someone breaching the restriction order at the neighbouring Old Cricket Ground, you may say something similar to the below:

“I’d like to report illegal waste activity at the Old Cricket Ground, next to the site at Bolton House Road in Bickershaw, Wigan. This is an illegal waste site being dealt with by the Environment Agency, and local officers have asked me to report incidents to this hotline. I have the National Grid Reference: SD6286401587”.

Please note that calls to the EA will be picked up by the call handler who will record your information and pass it to the Duty Officer, who will decide what action the local team will take. You can say "the local team are already aware of this information” if the call handler asks questions that do not seem relevant to the situation.