



WIGAN BLOOM
BOROUGH IN

WIGAN BOROUGH IN BLOOM

PORTFOLIO

2017 - 2018



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Executive Overview



Donna Hall
Chief Executive,
Wigan Council

Last year was just fantastic for our in Bloom programme. Not only were we given a gold

rating in Britain in Bloom, the highest accolade that can be awarded to an authority, we were also crowned the overall winner in the large city category and scooped an award for the environment for demonstrating responsible management of resources and high quality sustainable landscaping practices.

That's not to mention the 19 in Bloom groups that had their own success in the It's Your Neighbourhood Awards including Hindley Community Allotment and Garden Society who were rated outstanding and won Best Overall Winner and Best Small Neighbourhood. Nine groups in total were rated outstanding.

Since that success our in Bloom programme has flourished and this year I'm proud to say we have 31 groups entering the neighbourhood awards. I wish them all the very best of luck.

In Bloom really does personify everything we're trying to achieve in Wigan through The Deal. It's our informal contract with residents to both pledge to work together to build a better borough. And the In Bloom volunteers certainly do their bit of The Deal.

By being part of a group they're not only cleaning up communities, and making them more attractive, but they're making friends, enjoying themselves and staying fit and healthy.

It was brilliant the judges recognised The Deal in their feedback and how this is making a real difference in our borough.

I'm very grateful for all the hard work our volunteers do and I'm glad we're able to keep supporting them. It's brilliant to once again be part of North West in Bloom this year and I know our groups will do us proud.



Cllr Chris Ready
Wigan Council cabinet
member for Communities
and Neighbourhoods

All the planting and pruning was worth it after we walked away with a gold medal in last year's Britain in Bloom. It was

a huge team effort with everyone from volunteers, businesses, council staff and residents really coming together to get the borough looking great.

We are extremely fortunate to have so many excellent volunteers in Wigan borough who dedicate an enormous amount of time to in Bloom. Without them we wouldn't have enjoyed so much success and it's all down to their dedication.

These groups are crucial to having neighbourhoods of which we can be proud and help make our borough such an attractive place to live.

Last year was a fantastic year for us and we were delighted to be awarded gold at Britain in Bloom. Since then our volunteer numbers have increased and we have more groups than ever entering the It's Your Neighbourhood category.

Despite facing challenges our groups have really embraced The Deal and are doing their part to make where they live a better place.

This is the first year In Bloom has been in my portfolio as a cabinet member and I'm really looking forward to meeting the judges and showcasing our beautiful borough. I can't wait to meet all the volunteers on the judging days and congratulate them for the work they do.

Meet the team and our partners

Meet the team

Alex Baracscai
Media Officer

Jonathon Bilsborough
Analyst

Mike Cheers
Greenspaces Manager

Lee Connor
Town Centre Manager

Michael Fishwick
Greenspace Development Officer

Ben Foster
Operational and Technical Manager

Dave Green
Graphic Designer and Photographer

Chris Hayes
Operational and Technical Manager

Matthew Kelly
Service Manager - Street Scene
Services

Mike King
Greenspaces Manager

Cliff Millard
ProCo Landscape Manager

Danny Orrell
Team Leader Network Management

Arthur Price
Waste Service Supervisor

Martin Purcell
Greenheart Project Officer

Joanne Ramdewor
Greenspace Development Officer

Ian Sayer
Greenspace Service Manager

Tracey Williams
Borough in Bloom Co-Ordinator

Our partners and supporters

Adactus Housing

Aldi, Leigh

Allotment societies

Better Neighbourhood Fund

Boroughwide Community Network

Brighter Borough Fund

Bulldog Tools

Canals and Rivers Trust

Children's Centres, schools and colleges

Community and voluntary organisations

Conservation volunteers

Estate volunteers

Eyes of the Estate Group

Greenheart

Heritage Lottery

Incredible Edible

Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles

Keep Britain Tidy

Kings Seeds

Lancashire Wildlife Trust

Leigh Neighbours Project

Local businesses

Magnum Furniture

Markets

Moss Bank Nurseries

Natural England

Probation Services

Riverside Housing

Royal Horticultural Society

Shevington and District Parish Council

Spinning Gate Shopping Centre

Suttons Seeds

Tenants and residents groups

The Galleries Shopping Centre

The Grand Arcade Shopping Centre

The Prince's Trust

Thompson & Morgan

Wigan and Leigh Community Safety
Team

Wigan Council elected members

Wigan and Family Local History Society

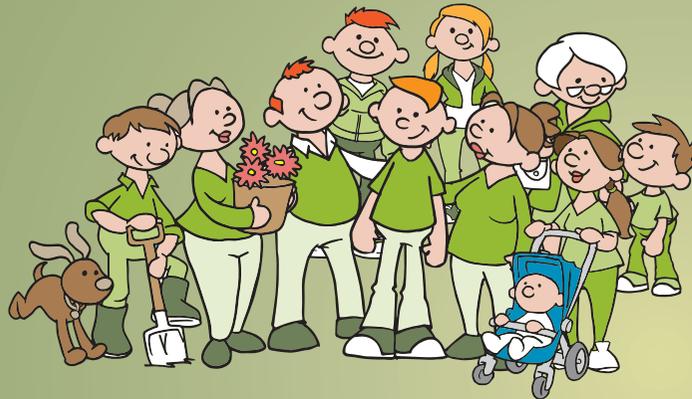
Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh NHS Trust

And all the people of Wigan Borough

Key Stats

In Bloom Community Groups

- More than 30 active community groups across the borough
- More than 20,000 community hours completed between 1st April 2016 and 31st March 2017. This gives an 'in-kind' value of over £245,000
- Between 1st April 2016 and 31st March 2017 community groups have raised over £85,000 in sponsorship and funding
- Throughout 2016 our communities received 39 environment-related awards
- 25 It's Your Neighbourhood entrants for 2017, an increase of approximately 56% compared to 2016



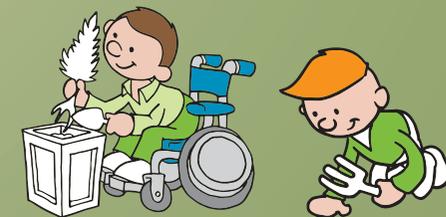
Wigan Council's Greenspaces team:

- Mow 3million square metres of grass per week
- 19 formal parks
- 4 Green Flag parks
- 24% of borough's schools are Eco Schools



Grow Your Own Incredible Edible projects since January 2017

- Over 17,000 seeds sown
- Over 70 hours spent with primary school children showing them how to sow seeds, transplant seedlings and look after plants
- 16 adults took part in a 12 week course showing them how to sow seeds, transplant seedlings and look after plants



Recycling

- 43.68% of all waste is recycled



Our Awards 2016

It's Your Neighbourhood Awards	
2 - 8 Brookdale Road, Hindley	Level 4 - Thriving
Abram Centenary Garden	Level 5 - Outstanding
Ambergate Gardens, Atherton	Level 4 - Thriving
Appley Bridge in Bloom	Level 4 - Thriving
Atherton in Bloom	Level 3 - Advancing
Cansfield Estate, Ashton in Makerfield	Level 5 - Outstanding
Crooke Village	Level 5 - Outstanding
Friends of Ashton Community Garden	Best New Landscape 2016
Friends of Ashton Community Garden	Level 5 - Outstanding
Friends of Kirkless Nature Reserve	Level 4 - Thriving
Friends of Mesnes Park	Level 4 - Thriving
Hindley Community Allotment and Garden Society	Level 5 - Outstanding
Hindley Community Allotment and Garden Society	Best Overall Entry
Hindley Community Allotment and Garden Society	Best Small Neighbourhood
Howe Bridge in Bloom	Gold - Large Village
Ingleside Residents and Friends, Tyldesley	Level 3 - Advancing
Mosley Common in Bloom	Level 5 - Outstanding
Selby Court, Leigh	Level 3 - Advancing
Shevington in Bloom	Level 5 - Outstanding
St Philips C of E Primary School, Atherton	The Environmental Award for Schools 2016
Standish in Bloom	Silver - Large Town
Stubshaw Cross residents Group	Level 4 - Thriving
The Bluebell, Atherton	Level 5 - Outstanding
Wigan Borough in Bloom	Gold & Category Winner - Large City
Wigan Flashes Local Nature Reserve	Level 5 - Outstanding
Worsley Hall Allotments	Level 3 - Advancing



Aims and objectives - The Deal for the Future; confident place, confident people, confident council

The Deal for the Future

As set out in the Deal for the Future, the council's corporate strategy to 2020, we want to create a confident place with confident people.

We want to build pride and belief in Wigan as the borough of choice to live and enjoy an excellent quality of life.

We'll do this by continuing to work with our vibrant and diverse communities, building on community assets and growing capacity through investing in our communities..

Through place-based working we'll look at what assets a community has and use them to strengthen it and build pride.

In the future, whilst the council will retain a pivotal role in place shaping – it is clear that its delivery will only be best achieved by enabling and supporting residents and communities to play their role in shaping their place.

Through The Deal we want to:

- Make the borough a clean, green place to live, work and visit
- Nurture an environment where people feel safe
- Create prosperous town centres where people want to visit and shop
- Encourage communities to be self-sustaining
- Raise the aspirations of residents



Our environmental objectives are to:

- Develop the town centres
- Enhance neighbourhoods
- Strengthen communities
- Ensure resources are deployed to the areas that need them most
- Challenge behaviours to increase awareness and respect for the environment
- Reduce litter and waste
- Increase recycling
- Reduce food waste

Our priorities for 2017/2018 are:

- Invest in the appearance of our town centres
- Encourage communities to create Incredible Edible Wigan projects
- Promote initiatives such as Fur Clemp Café's, "feed bellies not bins"
- Improve links with businesses and opportunities through Borough in Bloom
- Promote Borough in Bloom and environmental initiatives through press and social media
- Encourage residents to support their local market traders
- Develop SSSI locations
- Maintain Green Pennant sites
- Develop Green Flag parks
- Publish the Allotment Strategy
- Continue to support our existing In Bloom voluntary groups and encourage more areas to get involved





A



Section A : Horticultural Achievements

Assessing year round horticulture, including conservation and natural areas.



The planters and baskets were all well planted and maintained once more. The area at The Wiend has been greatly improved this year, with a lot of the old shrubs and grasses removed, replaced by geraniums which certainly adds more colour to the area. The maintenance around here was also to a higher standard this year. The bedding displays in Mesnes Park are also quite stunning and a real feature as you walk through here to the recently restored fountain. The judges were also shown the newly restored rose garden in the park and this area was very well planted and maintained.



Britain in Bloom Feedback 2016



A1 : Impact : Design, colours, appropriate choice of plants, special features, presentation and innovation

Summer Planting Schemes

In summer Moss Bank Nurseries plant up and maintain over 1,000 planters across the borough. We work closely with Moss Bank Nurseries and each year carefully select our plants to give long-lasting seasonal colour, as well as a variety of trailing and non-trailing plants to maximise the overall coverage of flowers. Planters and planting are chosen to fit the aesthetics of the area in which they are located. There are a variety of planters including guardrail, hook-over, ground, tiered, hanging baskets and cycle containers. They all contribute to making the borough a better place in which to live, work and visit. In some instances, as part of Wigan Council's The Deal, businesses, in bloom groups and residents take ownership of the planters and water them through the summer months. Going forward into 2018, we hope to build on this good work by creating sponsorship packages for local business so they can support with ongoing maintenance. This will help to reduce our year on year costs and help make Wigan Borough in Bloom sustainable into the future.

After the summer period is over we will be liaising closely with Moss Bank Nurseries to discuss the planting themes for 2018 and we are hoping to introduce more herbs as part of Wigan's Incredible Edible Wigan campaign.



Guardrail planter

Planting schedule

Wigan Borough in Bloom is an all-year round initiative. Our summer schedule is between June and September and for winter/spring it's between January and May. Like many local authorities, Wigan has had to make significant savings over recent years and one way to achieve this without sacrificing the quantity of planters, was to not plant in autumn. Over the past two years, the changing climate has meant that some of our summer planters have lasted until late November/early December when the frosts arrive. All winter planters are planted with additional spring bulbs to extend the season.

The vast majority of our planters are annual, but we do have a significant number of ground planters that have permanent, perennial planting. These are supplemented with annuals to enhance the planters colour and appearance throughout the seasons. Perennial plants such as phormiums are chosen for their year round structure, whilst herbaceous plants such as phylloglossum and hemerocallis are chosen for their unusual striking colour and long flowering periods.



Wigan Town Hall

Borsdane Roundabout

For many years the 1970's shopping precinct on Borsdane Avenue in Hindley had been a blight on the landscape. The precinct has now been replaced by a smart shopping complex with new social housing.

There was one area that was still subject to many complaints by local residents and that was the nearby traffic roundabout.

A group of residents acquired investment from their elected members' Brighter Borough funding. Wigan Council's Greenspaces Team provided their labour for free using the staff volunteer scheme to clear the roundabout of self-seed trees, overgrown shrubs and brambles. Once the area was cleared, local residents planted a selection of phormiums, cordylines, photinia and grasses. The area was mulched with bark chippings that were a by-product from locally felled trees.



Borsdane Avenue Roundabout

A2 - Horticultural Practice : Cultivation and maintenance, quality of plants, sustainability and new planting

Moss Bank Nurseries

Moss Bank Nurseries has been selected as the main contractor to deliver in Bloom planting across Wigan borough for the past six years and we now work together with other local community groups and businesses which have led to Moss Bank winning various awards for their generosity. They have also been awarded contracts from neighbouring authorities due to the excellent standard of planting seen in Wigan. Shevington Parish Council has also recently selected Moss Bank as their main contractor for displays within their village.

The Wigan Borough in Bloom Co-ordinator works directly with all contractors to ensure the quality of planting is at its best.

All new perennial beds are planted with low maintenance, high impact species and all our annual planting is recycled at the end of each season and turned into compost for landscaping schemes.

Any perennial plants used in the autumn / winter planters are offered free to community groups for planting in public areas.



Business Involvement

Wigan Council's Business Engagement Team work alongside the business sector to encourage participation in the in Bloom programme.

In 2018 there will be a formal sponsorship process for business to choose from dependant on the size and type of their particular business. Options to choose from will include buying and maintaining planters near their premises, taking on the maintenance costs of existing planters near their premises, or sponsoring Wigan's many In Bloom community groups.

Wigan Council's in Bloom garden competition is sponsored by local businesses including Bulldog Tools, Magnum Furniture and Moss Bank Nurseries. Vouchers are awarded to winning gardens. This year Thompson & Morgan and Kings Seeds have also agreed to donate packets of seeds to our winners.



A3 - Residential & Community Gardening : Residential, communal areas, allotments, public buildings, grounds of churches and schools, car parks etc.

In Bloom Garden Competition

On 1st April 2017, Wigan Council's Arms Length Management Organisation, Wigan and Leigh Homes, was taken back in-house, so Wigan Council now manages its own housing stock.

A key priority for Wigan Council was to allow residents the same opportunities that were previously only open to Council tenants, this has meant that the annual garden competition is, for the first time ever, open to all residents within the Wigan Borough, regardless of tenure.

The same group of volunteers will run the garden competition and they are looking forward to working with private residents.

There are still a variety of categories to cater for differing types and sizes of gardens.

The judges will look at how each resident has made the most of the available space, using their gardening skills and design talents, including growing their own plants from seed, floral displays and imaginative use of planting.

The categories for this year are:

- Best traditional garden
- Best ornamental garden
- Best communal garden
- Best hanging baskets or containers
- Best fruit and vegetable garden
- Best neighbourhood

The winner of each of the categories will be considered for the coveted title of Best Individual Garden or Best Communal/Community Garden.

All winners receive their prizes, which are donated by local businesses, at a special awards ceremony. This year, the In Bloom Garden Competition Awards Ceremony will be merged with the Borough in Bloom Big Thank You event.



A3 - Residential & Community Gardening : Residential, communal areas, allotments, public buildings, grounds of churches and schools, car parks etc.

It's Your Neighbourhood

This year has seen a significant rise in the number of separate It's Your Neighbourhood entrants into North West in Bloom.

2 – 8 Brookdale Road

2 – 8 Brookdale Road are a small group of bungalows in Hindley. Formal flowerbeds have been created in various geometric designs using roses and annual bedding plants. The railings along the area have been planted up to compliment the flowerbeds creating synergy and harmony.

13 – 29 Brookdale Road

13 – 29 Brookdale Road is a block of flats in Hindley. A group of residents work alongside each other in the garden to help maintain it. The aim of our garden is to provide a happy place for residents and their families to enjoy the surroundings.

As well as a seating area where residents can sit outside and socialise, the garden has different areas; the first being the vegetable bed and fruit trees. The residents grow a large variety to cater to everyone's individual tastes.

The second part of the garden is a dedicated wildlife area. It contains two small ponds containing frogs, toads and dragonflies. We also cater for a large amount of birds and bats.

We rely on donations of plants and equipment and try to upcycle unwanted materials as much as possible to make our garden sustainable.

Abram Centenary Garden

The concept of a Centenary Garden for Abram was first discussed in 2007 at a local tenants and residents association. Concern was raised about the possibility of houses being built on a small parcel of land opposite the church.

A lease was obtained from Wigan Council and funding was received from Fairshare Lottery Community Foundation for a community garden and also a carpark at the side of where the garden will be.

The planning of the garden coincided with the centenary year of a local mining disaster. On 18th August 1908, 76 miners were killed in an explosion at the local Maypole Colliery. There were only three survivors. This disaster was at the forefront of the minds of Abram Tenants and Residents Association members when they were deciding on a name. It was a fitting tribute to name it 'Abram Centenary Garden'.

Construction work, including new railings and footpaths commenced in April 2009 and a community planting day was organised for June 2009.

The main principle of the garden is that it is open to the community at all times, it is not locked and it is used all the year round. The garden has become a central hub for the community and it is used for community events, including a 'Carols in the Garden' event each Christmas. During summer months, local community members have also enjoyed an afternoon picnic in the garden with music provided by a local brass band.

The most notable community event that has taken place in the garden was that held in August 2014; a ceremony organised for the unveiling of a memorial dedicated to Lieutenant Colonel John Elisha Grimshaw, a Victoria Cross holder, born and bred in Abram. This event was attended by descendants of the Grimshaw family, the Mayor of Wigan, numerous members of the armed forces and of course, members of the local community.



A3 - Residential & Community Gardening : Residential, communal areas, allotments, public buildings, grounds of churches and schools, car parks etc.

Friends of Ambergate and Ingleside

Ambergate, Atherton and Ingleside, Tyldesley are housing complexes specifically designed to meet the needs of older people. In both schemes there is a small, core group of residents who help to maintain the gardens and create features to their own tastes. Most of the residents use the gardens when it is nice weather and help out to maintain the gardens. The communal gardens are a good meeting place for all residents. Adactus Housing Association, who manage the schemes, believe that the benefits of gardening are seemingly endless, both mentally and physically. Not only can planting bulbs, digging trenches and pruning roses vastly improve physical health, but it can also improve mental health too.

Cansfield Estate

The main focus of the residents of Cansfield Estate in Ashton-in-Makerfield is to keep their neighbourhood spotlessly clean. Through their partnership working and neighbourliness they were recognised by the council as an example of the 'perfect street'. Each year the residents co-ordinate their hanging baskets in a show of unity and this year 200 have been installed. This demonstrates their community spirit, pride and brings people closer together, resulting in a cleaner, greener and tidier place to live. The residents take part in regular clean up campaigns and estate inspections to ensure that their estate is always looking its best.

St Philips Primary School

St Philips Primary School are continuing to build on last year's work. The experience gained has allowed us to maintain the high standard of planting across the school site. The children from as young as four grow food to supply their own salad bar as well as stocking their 'No Miles' produce stall and help create exciting new gardens and outside learning environments.

All the children are encouraged to get involved with the planting around school and over at Blue Bell Corner where a group of children go every week to help maintain the area by weeding and litter picking.

The school has achieved a great deal this year which started with the sale of home grown soup and soup recipe book. The school now has three fully functioning growing areas, one for each key stage. All contain both edible produce and flowers. The school are currently running a pumpkin growing competition. The children planted and took home their own pumpkin and have an class pumpkin that is left in school. Parents and relatives have engaged with this activity and send in regular pictures and questions about their precious plant. This is proving to be a very successful venture that has captured a wide and varied audience in the community. Gardening Club children have started to learn about using different plants for different areas and conditions, plus why this is necessary. They have looked at plants for shade, perennials and succulents.



Ambergate



Cansfield Estate



St Philips Primary School

A3 - Residential & Community Gardening : Residential, communal areas, allotments, public buildings, grounds of churches and schools, car parks etc.

Stubshaw Cross Residents Group

Stubshaw Cross Residents Group was established in August 2002 with a general remit to secure improvements for Stubshaw Cross. The group don't just work on environmental projects, they have, over a number of years successfully run summer activities schemes.

The group hold regular reminiscence sessions and history nights for the older end of the community. The group have secured well over £300,000 funding for the area since 2003 and at least £250,000 has been spent on environmental initiatives.

The Heritage Garden is a visible entrance point to Stubshaw Cross and is used for heritage walks, school projects and local history initiatives provided by volunteers. The project won an Urban Design award in 2010 from Wigan Council and made best use of recycled materials such as old bricks, cobble stones, recycled trees, sandstone plinth and timber from sustainable plantations. The garden is the venue for inter-denominational church services at Easter and in Summer.

Selby Court

Selby Court is another housing complex designed for retirement living.

Residents of the Selby Court started to take an interest in the garden at the entrance the reception in 2015. Plants have either been donated or bought from local suppliers and different features have been added to the garden over the years.



A3 - Residential & Community Gardening : Residential, communal areas, allotments, public buildings, grounds of churches and schools, car parks etc.

Allotments

Wigan Council has 13 statutory and 34 non-statutory allotment sites which total individual 615 plots. There average waiting time for an allotment in the borough is between four and seven years. Typical rents are between £25 and £41 per year, dependant on the tenants age. Allotments are meant to be for growing good, but unfortunately some are neglected or misused by either tenants sorting building materials on them, allowing them to become overgrown, or using them as garden extensions.

In line with the Deal for the Future, Wigan Council is looking at the current allotment strategy and how it best fits a changing world.

Allotments generally contribute directly to the health and wellbeing of residents. Wigan Council is looking to work in partnership with the community and voluntary sector to align provision to match need and demand. It aims to be this by making the offer more flexible by introducing smaller plots, thereby creating more to meet demand. We are also looking into the option of community and voluntary sector taking over sites following Wigan's already established Community Asset Transfer process. By implementing these changes, in conjunction with our existing tenants, we aim for the allotment provision in the borough to be cost-neutral to the council in future years. Money saved in the interim could be used on refurbishing existing allotment sites to bring unused plots back into use.



A3 - Residential & Community Gardening : Residential, communal areas, allotments, public buildings, grounds of churches and schools, car parks etc.

Hindley Community Allotment and Garden Society

Hindley Community Allotment and Garden Society have been in existence since autumn 2012. They have turned a piece of barren, contaminated land into a colourful oasis. The first time they entered into North West in Bloom was 2013 and they achieved Level 5 Outstanding, which they have attained every year since. In 2016 they received the Best Small Neighbourhood Award and also the 2016 Best Overall Entry out of 236 gardens judged.

Each year the group try different planting and introduce new ideas. This year has seen the introduction of Rd Mason bees and an elaborate bug hotel, along with a wildflower meadow which replaced the dahlia bed.

The members of the group encourage anyone who has an interest in growing their own vegetables and have recently taken under their wing some teenagers who have been given a plot to share.

The more experienced growers volunteer regularly and offer their advice, expertise and knowledge to new growers from across the borough.



A3 - Residential & Community Gardening : Residential, communal areas, allotments, public buildings, grounds of churches and schools, car parks etc.

Mesnes Park Community Allotments

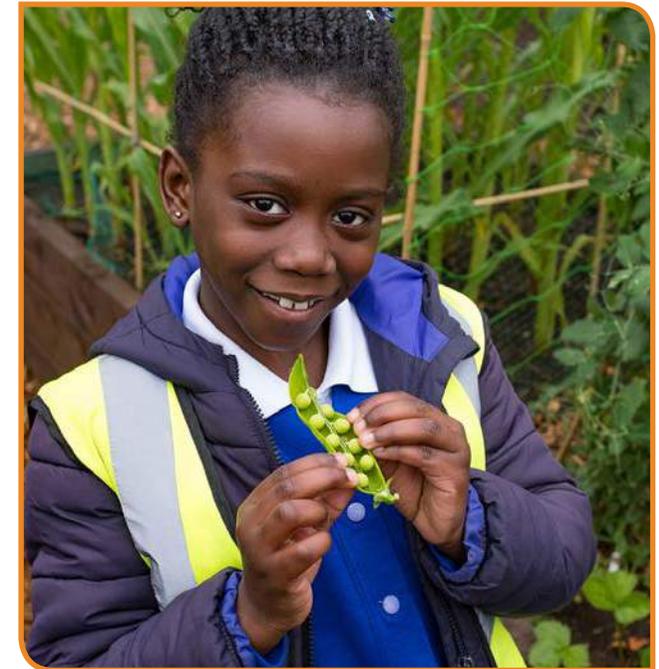
Mesnes Community Allotments began as part of Wigan Council's Active Living project as a community allotment for tenants and residents throughout the whole of the Wigan borough. The allotment consisted of 3 raised beds and a polytunnel. The project was fortunate to be able to use the existing portacabin that was on site.

In 2014 the project as it stood ended and the volunteers that had been there throughout took it over, it was run purely on a voluntary basis with all work being done and funded by the attendees when required. The improvements were slow due to lack of income, but there was no way of generating income at that time.

Over the years, materials left around the site were commandeered for the allotment. Bricks, boulders, York stone paving and scrap wood have all been recycled to improve the space and enabled the group to create extra raised beds.

In 2016 the allotment was used for a ten week introduction to growing your own fruit and vegetables by the Royal Horticultural Society. The project was funded by the Better Neighbourhood Fund. Mesnes Community Allotments were joined by members from another new scheme, Garden Warriors. The course was facilitated by the RHS, supported by staff from Wigan & Leigh Homes and experienced allotment plot holders from Hindley Community Allotments and Hope Carr Allotments. The sessions meant that Mesnes Community Allotments flourished with so many more helpers. The confidence of the members is attributable to the course, the knowledge they gained has enabled them to totally re-design the polytunnel, raised beds and incorporate fun design themes to the area.

One of the key achievements was the completion of the giant herb spiral which began as a mound of rubble and rubbish that had accumulated over time.



A3 - Residential & Community Gardening : Residential, communal areas, allotments, public buildings, grounds of churches and schools, car parks etc.

Edible Appley Bridge

This year, Appley Bridge in Bloom has added an Incredible Edible project to their portfolio. The site offers free vegetables, fruit and herbs for the community to take as they please. Local schools and uniform groups in the area are encouraged to visit. The Brownies have recently used the site so they can earn their Gardening Badge.



Incredible Edible Aspull

Aspull in Bloom are another 'traditional' In Bloom group that have embraced the ethos of Incredible Edible. The group secured funding to turn a very much overgrown patch of land into a haven of healthiness.

Local primary schools took part in Wigan Council's Grow Your Own Incredible Edible project. Over a three month period the pupils learned how to sow seeds and look after the tender, young plants. The final session was planting everything in the Incredible Edible site. Local residents are now able to pick their own vegetables.



A4 - Business Areas & Premises :

Retail and shopping areas, leisure sites, transport terminals, car parks, farms rural businesses, pubs, post offices, tourist areas/attractions, offices and estate agents.

Friends of Hindley Station

Friends of Hindley Station were formed in 2007 and their aim was always to make the station a nicer place to visit and travel from.

Local residents support the group by donating bulbs and plants. Tesco have also donated boxes of wild flower seeds as well as gladioli bulbs etc. Bickershaw Hall Nurseries and Hindley Rotary Club sponsor planters and flowerbeds. The group have also been successful in saving plants over winter and re-using them the following year.

The group themselves assist with Hindley Young Police Cadets during summer holidays and half terms and undertake local litter picks. They also raise funds for the local hospice and visit many community organisations to give talks and formal presentations on the work that they do.

Residents of Kildare Grange, a local sheltered housing scheme, hold an annual Strawberry Fayre to raise funds for the station and the group reciprocate by organising a Christmas party for them.

Local school children have taken part in planting days at the station which the group hope will give the children a sense of ownership. The group are mentoring another local train station who has just established their own 'Friends of' group.



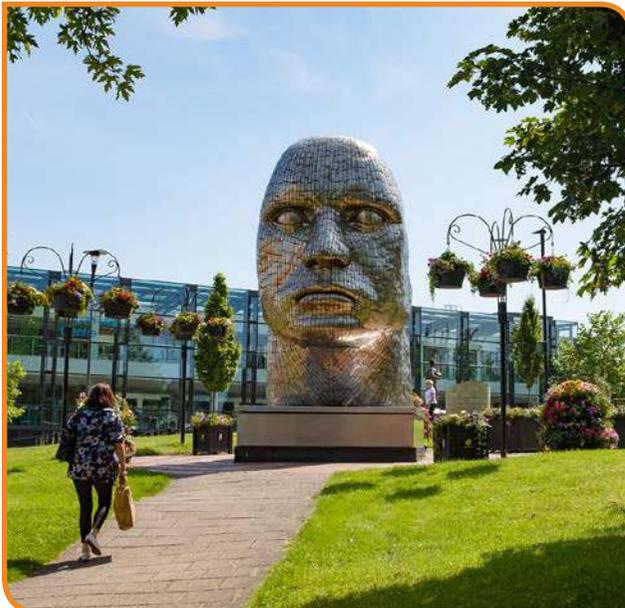
A4 - Business Areas & Premises :

Retail and shopping areas, leisure sites, transport terminals, car parks, farms rural businesses, pubs, post offices, tourist areas/attractions, offices and estate agents.

Believe Square / The Wiend

The Wiend in Wigan Town Centre has, over recent years, become the focal point for shoppers and visitors alike. Wigan Council has transformed what was once a dull lifeless area into the heart of our main town centres. Additionally "The Face" artwork has seen more and more people using the space and the new Wigan Life Centre has ensured that The Wiend is one of the busiest areas of the town centre. The focal flowerbeds are sponsored by Moss Bank Nurseries, and replanted annually by different voluntary groups.

Local restaurant, Gallimores, has created their own flower beds adjacent to their outdoor seating area. There is an informal mix of bedding plants creating a kaleidoscope of colours which contrasts to the formal planting around the square.



Grand Arcade

The Grand Arcade is the main shopping destination in Wigan Town Centre.

At the entrance to the facility there are planters to enhance the appearance and draw visitors in. The top storey car park has planting features around the edge to soften the landscape. The entrance to the carpark also has large planters to enhance the area.



A4 - Business Areas & Premises :

Retail and shopping areas, leisure sites, transport terminals, car parks, farms rural businesses, pubs, post offices, tourist areas/attractions, offices and estate agents.

Leigh Town Centre Public Realm Improvements

The council is investing close to £1m in the regeneration of Leigh town centre which will mean significant improvements to Bradshawgate and Albion Street.

High quality block paving, new modern seating, LED lighting and tree planters will transform the centre of Leigh creating a much more attractive space for shoppers, visitors and businesses.

The outdoor market stalls will relocate to a central location on Bradshawgate with increased visibility and improved access to the stalls. This will give an improved profile to the outdoor market and create a better approach to the indoor market along Albion Street.

The new lighting will feature floor mounted lights on the seating and lighting in the trees which can change colour remotely to reflect events or seasons.

It is hoped the investment will create more footfall into the town centre, increased business rates and take up of vacant properties and a reduction in maintenance cost to the council by using high quality paving.

Leigh town centre hosts popular events throughout the year including an inaugural 10K run, Christmas lights switch-on, international markets, Armed Forces Day parades, street velodrome, and a whole host of summer street entertainment.

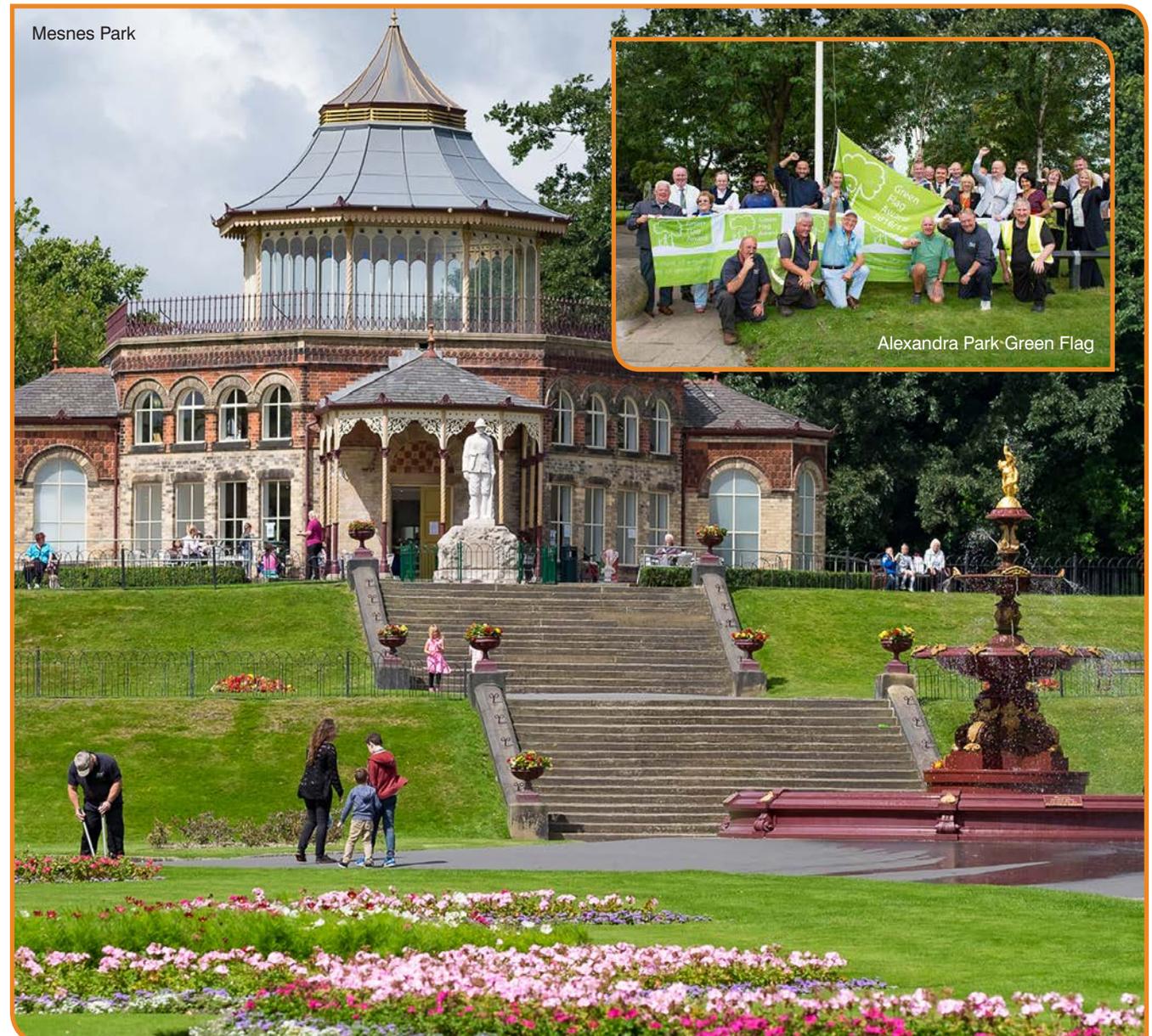


Artist's Impression - Bradshawgate Leigh

A5 - Green Spaces : Verges, parks and open public spaces

The Wigan borough has vast swathes of parks and open public spaces. This is made up of:

- 19 formal parks
- 10 countryside sites
- 44 playing fields
- 29 bowling greens
- 2 golf courses & 1 golf academy
- 9 cemeteries
- 10 war memorials
- 140 school grounds
- 500 hectares of recreational green space
- 150 hectares of council housing land
- 60 hectares of highway verges
- 4 Green Flag parks
- 4 sites of special scientific interest
- 89 Sites of Biological Importance
- 7 Local Nature Reserves
- 1500 hectares in countryside management



A5 - Green Spaces : Verges, parks and open public spaces

Friends of Ashton Community Garden

The community garden on Liverpool Road, Ashton in Makerfield has been an ongoing project for over ten years. Prior to the restoration, the area was derelict and overgrown and was an unsightly gateway into Ashton Town Centre off the M6.

In spring the area is awash with drifts of daffodils and crocus which are complimented by minimal, low-maintenance perennial shrubs and grasses.

There are native bluebells and snowdrops in the wooded areas and a new wildflower meadow has been created to encourage wildlife to visit.

Local school children have create a mosaic which will be planted up with seasonal flowers.

There is also a new remembrance garden created to commemorate those who lost their lives in World War One. An interpretation panel is set in an attractive cast iron framework featuring red poppies. This artwork is mirrored in the seating provision around the nearby trees.



Ashton Community Garden

Friends of Atherton Parks

Friends of Atherton Parks are a small volunteer group with the aim of improving the group is to improve the parks in the Atherton area, making them a more safe and approachable environment for all ages and abilities to enjoy. In the past 12 months the group have transformed Central Park into a safe, colourful, interactive place.

Successful funding bids to Age UK have enabled the group to regenerate the once well-known and well-loved rose garden. 124 roses have been planted and four 4 new arches installed. The group have also started to create an interactive sensory garden which, when complete, will house perennial plants including 24 lavender plants, grasses, herbs and honeysuckle. This area ignites all senses of touch, smell, sight and sound and will be blossoming all the year round, year on year and will hopefully be enjoyed by people of all ages and abilities. The group have installed an eight-sided bench in a key area of the park which allows a 360 degree view around the park and all the developing areas. An additional two benches have also been installed facing the new sensory garden and butterfly bed.



Ashton Community Garden



Atherton Cenotaph



Atherton Park

A5 - Green Spaces : Verges, parks and open public spaces

Blue Bell Garden

Atherton Environmental Projects started work on Blue Bell Garden in 2004. The garden is named after a local school.

Over the years the group worked with St Phillips Primary School to plant up the area. In winter of 2015 in conjunction with elected members it was agreed to make it more formal and an attractive entrance to Atherton town.

The area was leafleted to inform residents about what the aspirations for the area were and asking for volunteers and support.

Funding was secured for a willow figure to be sited in the centre circle as a focal point. This feature was chosen by the school children. A new bench and waste bin were also installed. The nearby trees were cut back to allow light into the area and make it safe for people to walk through. The area is planted up in summer and winter.

Unfortunately the original willow figure was vandalized and had to be removed, but the local community rallied and raised money to provide a replacement.



Collier's Corner, Howe Bridge

Created in 2002 by Atherton Environmental Projects, in conjunction with the Youth Offending Team, local residents and community groups.

In 2006 Wigan Council pledged the area to the village in recognition of the achievements of the volunteers and in 2009 the site was awarded a commendation in the Urban Design Awards. The area is a focal point in the North West in Bloom entries.

Green Flags have been awarded to the area for six consecutive years. In 2016, one of the Green Flag judges commented "I congratulate all involved, it is an outstanding example of how such strong partnership working can achieve exceptional results"

Over the years extra features have been added, such as the coal miner's truck and also the wicker pony which will be replaced in 2017.



A5 - Green Spaces : Verges, parks and open public spaces

Friends of Mesnes Park

Friends of Mesnes Park worked in partnership with what was Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust (now Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles) and Wigan Council to successfully secure £6.5 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund. This funding has been spent on renovating important features including the ornamental lake, pavilion and band stand, as well re-surfacing and better lighting.

The work that the group have carried out has also meant that Mesnes Park were awarded a Keep Britain Tidy Green Flag.

Alexandra Park

The park is split in two by Victoria Street. One side of the road consists of two bowling greens and a pavilion. The majority of the park is on the opposite side of the road and consists of a playing field including an informal sports pitch, a hard standing events area, a play area for 0-12 year olds, two tennis courts and an extreme sports facility.

Alexandra Park is well used recreational area, as well as hosting several events throughout the year.

Jubilee Park

Jubilee Park actually consists of two pockets of land situated either side of Wigan Road, covering 8.5 acres in total.

Originally swampy, they were known as the 'wombs' and were laid out and landscaped with the intention of them being named Victoria Park. However, when Lord Gerard officially opened the park in 1897 it coincided with Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee and the name was changed to Jubilee Park.

Facilities include a pavilion and toilets, tennis and basketball courts, grass pitches play areas, woodland area and a formal flower park.

Pennington Hall Park

A pretty community park with play areas, tennis courts, bowling greens and a band stand. Events take place in the park throughout the year, including a Last Night of the Proms event in September.

The park was presented to Leigh Corporation by local brewers Messer's George Shaw and Company Ltd in 1920 at a floral opening on Saturday 28th August 1920. The hall was used as a museum and art gallery and the grounds were adapted from the gardens of the hall and the work was carried out under an unemployment relief scheme.

The earliest records of a hall on the site are from 1200s when it was owned by the Pennington family; the last hall was demolished in 1963 when it was found to have dry rot.



Jubilee Park



Alexandra Park



Pennington Hall Park

Mesnes Park



B



Section B : Environmental Responsibility

Assessing year round activities improving environmental responsibility



The judges were agreed the Wigan Flashes sites and woodland/wildflower areas are perfect examples of how a managed natural habitat area blends in with a thriving area. The judges were most impressed with the eco-shopping centre and waste stations worthy of a special note.

Local heritage is cleverly portrayed, with numerous monuments as colourful focal points for relaxing, meeting and socialising. Managed well in design and maintenance, with ample signage and historical information boards.

All street furniture is in good condition and hard surfaces free from street clutter with design in mind for easy pedestrian usage.

Britain in Bloom Feedback 2016



B1 - Conservation and Biodiversity : Wildlife areas, natural habitats

Greenheart

Greenheart stretches from Leigh to Haigh Hall and includes parks, woodlands, wetlands, canals and green spaces.

Wigan's Greenheart area consists of wetlands along with a range of associated habitats including grassland on a restored post-industrial landscape due to coal mining. These grasslands have developed distinctive meadow vegetation and management by hay cutting has improved the quality of these habitats for biodiversity including bees and plants. The importance of meadows to bees is well known and the number of species using the Greenheart area is being measured by university students and volunteers in research studies and baseline surveys. Notable locations include the Wigan Flashes LNR and Highfield Moss SSSI, the latter has one of the region's highest colonies of solitary mining bees. The bumble bees in the Greenheart area are also recognised as maintaining good numbers with nesting colonies found at several locations. The abundance of available nectar created by involving the community in our work on the meadows provides a favourable conservation regime for these and other insects.

Since the 1970s Wigan Council and its partners have been working to improve these areas. Many have developed into natural environments over the years, rich in wildlife and diverse habitats. The canals that run through Greenheart have seen investment, along with other routes for walkers, cyclists and horse riders, and will join up the Greenheart sites.

Love My River

Love My River in Wigan is a project commissioned within the Action plan for the River Douglas Catchment Partnership by the Environment Agency.

The River Douglas project engages and manages volunteers in Wigan to deliver catchment walkovers, water quality surveys and environment improvements through small scale improvements to water bodies.

Love My River was recently successful in being awarded first prize in the Tesco Bags of help scheme following a public vote in local Tesco stores. The funding will allow us to run some environmental sessions with primary schools over the Spring/ Summer term 2018.

The work with schools will begin with "Mayflies in the Classroom" facilitated by the Wild Trout Trust, to provide an engaging classroom based project that educates children about the importance of clean rivers in regards to biodiversity. Participating schools will be encouraged to produce artwork, posters, videos and blogs that can be used as part of the wider project to educate their local community about steps that can be taken to improve water quality in the River Douglas. It is intended that by educating children about environmental issues their learning can be extended to the whole family changing behaviours for the whole household.



Water testing on a River Douglas tributary in Elnup Wood

Much of Greenheart is a designated wildlife corridor and can boast some of the most significant natural habitats in the region, including 4 Sites of Special Scientific Interest, 89 Sites of Biological Importance and 7 Local Nature Reserves.



GREENHEART JUBILEE WAY
 BEN HORNBY - GARETH EDWARDS - SCOTT FAIRBROTHER
 DAVID HOOK - CHRIS KELLY - GARY LAMB JOSEPH DARBY
 CHRIS ARMSTRONG - MIKE ORRELL - CRAIG MULLENS
 KATIE JACKSON - MICHAEL ASHCROFT - KARL MASON
 DANIEL O'DONNELL - HAZEL MAYOW - MARTIN PURCELL
 GERRY McEVOY - COLIN GREENHALGH - GARY MARSH
 DYLAN BARNES - GETHIN OWENS - ANTHONY SUTTON
 ANTHONY HORROCKS - EDDIE BOYLE - ANDREW DODD
 NATHAN TOPPING - DAVID WHITTLE - GEOFF ATHERTON
 THOMPSON DAGNALL - LEYTON DEWETT - PHILLIP WRIGHT
 GARETH SEDDON - JEFFREY DENNETT - PAUL ROBINSON

FRANK WILCOCK - ANDREW THORPE - THOMAS TURNER
 NIKKI DAVIES - CHRISTOPHER ANDERSON - NATHAN RILEY
 MARK HOLLAND - STEPHEN HIGHAM - ANTHONY O SHEA
 OLIVER HUNT - SARAH LALIEU - GLEN ALLAN - DAVID TRAN
 CHRIS STREET - PAUL COLLIER - MIKE BENT - TIM LYON
 JOHNATHAN MURRAY - GARY HAROLD - GARY JOHNSON
 PAUL SPENCER - KERRY ANDREWS - BRIAN RATCLIFFE
 NICK SINGER - STEVEN BAKER - JAMES BURTONWOOD
 MICHAEL DAVIES

PROJECT PARTNERS - GROUNDWORK
 WIGAN COUNCIL - CANAL & RIVER TRUST
 COALFIELDS REGENERATION TRUST



B1 - Conservation and Biodiversity : Wildlife areas, natural habitats

Carbon Landscape Programme

Wigan council is a partner in the Carbon Landscape Programme which is due to have its official launch in September 2017 at Astley Mining Museum.

'The Carbon Landscape – Restoring Greater Manchester Wetlands to the Community' will revitalise a landscape left devastated by decades of coal-mining and peat extraction and has received a grant of almost £2million from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

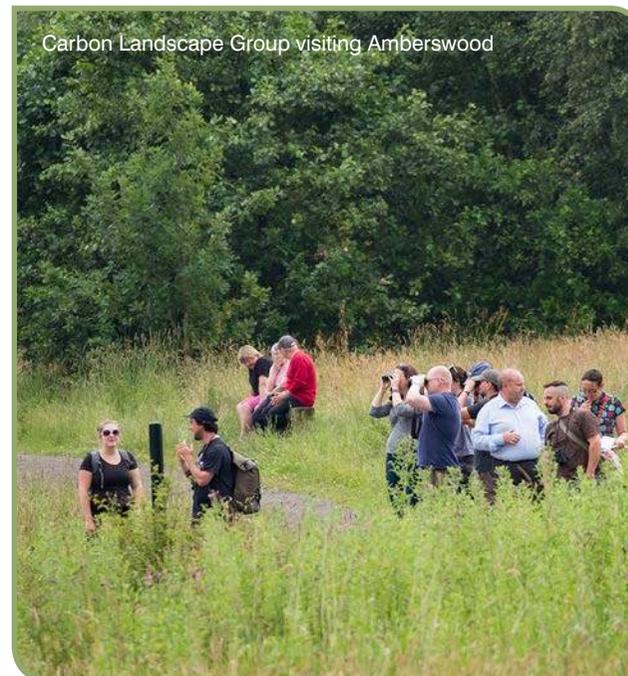
The five year scheme will work to restore key habitats and reconnect local people with their unique natural heritage, preserving it for future generations.

Wigan Council is one of the 13 key partners and stakeholders in the project who have already spent more than a year informing and consulting people on the proposed work to revitalise the landscape. A total of 22 targeted projects will work to combat threats facing the landscape, creating an integrated network of wetland habitats to support species and migration, and carrying out wildlife surveys to strengthen ecological networks and climate change resilience.

Visitors to the Carbon Landscape will be able to enjoy the health and well-being benefits of a walk in the countryside.

Activities from the project will include:

- Major landscape restoration programme.
- Creation of a Landscape Traineeship Scheme.
- Improved and increased volunteering opportunities through a training and rewards and recognition programme.
- Research and wildlife surveys to strengthen our ecological networks and climate change resilience.
- Improved access through the landscape with the development of the Carbon Trail.
- Increased appreciation of the importance of our landscape and the role carbon plays in its creation, exploitation and restoration.



Carbon Landscape Group visiting Amberswood



B1 - Conservation and Biodiversity : Wildlife areas, natural habitats

Former Bickershaw Colliery site

Wigan Borough has made tremendous progress with the reclamation and regeneration of the former coalfield areas and many significant sites have been transformed into sites with positive community uses.

Bickershaw was the last colliery to close in 1992 and funding has been secured to help reclaim the 247 hectare as a green haven to motivate, engage and enable local people to become more physically active.

Over the three years of the investment the site will undergo three phases of essential access and habitat improvements, establishing a clear and accessible path network, signage and safe entrances to enable the surrounding and wider community of Wigan and Leigh to discover this potentially fantastic resource.

A dedicated community engagement officer will be employed for the duration of the investment to reach into the local community, drawing out different groups through a targeted schedule of health, education, heritage and nature based events and activities on the site.

A new community allotment site has already been created on the eastern part of the site and a herd of Galloway cows was recently introduced.

Former Bedford Colliery Site

This site has benefited from the annual hay cut as part of the Higher Level Stewardship agreement with increased numbers of orchids and better recreational opportunities. The site acts as a link both for wildlife and the community to the areas of countryside around Lilford Woods and Park.

Former Cutacre Colliery Site

Cutacre is 96 hectares of land which comprises a mixture of meadows which are grazed by long-horned cattle which will increase the flower diversity and wetland to encourage wading birds and amphibians.

Eight ponds and 12 scrapes have been created to encourage more wildlife.

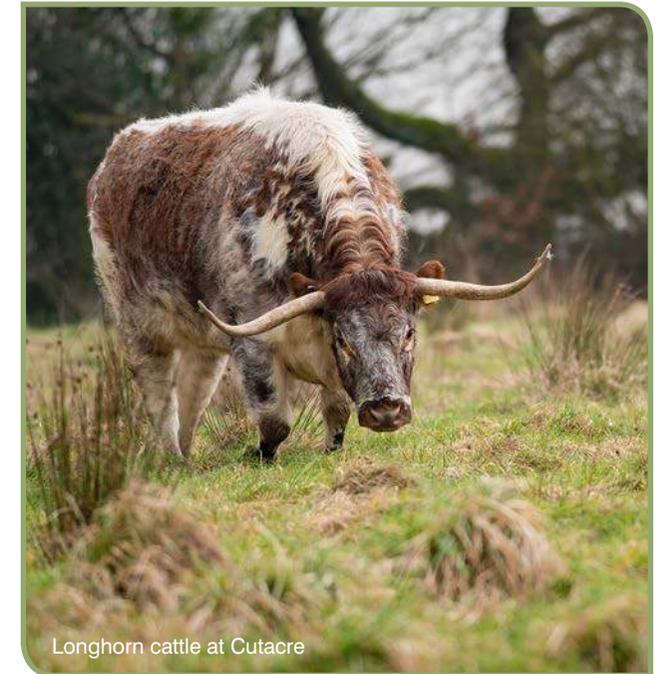
Hedgerows will also be improved to provide food and shelter for many species of plants and animals.

Astley Moss

This site is part of the important Manchester Mosslands Special Area of Conservation. There has been considerable work on the reserve; removing scrub and re-wetting. The area of mire building sphagnum has significantly increased due to recent work and this year sphagnum magellanicum was found. Round leaved sundew is also colonising much of the site and viviparous lizard is becoming more common.

Highfield Moss

This Site of Special Scientific Importance has been successfully re-wetted. This has been achieved by plastic piling dams and scrub removal, leading to an increase in sphagnum cover and areas of Cranberry.



Longhorn cattle at Cutacre



Bickershaw

B1 - Conservation and Biodiversity : Wildlife areas, natural habitats

Kirkless Friends Group

Kirkless Friends Group is a voluntary run organisation who supports the partnership between Wigan Council and Lancashire Wildlife Trust in maintaining and improving the area known as Kirkless Nature Reserve. They regularly organise Community Clean ups and collect cans and bottles in clear plastic bags for recycling.

Once a month they meet with Lancashire Wildlife Trust to carry out general maintenance such as cutting back brambles on overgrown paths and clearing out invasive species e.g. Himalayan balsam. The group have installed two Bee Banks which provide a habitat for individual Miner Bees. They have also created a Willow Tit habitat in the woods. The woodland has been improved by planting 200 saplings and 2000 native bulbs including blue bells, Lords and Ladies and wild garlic.

The group received 400 hedgerow plants from the woodland trust which will be planted later in the year. Any plants that they don't need will be shared with other groups. A Dawn Chorus walk proved successful earlier this year and they are hoping to organise a bat walk later in the year.



Kirkless

Friends of Amberswood

The group help to look after, maintain and improve the 160 hectare site with emphasis on improving the varied habitats that make up Amberswood to benefit the wildlife on site.

Amberswood is made up of a number of different habitats ranging from the Mossland, where funding was received from Natural England to help reclaim and conserve this valuable habitat, to the wildflower meadows where the volunteers collected yellow rattle from another site and dispersed the seed on the field to help with species diversity in this area.

Mossland is now an internationally threatened habitat and in the Greater Manchester area there is less than 100ha of wet mossland left. Contractors have been on site over the past few weeks carrying out work to re-wet parts of the mossland through the creation of bunds and ditches so that water levels can rise to the best height to ensure the growth of bog vegetation. Dams have also been created to isolate the mossland from outside ground water influence to maintain a higher water table.

The group also engage a local farmer once a year to help harvest the field for biodiversity including bees and plants. Woodland blocks, reedbeds and numerous water bodies on site provide research opportunities for ecology students from Edge Hill University.

The Friends Group invite local schools out for environmental studies, pond dipping etc. On one day alone they had a group of 90 children. They are also engaged in a consortium with Wigan Flashes and Kirkless group where, under the support of Lancashire Wildlife Trust, they obtained funding to create a route that people can walk or cycle, which takes them through all three reserves with way markers and interpretation boards. The routes will also be on their websites for people to download.



Amberswood

B1 - Conservation and Biodiversity : Wildlife areas, natural habitats

Wigan Flashes Local Nature Reserve

The area has 10 km of paths around the site where people can enjoy the peace and quiet of the countryside, rich wildlife and diverse habitat.

There are eight shallow wetlands or 'Flashes' in the area, which formed as a result of mining subsidence. Native tree species were planted as part of a reclamation scheme that began 40 years ago. Over the years, and with careful maintenance, the industrial landscape has developed forming a mixture of beautiful habitats including open water, reed beds and moss land.

The area has an abundance of wildlife, including water vole, willow tit and bittern. Key habitats include open water, swamp, scrub and woodland. The area's rich biodiversity and value as a local amenity and resource for education and awareness makes it an important area for protection.

Wigan Council, Lancashire Wildlife Trust and the established Wigan Flashes Conservation and Community Group are continuing to work in partnership to ensure the area develops as one of the most important wildlife sites in the North West.



Wigan Flashes

Public Rights of Way

Wigan Council is responsible for the management of 480km of public footpaths and bridleways throughout the borough. Maintenance is carried out on priority routes which link residential areas, schools and local amenities twice a year. Work is also carried out on footpaths and bridleways which link country parks, green corridor routes and other key facilities.

The aim of Wigan Council is to have a well-connected, safe and inclusive Rights of Way network which improves accessibility which can be used for leisure to support a healthy and sustainable community and a dynamic economy.

A number of bridleways and cycle paths have been created and legally designated.



Public Bridleway

Education

The Environmental Education Team continues to promote the topic of biodiversity to schools through the Eco-Schools programme. The latest eco news and information is shared with schools via a termly Eco-Schools Newsletter which includes links to campaigns, funding opportunities, educational visits (both within Wigan Borough and beyond) as well as support offered by Wigan Council such as one to one visits, assemblies and lessons within school. Schools are also invited to attend two Eco-Schools workshops for teachers and an annual Eco-Schools Conference, where schools can find out the latest eco information, share good practice and meet a range of service providers.

As part of The Deal, schools are actively encouraged to take part in borough wide clean ups, not only to improve the aesthetics and cleanliness in and around the school grounds, but to help create safer habitats for nature.



Eco Warriors - Ince CE primary School

B2: Resource Management : Recycling, minimising demand placed on natural resources and any harmful impact on the environment

The Grand Arcade

The Grand Arcade shopping centre in Wigan was the first carbon neutral shopping centre to be built in the UK.

The centre has a green roof which attracts a natural habitat in an urban area, insulates the building and helps to harvest rainwater.

The Grand Arcade has no mechanical heating or cooling systems in place and only natural ventilation is used.

All waste from the shops is collected throughout the day and put through various processes to ensure that it is 100% recycled and nothing goes to landfill.



B2: Resource Management : Recycling, minimising demand placed on natural resources and any harmful impact on the environment

Recycling

A key part of The Deal is to recycle more, recycle right and thanks to resident's recycling efforts so far we have kept council tax low. During 2016/17 the recycling rate rose slightly to 43.68%, therefore, maintaining the level of recycling against a backdrop of falling national rates. We also have plans to implement new collection changes which we hope will further increase our recycling rate to our target of 50%.

Around three quarters of the waste created by householders is collected at the kerbside, so changes to this service have the greatest potential to help residents to recycle more.

Following a review of the most cost effective way to deliver services in 2016/17 it was agreed to move to a three weekly, (black bin / refuse) collection, which will be launched in late September 2017. By collecting our paper/card, mixed recycling and residual waste on a three weekly rota (whilst maintaining the co-collection of food/garden waste fortnightly) we can maximise staff resources whilst optimising the capacity of vehicles and wheeled bin storage. More pertinently, there is a wealth of evidence showing that a reduction in the residual bin capacity can have a significant impact on increasing the quantity of waste recycled. The quantity of waste thrown away often reduces to a greater extent than the rise in recycling, demonstrating genuine prevention of waste. The treatment of residual waste is very expensive compared with recycling so there is a significant reduction in cost.

Following last year's structural changes to the Household Waste Recycling Centres to make recycling an easier and more pleasant experience, this year we have focused on making improvements

to how we help residents visiting the site to recycle more. This focuses on site operatives interacting more with residents to help them recycle more, and prevent them from disposing of waste that could otherwise be recycled in one of the bays available. This includes checking all waste (even waste in black bin bags) that is brought to the site, and deterring traders from using the site. We are also in the process of developing a re-use shop (in partnership with FCC) at Kirkless which will allow any items of value to be recovered for re-sale.

The quantity of organic (food and garden) waste collected in 2016/17 was equivalent to 17% of household waste, or approximately half of the food and garden waste generated. This is turned into compost returning valuable nutrients to the soil, and improving its structure.

In 2016-17 we achieved 43.68% recycling and only landfilled 7% which maintains our achievement of only using landfill when no other viable solution is available. We are now looking at initiatives that will increase our recycling rate to over 50%.

Improvements at the Kirkless transfer station have continued and a new fire suppression system has been installed which included the fitting of a new underground water storage tank.

Work still continues to reduce contamination within the recycling bins and to this end we have run a series of 'Recycle Right' campaigns, roadshows and educational events across the Borough. Across 2016 we ran 34 roadshows and spoke with @ 4500 residents. Key national recycling messages are used and in 2016 these included Recycling Week, Love Food Hate Waste and Love Your Clothes. Social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are regularly used to promote recycling messages to residents and we have held 'live' twitter question and answer sessions.



B2: Resource Management : Recycling, minimising demand placed on natural resources and any harmful impact on the environment

Composting

Free compost bins have been supplied to local groups and allotments and green waste collected from residential bin collections is reused as agricultural grade compost. Wood bark chippings are also provided free to any resident of the borough.

Smart Energy

Some social housing properties in the borough have been fitted with state-of-the-art smart energy developed in collaboration with Japan.

Tenants are helping to reduce carbon emissions while saving money on their fuel bills by taking part in the pilot project that will see their old inefficient heating systems replaced with air source heat pumps.

The pumps are connected to a “smart grid” system which can manage the energy produced in people’s homes and help reduce demand on the National Grid, which is currently close to capacity. This uses less energy and can therefore lead to cheaper fuel bills. It is the first time the technology has been used in homes anywhere in the world.

As part of the trial, tenants are given free access to the internet and a tablet computer. Specialist equipment is installed in each home known as a ‘home gateway’, which is used to monitor and control the heat pumps. This will be used to reduce energy consumption at peak times – thus reducing demand on the national grid.

LED Street Lighting

Wigan Council recognises that street lighting is important to householders, not only as an amenity, but also for security and road safety. As part of The Deal we decided to keep our street lights turned on but invest in a three-year programme to replace all of the lights with more efficient LEDs which will be sustainable for the next 20 years.

The use of LED street lights will significantly reduce our electricity usage by around 55% or 6,500,000 kWh per year. Savings in carbon emissions will be around 3,500 tonnes per year which will save purchases of carbon allowances. Additionally, the LED lighting units will be controlled by a central computerised management system and will require less planned maintenance than conventional lights.

To date, Wigan Council has installed around 5,500 LED street lights and fitted LED’s to all of its 3,500 illuminated traffic signs. The plan is that the remaining 31,000 street lights on around 4,900 roads throughout the borough will be replaced to improve the overall efficiency and quality of the street lighting across the borough.



LED Street Lighting - Abram

B3: Local Heritage : Management and development of local heritage and / or identity, inclusive of natural heritage

The Metropolitan borough of Wigan was formed in 1974 and is an amalgamation of several former local government districts and parishes. It is twinned with Angers in France.

During the industrial revolution the borough was an industrial centre for textiles, both spinning and weaving, along with coal production and other engineering factories.

In the 1800's cottage industries grew in size and turned to factories located in towns. These became traditional mill towns with terraced housing. It is recorded in 1854 that there were 54 collieries in and around Wigan, that is about a sixth of all collieries in Lancashire

The towns were predominantly described as industrial with its mills, collieries, foundries and rows of terraced houses for its workers.

After the Second World War there was a temporary boom in the textile industry, but then a slump and the industry never recovered. The borough built the last purpose built spinning mill in the country in 1977

The industries left a scar on our landscape and Wigan was known for its spoil tips and slag heaps. The flashes and lakes in the borough are as a direct result of its industrial past.

Thomas Woodcock

Thomas Woodcock was born in Belvoir Street, Scholes in 1888. His job exempted him from having to enlist into the military when war broke out in 1914.

On 26th May 1915, Thomas, together with some friends from the Hardybutts area of Scholes enlisted in 2nd Battalion Irish Guards, eventually being posted to the western front in France. On 12th September 1917 his company moved to the northern sector of Ypres, in Belgium, where Private Woodcock was part of an advanced post within Ney Copse, just north of Broenbeek Stream near the village of Langemark.

During a period lasting over three days the post came under relentless attack. Thomas and a comrade covered the withdrawal of the party, only leaving their posts when the enemy was just yards away. Whilst Thomas was making his way back across the stream towards the British front line, he heard cries for help from behind him. Without thought for his own welfare he returned to rescue his wounded comrade, carrying him back over open ground towards safety.

On 27th February 1918 Private Woodcock received the Victoria Cross from King George V.

Thomas received a hero's welcome in Wigan during his homecoming on 2nd March 1918. Winning the VC meant that he was not required to return to his unit on the front line, but he did. His words as he left for the front on the evening of 17th March were "Time to do a little more for the King". On 26th March 1918 just outside the village of Ayette, northern France, Thomas was killed action whilst serving his country one more time.

In September 2017 a memorial to Lance Corporal Thomas Woodcock VC will be unveiled close to Woodcock House in Scholes. His grand-daughter will be part of the ceremony. A small flower bed will be created to harmonise with the artwork.



B3: Local Heritage : Management and development of local heritage and / or identity, inclusive of natural heritage

Winstanley Hall

Winstanley Hall is a late 16th-century house in Winstanley. It is listed as a Scheduled Ancient Monument and a Grade II* listed building. Originally built for the Winstanley family, the building is one of only three Tudor buildings in the Borough.

The hall was built in the 1560s for the Winstanley family of Winstanley who were Lords of the manor since at least 1252.

The Winstanleys owned the hall until 1596, when the estate was sold to James Bankes, a London goldsmith and banker.

The Bankes family retained ownership of the hall until the 21st century when it was sold for private development.

Wigan Pier

Situated just a few hundred yards south-west of the town centre, Wigan Pier is the name given today to the area around the canal at the bottom of the Wigan flight of locks on the Leeds and Liverpool Canal.

Although the name has an image of a seaside pleasure pier, Wigan is an inland and traditionally industrial town.

The original pier at Wigan was a coal loading staithe, probably a wooden jetty, where wagons from a nearby colliery were unloaded into waiting barges on the canal. The original wooden pier is believed to have been demolished in 1929, with the iron from the tippler being sold as scrap.

Mesnes Park Restoration, Wigan

Thanks to a £6.1m grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the park has been restored to its original Victorian glory and re-introducing many replicas of the original.

The original Coalbrookdale Fountain was removed from the park in 1921. A replica was made following the original plans and the current fountain is a faithful reproduction.

Generations of locals have visited the park to rub the 'lucky foot' of the Sir Francis Sharpe Powell monument. As a result, a hole appeared in his shoe which has now been repaired and re-bronzed.

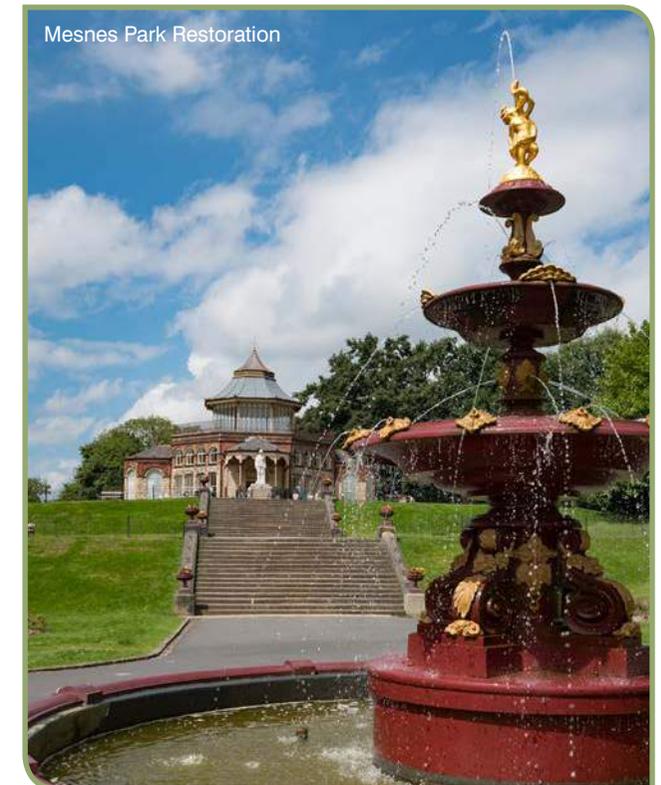
The pavilion building now offers a modern café facility with two floors of seating and the Dalton steps leading up to the pavilion have been repaired and the missing urns replaced.

A power supply has been provided to the band stand to bring it into the twenty first century.

The original layout of the formal lawn areas have been recreated, following John McLean's formal design. The design features clipped rhododendron beds of differing shape, along with structural trees.

Parterres have been created, echoing McLean's design style and use of tree varieties that were available at the time of the original park planting.

Soft landscaping is designed to co-exist with the Victorian design and where possible, the planting schemes are the same as what would have been in the park originally.



Mesnes Park Restoration



Wigan Pier

B3: Local Heritage : Management and development of local heritage and / or identity, inclusive of natural heritage

Historic Monuments

There are over 500 buildings and structures of local architectural or historic interest and importance in the Wigan borough. These vary from buildings or structures associated with an historic figure, or buildings that illustrate an important part of Wigan's cultural or industrial history.

The Obelisk in Leigh Civic Square was erected in 1762 by Robert Vernon Gwilym of Atherton Hall. It is thought that the base of the Obelisk may contain stones from the market cross which was referred to in documents dating back 1581.

Mab's Cross, Wigan Town Centre, The earliest surviving mention of the medieval wayside cross in Standishgate is dated 1277. This cross received its legendary name when it became the destination of a weekly penance imposed on Dame Mabel Bradshaigh. The church decreed that she must walk barefoot from Haigh Hall to the cross for marrying a Welsh knight when she innocently believed that her husband Sir William had been killed. There are differing accounts as to whether he was on pilgrimage or fighting in the Holy Wards.

Astley Green Colliery has the only surviving headgear in Lancashire and can be seen off the A580 East Lancashire Road. Worked started on Astley Green Colliery 1908 with the purpose of tapping into the coal reserves in the south Lancashire Coalfield and closed in 1970. The winding gear was designed to lift eight tons of coal every two minutes from a depth of 80 metres.

The In Bloom team work across the borough with local ward councillors to enhance the appearance of these areas with appropriate floral displays.



B4: Local Environmental Quality : Management of vacant premises and plots, litter, graffiti, fly-posting and dog fouling

Graffiti & Fly Tipping

The graffiti team operate across the borough to deal with reports of graffiti and fly posting, which is removed within two working days of receiving the report. The service extends to graffiti on domestic and business premises where it is visible to the highway. There has been a decline in graffiti since the team was introduced.

Cleansing Operatives & Enforcement

The town centre cleansing staff deal with the everyday cleansing problems, fly posting and chewing gum with the use of a high-pressure washer and other specialist equipment.



Chewing Gum Removal

Management of Vacant Retail Units

The majority of retail premises in the Wigan borough are privately owned and Wigan Council will work with individual landlords to encourage prospective tenants to establish their business in the town.

Window vinyls have been installed on vacant units to maintain the appearance of the town centres.

Wigan Council work with market traders to ensure that footfall is maintained across the borough. The Council also encourages people to buy local produce through the Incredible Edible initiative.

The town centres in the borough hold regular street events which have proved successful, such as farmers markets, food festivals and pop up shops.

To enhance the town centres and to encourage visitors from out of town, Wigan, Leigh and Ashton town centres will be the subject of refurbishment in the near future. These redevelopments will enhance the street scene and modernise the public and open spaces.



Wigan Christmas Market



TITAN the robot



Window Vinyl Installation

B5: Pride of Place : Management of street furniture, signage, art in the landscape and hard landscaping

Public Artwork

There are over 15 pieces of public art around the borough including: Interpretation figures around Wigan Pier Quarter, The Face at the Wiend, Ince Mosaic, Walmsley Park, Atherton Mosaic, Standish Sculpture, Wigan Tree, Leigh Willow Sculpture, Dragonfly at Flashes, Rose Bridge Arch, Spirit of Wigan, Mosley Common Wheel, Marus Bridge Roundabout, Climbing to New Heights sculpture and the Gabury Fold Pit cage. These are in addition to the various pit tubs and field ploughs in various villages around the borough.

There are mining headgear wheels in both Howe Bridge and Mosley Common, acknowledging their mining heritage.

Shevington have large metal interwoven baskets which recognise their heritage as a basket making area.



The Spirit of Wigan at M6 J24



The Face of Wigan - Rebranded for Wigan Pride

C



Section C : Community Participation

Assessing year round community participation



Wigan Council work in partnership with community groups, local schools, other agencies to ensure that a wide knowledge of environmental skills and ec-friendly projects are carried out with impressive results

The judges were impressed with the funding and support from both Wigan Council and outside agencies, they work together as one team to reach the goals achieved, although certain financial restraints are in place. Judges noted that Wigan Council are excellent in sharing the successes with all groups and hold events to feed back and honour the work they are carrying out.



Britain in Bloom Feedback 2016



C1 - Development and Continuity : Development and sustainability of the local bloom initiative and evidence of ongoing projects

Community Forum

Each year we hold a Wigan Borough in Bloom Community Forum at the end of summer to discuss with the community groups involved what was successful and how we can improve. Their ideas are then summarised and fed into the Wigan Borough in Bloom Steering Group and used to aid future development of Wigan Borough in Bloom Steering Group. It also allows groups to share their experiences and knowledge and encourage new groups to become involved.

Judging Criteria Workshop

The main area for improvement that was suggested at the Community Forum was that groups needed direct access to the regional judges to ask them questions about their individual entries. Although each group receives feedback and areas for improvement, sometimes groups have specific questions that are not easily answered. Regional judges are invited along and answered questions face to face with the groups. This allows groups to prioritise projects in order to maximise their possible points score when being judged in the summer. Feedback from the event has been very positive.

Wigan Borough in Bloom Awards Ceremony

With Wigan Borough in Bloom and The Better Neighbourhood Garden Competition being merged together, it is the logical next step to merge both awards ceremonies. This combined, end of season celebration will take place in early autumn and will be an opportunity to thank individuals, groups, schools, businesses and partners for their contribution to the overall Wigan Borough in Bloom campaign.



C2 - Communication and education :

Community awareness and understanding, engagement with schools and young people and/or other community groups, press coverage and publicity materials

Public Relations

Borough in Bloom is a well-recognised programme across Wigan Borough and many residents have good knowledge of what it is.

The programme has support throughout the year from the council's in-house public relations team who are familiar with the programme. The team cover press, marketing, photography and graphic design and has an annual campaign plan to promote activities.

The team also supports individual groups and promotes them via a number of council channels including in the local media and on social media.

An in-house photographer captures the work of the in Bloom groups all year round.



Branding

The well established Wigan Borough in Bloom brand has been used for a number of years now so is consistent and memorable for the public.

We use this brand when we produce publicity materials, posters, seeds, planter logos; vinyls, documents and banners to promote In Bloom as widely as possible.

We also encourage our neighbourhood groups to use this brand to ensure local residents who are not yet involved with the projects can recognise it as a co-ordinated programme.

Lots of local groups also use their own branding which reflects their individual character and diversity.



Borough Life

Borough Life is the council's award-winning residents magazine which is distributed to all households three times each year and is available to read online.

Each edition includes a feature on the in Bloom programme, focusing on different aspects including a focus on volunteers, encouraging businesses to take part, and more recently 'grow your own'.

Groups have been interviewed for the magazine and used as case studies to encourage other residents to sign up. We have included garden competitions and given away free seeds to readers.



C2 - Communication and education :

Community awareness and understanding, engagement with schools and young people and/or other community groups, press coverage and publicity materials

Staff volunteer days

Every year through The Deal Wigan Council staff are encouraged to take two volunteering days to give something back to the community.

Various different teams have helped in Bloom volunteers with their planting and community activities.

This is a great way to bring staff and residents together.



Staff volunteers at Thompson House, Standish

The Deal

The Deal is an informal agreement between the council and everyone who lives or works here to work together to create a better borough.

We have committed to a series of pledges and in return need residents and businesses to play their part too. So far through working together we have saved £115m, but there's still a long way to go.

We now have the second lowest Council Tax rates in the whole of Greater Manchester and believe we can continue to balance our books if residents help by doing things like recycling more, volunteering in their communities and using online services.

Boroughwide Community Network

Boroughwide Community Network is a strategic community organisation covering the whole borough who support In Bloom groups / events and council staff to deliver a cleaner, greener borough.

They have delivered horticultural events to people of all ages in the communities where they live. The aims of the events are to encourage people and groups to become involved in the In Bloom campaign and increase interest in horticulture generally.

They provide a weekly community e-newsletter which has a dedicated page for In Bloom news, information and events.

They assist Wigan Council by co-ordinating the community groups on judging days for North West in Bloom and Britain in Bloom. They arrange and decorated the venues to raise the profile of groups who were not included on the judging route. They also facilitate an opportunity for the community groups to feedback any issues that may have arisen throughout the judging process.

They successfully applied for funding to increase the biodiversity in the borough by building bird boxes to attract new species. A local, community organisation that cater for male social isolation issues, Men In Sheds, will be building the boxes.

C2 - Communication and education :

Community awareness and understanding, engagement with schools and young people and/or other community groups, press coverage and publicity materials

Education

This year, environmental education has been delivered in 61 of our 135 schools to over 3,000 pupils. Wigan Council is currently 3rd out of 159 Local Authorities in England in terms of number of schools registered on the Eco-Schools Programme with 95% of schools registered. Of the 135 schools in Wigan Borough, 24% have achieved their Green Flag making the borough 3rd in England for number of schools achieving the prestigious Green Flag standard.

A key part of the education programme is to show pupils how their behaviour affects their community with the aim of encouraging pupils to develop a sense of ownership and responsibility for their environment.

With the support of the council's eco mascots, 'Waste Warrior and Scoop', topics covered in schools include waste and recycling, litter and dog fouling as well as general environmental issues. A key part of the education delivered supports The Deal, with schools actively encouraged to share environmental messages with the wider community. This includes schools creating their own online slideshows promoting recycling and anti-litter messages, inviting Wigan Council's Environmental Education Officer to deliver assemblies and lessons in school, taking part in community clean ups (including the council's 'Four Seasons' campaign) and working with Wigan Council to create YouTube videos to promote recycling messages.

In March, ten schools across Wigan Borough took part in The Great British Spring Clean Competition (carried out as part of a borough wide clean-up campaign). Four cash prizes of £250 (donated by local businesses) were awarded to five schools (two

schools carried out a joint litter pick) who organised and carried out clean ups in their local communities.

Schools are kept up to date via termly e-newsletters, twice yearly Teachers' Network meetings and an annual Eco-Schools Conference. The conference also gives schools the opportunity to network with each other and other eco-education providers, both internal and external to Wigan Council. In October 2016, 33 schools attended the event which was held at Central Park Academy in Wigan. During the event, schools had the chance to learn more about the Deal, including what services are available to schools and how schools can take part in the Deal. The event was very well received with 100% of schools rating the overall experience as 'very good' or 'excellent'.

The event was catered for by 'Fur Clemt Café' situated at Central Park Academy. This volunteer ran café is part of the Real Junk Food Project, which uses excess stock donated by wholesalers, supermarkets and local businesses, to create meals which are available to the public on a 'pay as you feel' basis. Fur Clemt has recently set up a 'Fuel for Schools' programme where schools can sign up to access the food from Fur Clemt to use in their breakfast clubs or to create their own 'food boutiques' where food is made available for parents to take in return for a donation. Fur Clemt also visit the schools to deliver education about food waste to pupils, including information on how to make food go further and avoid waste. Since the Eco-Schools Conference, several schools have now signed up to Fuel for Schools and Fur Clemt continues to promote the programme across the borough.

In June 2017, the Environmental Education Team worked in partnership with Wigan Council's Road Safety Team, GMP Manchester, GMP Wigan, NHS Bridgewater Trust Nurses and Inspiring Healthy

Lifestyles team to deliver 'Crucial Crew' to over 1,800 Y5 school children. Pupils took part in a range of educational sessions ranging from 'Stranger Danger' to learning about the Recovery Position.

The Environmental Education Team delivered sessions on recycling where pupils were shown how to recycle at home and discussed the importance of recycling. As part of the sessions, pupils were asked to encourage their families to use their recycling bins correctly to avoid 'contamination', which is a key issue for the Waste Services Team.

Recycling messages are communicated to the public via roadshows, online videos and a range of educational leaflets. Last year the Environmental Education Team delivered 40 environmental roadshows or community talks to engaging with 4,000 residents from across the borough.



Dog Fouling Campaign

C2 - Communication and education :

Community awareness and understanding, engagement with schools and young people and/or other community groups, press coverage and publicity materials

Grow Your Own

The Grow Your Own campaign started off as an initiative by Wigan & Leigh Homes. It has been in existence since 2013. In the future it will be merged with Incredible Edible Wigan.

The aim of the project initially was to encourage residents to grow their own fruit and vegetables and they were given seeds to sow at home. In hindsight, this wasn't the best solution, as it relied on a degree of knowledge of what to do with the seedlings once they appeared in the trays.

The following and subsequent years the focus was on schools. A selection of vegetable plants and strawberries were taken into school and planted with the children. This approach worked as the tricky nurturing of seedlings wasn't required, but it meant that the children saw the end product.

In 2017 it was decided to change the concept to give the children a greater understanding of horticulture and gardening. Schools were chosen that would be holding activity camps for the children over the school holidays. This ensured that the plants would be looked after. Funding was obtained for seeds, compost, seed trays and other essential gardening equipment. The project ran from February through to June and the same schools were visited fortnightly. Sessions included sowing seeds, looking after seedlings, transplanting seedlings, potting on, to eventual planting out.

One school took their children to a local community allotment site for the morning. The children had a tour of the site, learnt more about growing techniques and even got to sample the end produce.

A smaller project was also held for adults. They attend six sessions in a 12 week period. Participants ranged from people with learning difficulties, new allotment plot holders and Incredible Edible groups. This project was boosted with the donation of gardening equipment by Aldi in Leigh.



C2 - Communication and education :

Community awareness and understanding, engagement with schools and young people and/or other community groups, press coverage and publicity materials

Incredible Edible Wigan

The Incredible Edible movement started in Todmorden, Lancashire in 2007 by a group of people who were looking for ways that everyone could help improve their own community. The solution they came up with was food as it can get people talking and maybe even inspire people to take action.

The group started with small herb gardens and community plots. They then went on to support businesses and encourage the creation of learning centres at the Incredible Aqua Garden and the Incredible Farm.

The ethos of Incredible Edible and its activities are:

- The Community Plate - growing produce and working together
- The Learning Plate – providing training from field to classroom to kitchen
- The Business Plate - supporting local commerce

Wigan Council joined the Incredible Edible movement in 2016 with the aim to make local food accessible to all by working together, sharing skills and knowledge and supporting local businesses.

Incredible Edible Wigan offer opportunities for residents across the borough to get involved.



RHS Green Plan It Challenge

Wigan Council's Borough in Bloom Co-Ordinator was a judge for the Royal Horticultural Society's Manchester area based Green Plan It Challenge. The Green Plan It Challenge is a ten week project during the Autumn term for Year 8 and 9 students to imagine and design a garden for their school or a new outdoor community space. Part of the process is to help young people learn about the world of plants and challenge their perception of horticulture. Teams of up to six students work carry out research before building a three-dimensional scale model of their chosen garden to bring their ideas to life.

At the end of the challenge, students compete against other local schools and present their designs at a local celebration event. Part of the judging process is for each of the members of the team to present the project, explaining why they decided to go down the route they did and what inspired them. They also have to be mindful of budgets, special planning and also who the target audience of the garden may be.



C3 - Community Participation : Community involvement is representative of the community's side and diversity

Appley Bridge in Bloom

Appley Bridge in Bloom was established in 2012 as an extension of Shevington and district in Bloom. Over the years the group have moved from buying annuals for a 'summer only' display in one area, to growing their own plants from seeds and plug plants in the Parish council greenhouse. They also incorporate perennials in their planting, overwinter tender plants, corms and tubers, take cuttings to extend their stock and have their own compost bins.

The group now regularly cultivate four areas around the village, two of which are sponsored by local businesses. Another two businesses give practical help by supplying watering equipment and water, as do residents adjacent to the project areas.

The planting schemes cover winter too and they have incorporated a canal boat and bridge planters to celebrate local links with the Leeds and Liverpool Canal.

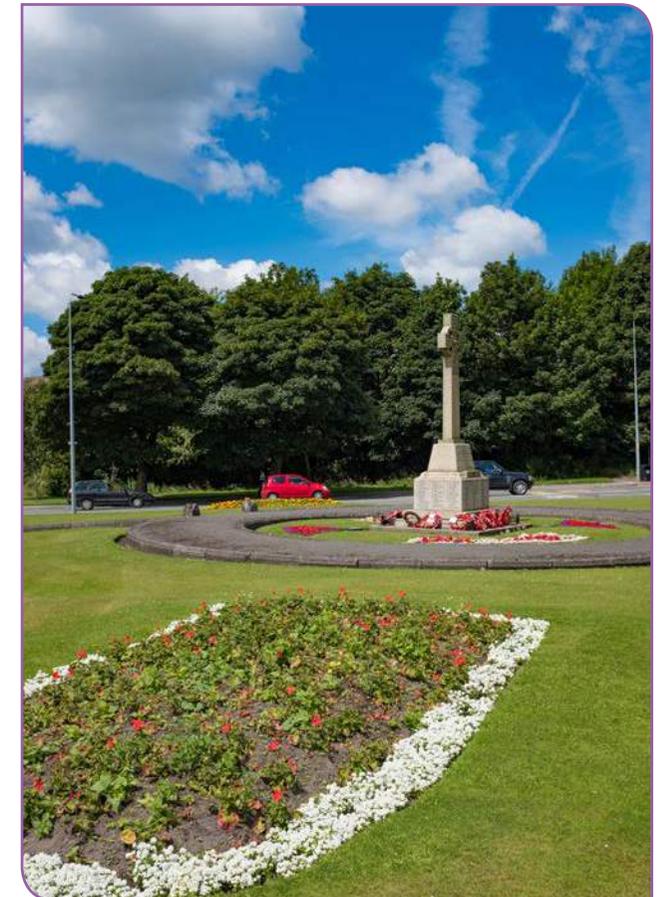


In 2016 funds were raised for plants by setting up a home-made food stall and this has now become a regular event in the village in May/June. New large planters were constructed for the area by the Wigan Council's Community Payback team and installed by the local shopping parade. The shopkeepers undertook to water and feed regularly as they are situated under a canopy and receive no rain. The arrangement works well, partly because the businesses made a (small) contribution to the cost and so have ownership of their planters.



Aspull in Bloom

Aspull in Bloom was formed in 2015 on the back of Wigan Council's Deal in Action. The group have core members, but also work in close partnership with local schools, local businesses, Ward Councillors, local residents and Wigan Council. The aim of the group is to improve the environment, improve green open spaces and make Aspull a better place for people to live in and visit.



C3 - Community Participation : Community involvement is representative of the community's size and diversity

Standish in Bloom - Large Town

Standish in Bloom plant various tubs and containers across the town each year in an effort to make the area attractive.

Hanging basket workshops are held where residents can learn how to plant up their own hanging basket to take away.

The group have forged close links with My Life, which is a local charity based in Standish. My Life caters for people of all ages who have a variety of physical and mental disabilities to ensure they have the best quality of life possible.



Heritage pit tub and plough

Crooke Village Residents Association - Small Village

In 2016 the village was awarded a Level 5 – Outstanding. This year they are entering as a small village for the first time.

The group continue to carry out various improvements to the village which includes working closely with Adactus Housing Association and the Canal & Rivers Trust. Fences have been repaired and repainting, along with grass verges and footpaths being edged. The residents also hold regular community litter picks and clean up days and gained £200 sponsorship from a local scaffolding company.



New for 2017: Rails for coal pit tub

Howe Bridge Community Group - Urban Community

Howe Bridge in Bloom is made up of a number of individual voluntary groups that work together to make Howe Bridge a desirable place in which to live and visit. It consists of Atherton Environmental Projects, The Bridgers Community Group, Gardeners Arms Bowling Green, St Michael and All Angels' Church and Dementia Buddies.

All the groups manage individual areas in the village and hold their own fund-raising events for their own activities, but they come together regularly to carry out village-wide litter picks and clear up days and they all help each other with the ongoing maintenance.



Ladder Pit Garden, Howe Bridge



C3 - Community Participation : Community involvement is representative of the community's side and diversity

Golborne in Bloom

The main aim of Golborne in Bloom is to create a place where people want to visit. They do this by holding regular clean up days and litterpicking and weeding sessions throughout the town. The main focus point for the town is Peter Kane Square which has been brightened up by the addition of colourful planting schemes. An overgrown shrub bed near to the towns library is the current project for the group. Overgrown shrubs have been cut back and the canopy of untended trees has been lifted to allow light to enter into the area.



Leigh Neighbours Project

Leigh Neighbours Project is a resident led community development project which has received lottery funding under the 'Big Local' funding stream. During initial consultation, it became apparent that local people value their green spaces and had a range of ambitions and aspirations for environmental improvements in our area.

In response to the consultation a community was garden on the site of a demolished church. The garden has a mix of decorative planting as well as herbs, vegetables and fruit which are donated to the local Foodbank.

Back alleys have been cleaned up and in some instances, planted up.

The project also funds spring and winter hanging basket workshops for local residents, schools and businesses in the area.

Provide grant funding for various environmental initiatives such as spring bulbs, greenhouse of school, planted trees and refurbished flower beds.



Mosley Common in Bloom

Mosley Common in Bloom, whilst not entering this year, have still continued to maintain their village to the highest standard. They are concentrating on developing a wooded copse, which involves clearing brambles and thinning of self-seeded trees. Once this work is done they will be able to create new pathways to facilitate access to the planned nature trail.

Once the wooded copse is finished a variety of homes for wildlife and plants will be added to create interest and improve the biodiversity of the area.

Another project for the group is the refurbishment and upgrade of the local children's play area. The group are liaising with Wigan Council on the planned programme for the work.



C3 - Community Participation : Community involvement is representative of the community's side and diversity

Shevington in Bloom

Shevington in Bloom have been following the advice of the 2014 Britain in Bloom Judges which was to concentrate on the areas they already have and keep them to the same standard. This year the group have completely emptied the heritage baskets, taking out the moss lining that was growing through the planters and taking water from the plants; this has been replaced by visqueen. The group worked with their District Councillors who purchased a shed for the group to store their tools. They are currently liaising with their Parish Council about buying a water cart and are also working towards having a water tap in the village which will prove invaluable for the group to maintain their planters.

The group have removed the old woody lavender and replaced it. They are also hoping to have decorative Christmas lights on the lamp posts in the village. After a recruitment campaign, there are new volunteers working in the group

Shevington Community Primary School have planted the horseshoe bed in the centre of the village. This will be the schools last year as it is due to close at the end of term.

Perennials, including heuchera, have been planted around a tree in the park. All but two of the beds in the village are planted with 50% perennials as saves time and money. Annual bedding plants are added for extra colour in winter and summer.

Regular working parties keep the areas tidy and as weed free as possible. These sessions are an opportunity for the wider public to engage with the members and pass on their compliments,

Local businesses support the group in different ways; one sponsors the weaver's heritage baskets and one waters the feature olive tree.

Recycled plants are the main feature in the nine Parish Council car park beds and the group now have four compost bins with one being dedicated to leaves which take longer to compost.



C4 - Year Round Involvement : Schedules of events and supporting evidence of year round activity

Wigan Borough in Bloom has seen budget cuts, along with many other council services, but it continues to deliver a 12 month planting programme across the borough.

A new Borough in Bloom Co-Ordinator for Wigan Council was appointed in May 2017 and the focus to date has been on the North West in Bloom competition and supporting community groups with their own entry. Over the next 12 months it is hoped to hold events during National Gardening Week in April, National Allotments Week in August and also seed swap and potato days in February.

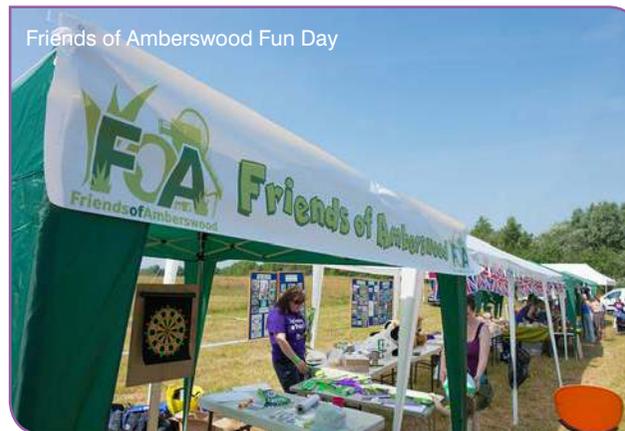
Wigan Council are holding an event in September for older people in the borough to try new activities and there will be a workshop showing people how to make flowers out of sugar paste. This is one of the many ways we hope to engage people in the In Bloom campaign, even if they don't like gardening.

Many of the voluntary In Bloom groups across the borough have become adept at holding innovative and creative events all the year round to raise vital funds to boost their spending power in the spring time. By holding diverse events at different times of the year, they are able to attract a wider audience and cater for different interests.

- Abram Centenary Garden raised funds by creating a calendar which featured photographs of the area.
- Crooke Village in Bloom sold Christmas cards featuring photographs of the village.
- Friends of Amberswood hold an annual fun day for all members of the community.
- Friends of Hindley Station hold an annual strawberry fayre.
- Howe Bridge in Bloom has successful plant sales, supported by Moss Bank Nurseries.
- Mesnes Park Community Allotments grow all their plants from seed and sell any surplus to members of the public. This year it has been on an ad-hoc basis, but next year they are hoping to do it in a more formal way by taking orders.
- Mosley Common in Bloom holds a successful dog show and also an annual scarecrow festival.



Mesnes Park Allotments produce



Friends of Amberswood Fun Day



Friends of Hindley Station Strawberry Fayre at Kilkdare Grange



Friends of Amberswood Fun Day

C5 - Funding and Support : Initiatives to secure on-going support for the local bloom campaign including local business support.

Wigan Community Partnership

Wigan Community Partnership has a dedicated community funding officer. Their role is to promote funding streams and support members of the voluntary sector through the application process. Funding workshops will be organised across the borough throughout the year.

Along with communities, local businesses are key to the future success of Wigan Borough in Bloom. In the current period of budget restraints, it will be necessary to forge close relationships in the hope of securing funding for high-profile planting schemes and also voluntary In Bloom groups

Brighter Borough Fund

The Brighter Borough initiative provides a fund for elected members to support schemes that improve the environment and benefit the community within their Wards. Many of the planting schemes throughout the borough are funded through Brighter Borough.

The Deal of Communities Investment Fund

The Deal for Communities Investment Fund is the main funding stream within the Wigan Borough. As part of The Deal, residents are being encouraged to get involved in their community. The Deal for Communities Investment Fund will allow communities to help solve some of the borough's biggest social problems.

Since launching the fund in 2013 we have supported community groups and projects who are working towards improving outcomes for local residents with £7.5m invested by the end of 2016. This demonstrates how committed we are to supporting local communities.

The fund is an investment opportunity, not a traditional grant and there is a level of expectation on communities that they will have to provide

There are three funding streams as part of the investment, dependant on the level of money required from one year Small Investment and Start Up to a Big Idea which is delivered over three years.



Brighter Borough Fund donation



Fur Clemp at Ince CE Primary



Garswood Bowling Club



WIGAN BLOOM
BOROUGH IN