

Wigan 
Borough
In Bloom

WIGAN BOROUGH IN BLOOM

PORTFOLIO

2019 - 2020



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Executive Overview



Alison
McKenzie-Folan
**Chief Executive,
Wigan Council**

Alison has recently been appointed as Chief Executive at Wigan Council and was formerly the Deputy Chief Executive with strategic responsibility for a wide range of services.

Alison is passionate about public services and determined to make a difference for residents and communities. She is dedicated to inspiring the next female generation and committed to collaboration, innovation and technology.

She is a Board Member of Unify Credit Union and spokesperson for SOLACE on the digital agenda and sits on the Board of Open Data Manchester.

Alison was recently named in the Northern Power Women Top 50 Power list and one of the nine most influential digital leaders in Greater Manchester.

Wigan Council has recently been named as LGC Council of the Year and Northern Power Women Large Organisation.



Cllr Carl Sweeney
**Portfolio Holder
for Environmental
Services**

Cllr Carl Sweeney was first elected in 2003 to represent Abram Ward. Carl has served on a number of committees during his time as a councillor and is a past chair of the audit and governance committee.

Carl joined the cabinet in 2017 as the portfolio holder for resources and reform and in May 2018, Carl was appointed as portfolio holder for planning and environmental services.

Carl has a background in the environment sector having worked in the waste management industry before joining the Environment Agency where he has held a variety of environmental regulation roles.

Carl sits on a number of outside bodies including Norfolk Property Services (NW) Ltd, Platt Bridge Community Centre, Public Sector PSP and the GMCA Planning and Housing Commission.



Cllr Chris Ready
**Portfolio Holder
for Communities and
Neighbourhoods**

Cllr Chris Ready was elected in 1996 to the Aspull, Standish Ward which changed to Aspull, New springs and Whelley Ward in 2004.

Chris has served on many committees over the years incorporating many Council Departments. Chris works as a data analyst in the public transport sector.

Chris has served on the Cabinet since 2004 covering Housing, Leisure, communities and press and publicity.

Chris has overall responsibility for all aspects of funding for communities and voluntary organisations covering all 323,000 residents of the borough.

Introduction

With a population of approximately 320,000, Wigan is the ninth largest metropolitan authority in England and the second largest in Greater Manchester. Wigan occupies an enviable geographic position, lying between the major cities of Manchester and Liverpool.

The historic towns and villages which grew during the Industrial Revolution punctuate the landscape and residents enjoy a significant 'greenheart' area, with 70 percent of Wigan's 77 square miles consisting of expansive countryside. Spanning the length and breadth of the borough, this area includes stunning parks, woodlands, wetlands, canals and green space, rich in flora and fauna.

The Deal, which was introduced in 2014, is an informal agreement between the Council and residents to create a stronger, more resilient borough for everyone. It is about

beliefs and a culture change and way of working that reflects everything that we do. It signals a positive approach for individuals and communities that encourages self-reliance and independence through an equal partnership.

Through The Deal, the Council has committed to a series of pledges and in return, residents and businesses are asked to help reduce reliance on public services. For example, recycling wherever possible, helping to maintain clean and tidy streets and volunteer within their community.

Through this innovative approach, the Council has saved in excess of £115million.

Wigan Borough in Bloom underpins the ethos of The Deal.



Meet the team and our partners

Meet the team

Martin Barton

Street Works Co-ordinator

Jeremy Bell

Town Centre and Events Co-ordinator

Ryan Tute

Media Officer

Mike Cheers

Parks and Street Scene Officer

Lee Connor

Town Centre Manager

Michael Fishwick

Greenspace Development Officer

Dave Green

Graphic Designer and Photographer

Matt Kelly

Service Manager - Street Scene Services

Mike King

Parks and Street Scene Officer

Jane Kneale

Street Scene Operations Manager

Martin Purcell

Greenheart Project Officer

Joanne Wakeman

Greenspace Development Officer

Ian Sayer

Street Scene Operations Manager

Hayley Walton

Estates & Street Scene Officer

Tracey Williams

Borough in Bloom Co-Ordinator

Meet our partners and supporters

Aldi, Leigh

Allotment societies

Boroughwide Community Network

Brighter Borough Fund

Bulldog Tools

Canals and Rivers Trust

Children's Centres, schools and colleges

City of Trees

Community and voluntary organisations

Conservation volunteers

Estate volunteers

Eyes of Your Estate Volunteers

Greenheart

Heritage Lottery

Incredible Edible

Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles

Keep Britain Tidy

Kings Seeds

Lancashire Wildlife Trust

Leigh Neighbours Project

Local businesses

Magnum Furniture

Markets

McDonalds, Leigh

Mears

Moss Bank Nurseries

Peter Lubbe & Sons

Royal Horticultural Society

Shevington and District Parish Council

Spinning Gate Shopping Centre

The Blooming Nursery

The Galleries Shopping Centre

The Grand Arcade Shopping Centre

The Prince's Trust

Thompson & Morgan

Virgin Trains

Wigan Borough Community Partnership

Wigan Council elected members

Wigan and Leigh College

And all the people of the Wigan Borough

Key Statistics

In Bloom Community Groups

Over 50 In Bloom community groups across the borough

827 volunteers

Over 33,000 community hours completed between 1st April 2018 and 31st March 2019. This gives an in-kind monetary value of over £386,000

Over £50,000 raised by communities in either grants or donations between 1st April 2018 and 31st March 2019

Between 1st April 2018 and 31st March 2019 communities received 67 environment-related awards throughout 2018

Over 4200 individuals looked at environmental volunteering opportunities on the website throughout 2018

Public Relations

25,000 interactions about the In Bloom Garden Competition on social media

Wigan Borough In Bloom



Wigan Council's Street Scene team

Mow 3 million square metres of grass per week

Maintain 19 formal parks

4 Green Flag parks

4 Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Recycling

53% of all waste is recycled

Eco-Schools

95% of all schools are registered on the Eco-Schools Programme

Our Achievements in 2018

| | |
|--|------------------------------|
| 2 - 8 Brookdale Road, Hindley | Level 5 - Outstanding |
| Ambergate, Atherton | Level 5 - Outstanding |
| Canal Bank, Appley Bridge | Level 3 – Advancing |
| Cansfield Estate, Ashton-in-Makerfield | Level 4 – Thriving |
| Collier's Corner | Level 4 – Thriving |
| Edible Appley Bridge | Level 3 – Advancing |
| Ellen Higginbottom Memorial Garden | Level 4 - Thriving |
| Friends of Ashton Community Garden | Level 5 – Outstanding |
| Friends of Hindley Station | Gold Award - Railway Station |
| Golborne Members Club Community Allotments | Level 3 – Advancing |
| Golborne Community Wetland | Level 3 - Advancing |
| Haigh Woodland Park | Level 4 - Thriving |
| Hindley Community Allotment and Garden Society | Level 5 – Outstanding |
| Ingleside, Tyldesley | Level 4 – Thriving |
| Leigh Neighbours Project | Level 3 – Advancing |
| Mesnes Community Allotment | Level 5 - Outstanding |

| | |
|---|---|
| Randalls Corner, Appley Bridge | Level 4 - Thriving |
| Selby Court, Leigh | Level 5 - Outstanding |
| Shevington in Bloom | Gold Award - Town Category Winner - Town Britain in Bloom Nomination for 2019 |
| Shevington Parish Council Memorial Park | Gold Award - Park |
| Stubshaw Cross Residents Group | Level 3 - Advancing |
| The Bluebell, Atherton | Level 5 - Outstanding |
| Wigan & Leigh College | Level 4 - Thriving |
| Wigan & Leigh Hospice | Gold Award - Hospice Grounds |
| Wigan Borough in Bloom | Silver Gilt Award - Large City |
| Category Winner - Large City | |
| Wigan Council Jubilee Park | Gold Award - Park |
| Wigan Council Mesnes Park | Level 4 - Thriving |
| Wigan Wallgate Wallflowers | Level 5 - Outstanding |
| Woodnook Road, Appley Bridge | Level 3 - Advancing |

It's Your Neighbourhood Discretionary Awards

Ambergate Housing
Adactus Homes Award

Ellen Higginbottom Memorial Garden
Overcoming Adversity Award

Golborne Community Wetland
Biodiversity Award

Haigh Woodland Park
Conservation & Environment Award

Britain in Bloom North West Discretionary Awards

Wigan Council Jubilee Park
Kieron Moss Award for Floral Displays
RHS Parks and Green Spaces Award

Wigan & Leigh Hospice
RHS Wild About Gardens Award



Aims and Objectives

The Deal for Future; Our People, Our Place, Our Future

Throughout 2018 The Council consulted with residents as part of the Big Listening Project to find out what their priorities were for the future.

From the results of the Big Listening Project we have identified 10 strategic goals for our borough which we have grouped together as priorities for Our People, Our Place, Our Future:

Our People

- Best start in life for children and young people
- Happy healthy people
- Communities that care for each other

Our Place

- Vibrant Town centres for all
- An environment to be proud of
- Embracing Culture, Sport and Heritage

Our Future

- Economic growth that benefits everyone
- A well connected place
- Confidently digital
- A home for all

By 2030 we will:

- Ensure the best start in life for all children and young people
- Build a borough where people are healthy, active and happy and doing what they enjoy
- Create strong, safe and friendly communities that care about each other
- Create attractive and well supported town centres with something for everyone
- Create a clean, green place that we all look after and enjoy
- Celebrate sport, culture and heritage and get more people involved
- Create a thriving inclusive economy which attracts business and increases local entrepreneurs
- Harness the power digital has to improve people's opportunities and prepare for the future
- Increase the amount of people using greener travel options and improve connectivity in the borough
- Create a borough that provides quality, affordable homes that are right for you

The  Deal

A



Section A : Horticulture

- 14 – A1 – Overall Impression
- 15 – A2 – Maintenance of Planted Areas
- 16 – A3 – Plant Selection
- 17 – A4 – Plant Quality

A1 : Overall Impression

A1: Overall Impression - Are the overall design and materials used within the entry appropriate to the location and do they generate a positive image?

The council's ground maintenance landscape team plant over 150,000 Summer and Spring annual and perennials in various locations across the borough.

This takes a team of experienced gardeners over 1500 hours. Plants are selected to produce a huge visual impact, whilst maintaining the historical feel of the various locations.

We are proud to continue our association with Wigan & Leigh College by encouraging horticulture students to spend time with our gardeners, either as part of formal apprenticeships, or through ad hoc day release or work shadowing opportunities.



A2 : Maintenance of planted areas

A2: Maintenance of Planted Areas - Are the areas within the entry maintained to an appropriate standard, including cultivation, weeding, feeding, pruning, grass maintenance, tree management and maintenance?

The Council mow 3 million square metres of grass per week.

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.

The council highway services maintain around 2,900 trees, 34,000 sq.m of shrubberies, 800,000 sq.m grass verges, 3,200 flower beds and meadows and weed sprays around 1,160km of the highway network each year.

The Council hold a map and database for the three main invasive plant species (Himalayan Balsam, Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed). This map and database are updated as and when new sightings are reported by either members of the community or through programmed inspections. The Council have an ongoing treatment programme for Council-owned land using Icade Herbicide which is safe to the environment and offer advice to other landowners on their responsibilities.

As part of the Council's Tree management Policy, all trees within the borough are inspected regularly, depending on their location, i.e. highways, parks, open spaces, woodlands. Any arboricultural work necessary is carried out to BS3998. There are over 5000 individual trees plus over 800 areas within the Borough that have Tree Preservation Orders.



A3 - Plant Selection

A3: Plant Selection - Are the plants used in the planting schemes suited to their growing conditions and locations and is there year-round interest?

Moss Bank Nurseries have been the main contractor to supply and maintain our containers across the Wigan borough for the past eight years.

As well as Wigan, Moss Bank Nurseries also hold contracts from neighbouring authorities due to the excellent standard of planting seen in Wigan. Shevington Parish Council also employ Moss Bank as their main contractor for displays within their village.

Moss Bank Nurseries supply plants for the parks and open spaces across the borough and hold separate contracts for The Galleries and Spinning Gate shopping centres in the borough.

The Wigan Borough in Bloom Co-ordinator works closely with all the staff at Moss Bank Nurseries to ensure the quality of planting is at its best and containers are placed in locations to achieve maximum affect.

Following feedback from both residents of the borough and Council staff, the areas around the planters receive monthly weed treatments to eradicate the moss and weeds that flourish due to the feed applied.

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 October 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 three 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 contain annual plants, 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 Phytolacca and Hemerocallis are chosen for their unusual striking colour and long flowering periods.

Wigan Town Centre has recently been redeveloped and to enhance the Incredible Edible offer, a mini-orchard has been created in planters with dwarf fruit trees which are underplanted with strawberries, herbs and tumbling tomatoes.



A4 - Plant Quality

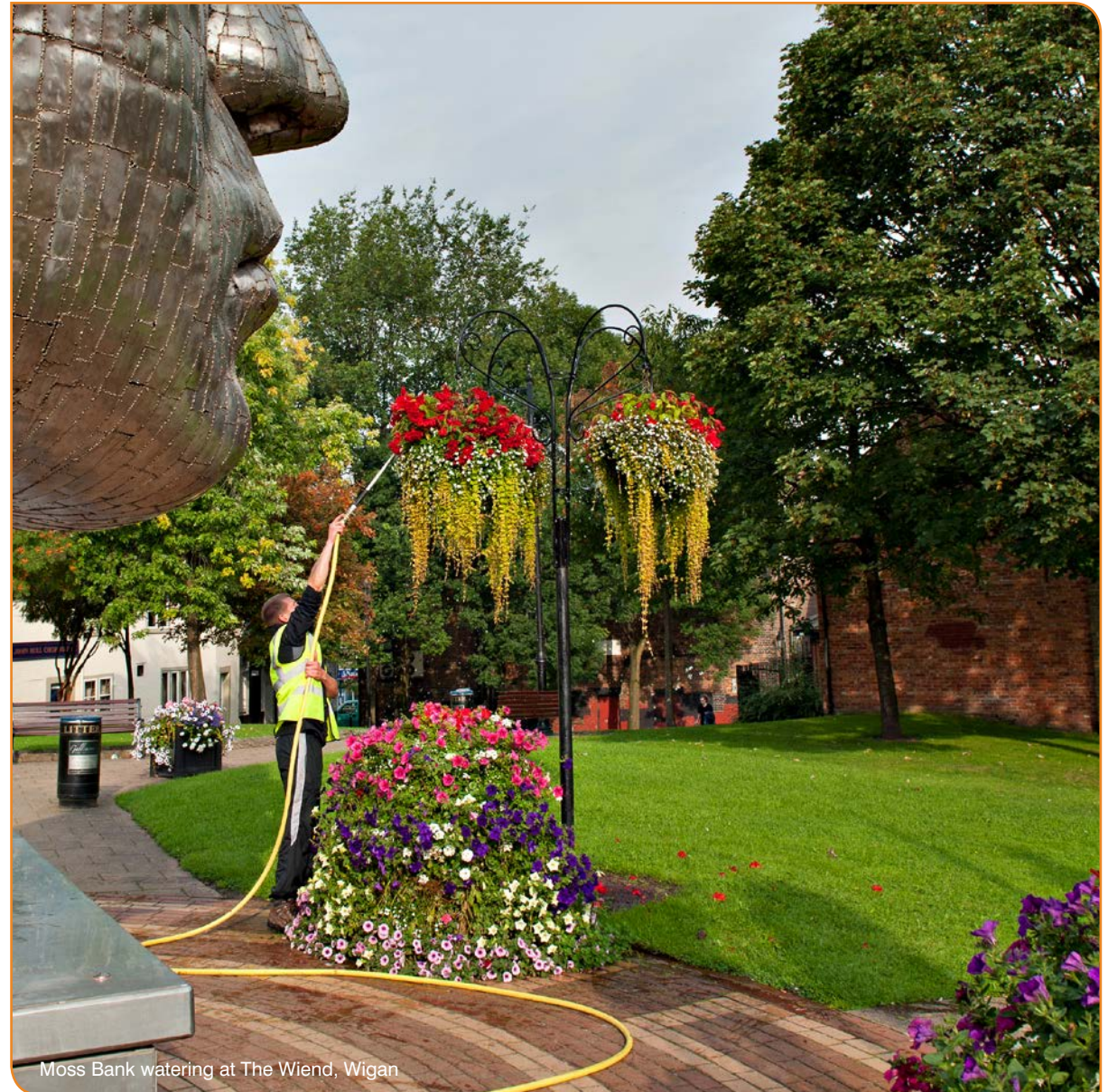
A4: Plant Quality - Are the plants vibrant and grown to their full potential? Are they free of all pests and diseases?

Plants are delivered to the nursery early spring and late summer and grown on under glass for two weeks to ensure that they recover from transportation. Where possible, containers are planted up on the nursery so the plants have time to settle and start filling out before they are moved to their final location.

In summer Moss Bank Nurseries will plant up and maintain over 65,000 plants in 1,000 planters across the borough. Each year plants are carefully selected 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.

Across all 25 wards, there are a variety of planters including full and half barriers, ground, tiered, precinct, hanging baskets and bicycle containers. They all contribute to making the borough a better place in which to live, work and visit.

Some of our town centre locations, away from vehicle pollution, are planted with tumbling tomatoes, strawberries and herbs to enhance our Incredible Edible Wigan campaign.



Moss Bank watering at The Wiend, Wigan

B



Section B : Environment

20 – B1 – Local Identity

26 – B2 – Natural Environment

36 – B3 – Hard Surfaces and Open Grass Areas



B1 - Local Identity

B1: Local Identity - Is there a sense of place, with appropriate sense of heritage, art in the landscape, signage and interpretation?

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 into 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. A large proportion of the boroughs open spaces are as result of the Council's former land reclamation programme to bring the spoil tips and slag heaps into public use. The flashes and lakes in the borough are as a direct result of its industrial past.

Most community groups have embraced the heritage and past industries of their villages and have created fitting memorials, for example Shevington have large metal interwoven baskets which recognise their heritage as a basket making area.

There are various nods to the mining past in the form of pit tubs and pit ponies. Howe Bridge and Mosley Common have mining headgear wheels. Friends of Hindley Station have replaced the old wicker hind, with a new bronzed fibreglass one. The group are also in the process of updating some of the work which was done when they established 12 years ago. Visitors to the station are shown the Corncrake from the Leyland Family Crest and told why it is there. The station also features a replica Ladies Lane No. 4 Pit.



B1 - Local Identity

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, Walmesley Park, Atherton Mosaic, Standish Sculpture, Wigan Tree, Leigh Willow Sculpture, Dragonfly at Flashes, Rose Bridge Arch, Spirit of Wigan, former Marus Bridge Roundabout, Climbing to New Heights sculpture and the Gadbury Fold Pit cage. These are in addition to the various pit tubs and field ploughs in various villages around the borough.

In the Borough's largest towns, Leigh and Wigan, wicker artwork has been created to commemorate the centenary of the end of the First World War. The title of the artwork is 'Coming Home' and it illustrates a soldier returning home from the war, being greeted by his family. An interpretation panel has been installed detailing the Victoria Cross holders and other notable veterans in the borough.



"Coming Home" on Believe Square



Mosley Common Wheel



The Face of Wigan

B1 - Local Identity

On the morning of 25th April 1915, one of the most courageous actions ever performed by the British armed forces took place at a beach close to Cape Helles on the Gallipoli Peninsula in Turkey. The gallantry displayed that day led to the famous "Six Before Breakfast" awards in which half a dozen Victoria Crosses were handed out in recognition of the bravery shown by the 1st Battalion, Lancashire Fusiliers. Of the four Wigan Borough Victoria Cross holders, two were awarded the Victoria Cross as part of the "Six Before Breakfast" for their heroics at Gallipoli.

William Stephen Kenealy

William Kenealy was born in Wexford in 1886 and the family moved to Ashton-in-Makerfield when his father started employment at Bryn Hall Colliery, following his retirement from the army. At the age of 13 he also became a miner and enlisted with the 1st Battalion, Lancashire Fusiliers, ten years later.

William was 28 when he earned his Victoria Cross.

John Elisha Grimshaw

John Elisha Grimshaw was born in Abram in 1893. He worked as a carpenter in the local mine, like his father. He enlisted with the Lancashire Fusiliers in 1912.

John was 22 when he earned his Victoria Cross

Alfred Robert Wilkinson

Alfred Robert Wilkinson was born in Leigh in 1896. His father was a cotton spinner and the family lived at 1 Brideoake Street, later moving to 59 Bradshawgate. He attended St Joseph's Infant and Primary School. After school he went to work with his father at the Mather Lane Spinning Company No. 3 Mill in Leigh where he was employed as a cotton piecer. This was a hazardous job, usually carried out by children and young people, requiring the piecer to lean over the rapidly moving spinning machines in order to repair broken thread.

Alfred enlisted in 1914 and was sent to France to join the 18th Manchesters.

In 1918, during the attack on Marou, following the death of four soldiers who had previously tried, Private Wilkinson volunteered to deliver a message to the supporting company. He succeeded in delivering the message, though the journey involved exposure to extremely heavy machine-gun and shell fire for 600 yards. He showed magnificent courage and complete indifference to danger, thinking only of the needs of the company and entirely disregarding any consideration for personal safety.

In February 1919 Wilkinson was given 14 days special leave to return to the UK to receive his award.

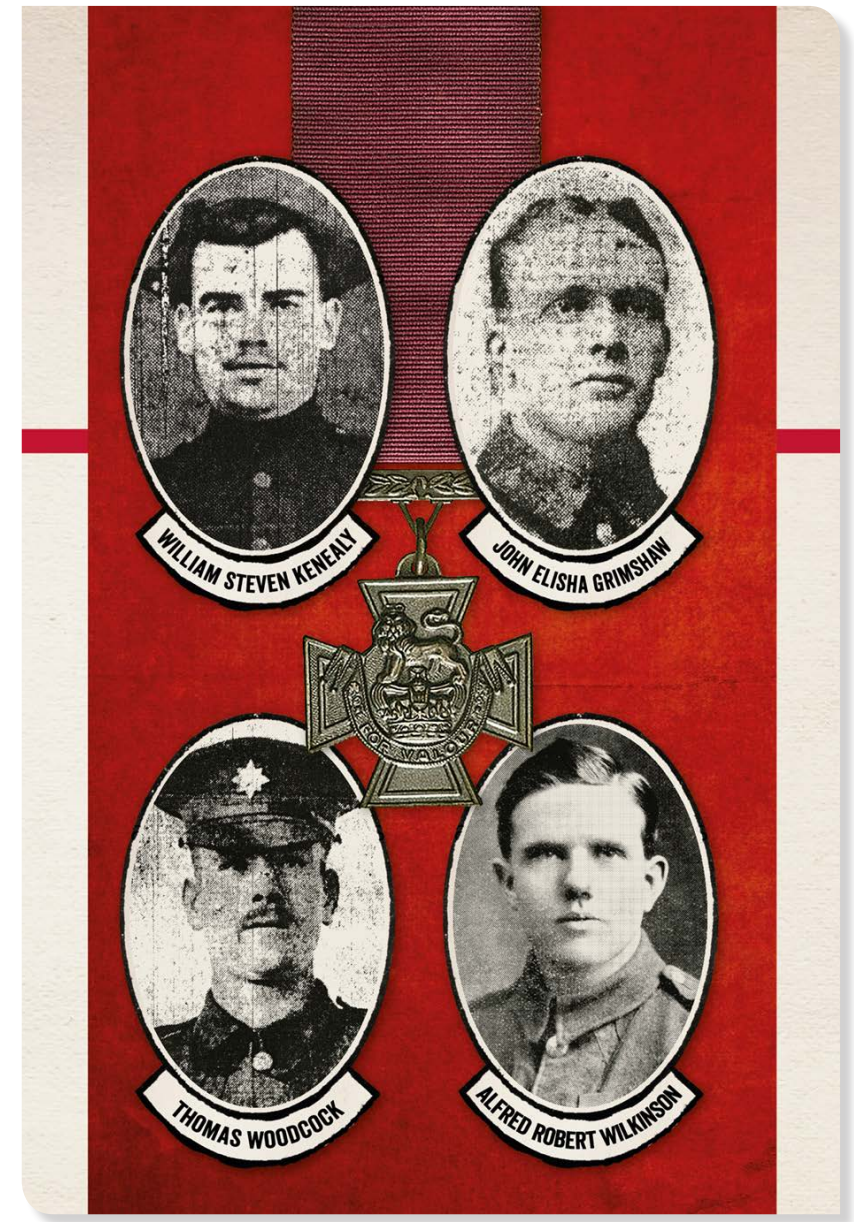
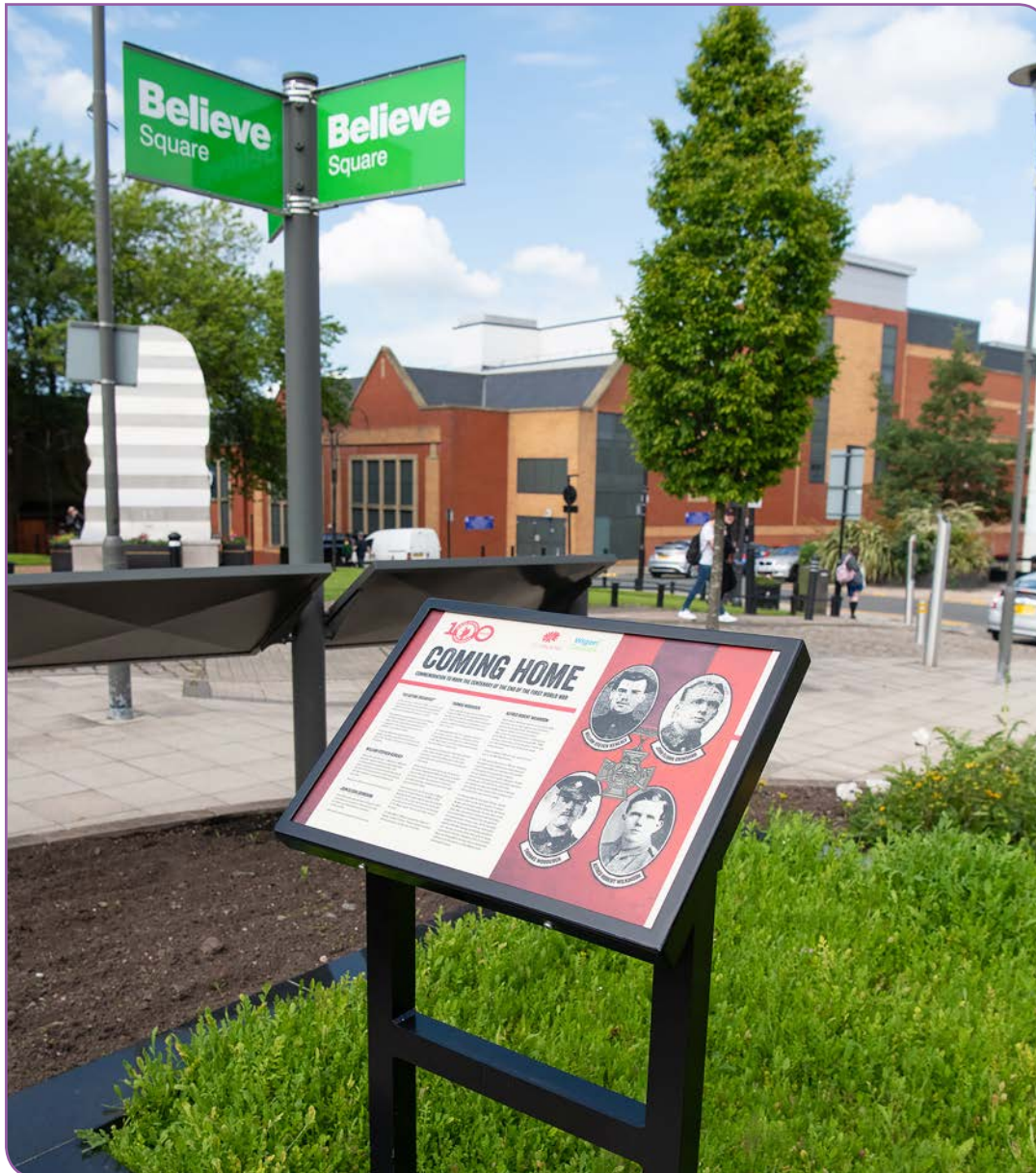
Thomas Woodcock

Thomas Woodcock was born in Belvoir Street, Scholes in 1888. He enlisted in 2nd Battalion, Irish Guards in 1915. On 12th September 1917 his company moved to the northern sector of Ypres, in Belgium. 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.

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.



B1 - Local Identity



B1 - Local Identity

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.

Historic Buildings

Wigan has some fantastic historic buildings and landmarks in the borough which have been preserved for future generations.

Wigan Hall, New Market Street, Wigan - A Grade II Listed Building that was the former rectory for Wigan Parish Church. The building looks Medieval or Tudor, but was built in 1875.

Winstanley Hall, Pemberton Road, Winstanley - A Grade II* Listed Building built in the 1560's for the Winstanley family. It is one of only three Tudor buildings in the borough.

Alder Mill Office Building, Chapel Street, Leigh - The office building of the former spinning mill is a Grade II Listed Building built in 1907

Morley's Hall, Morleys Lane, Astley - A Grade II* Listed Building which was largely built in the 19th Century, but encompasses 16th and 17th Century timber framed buildings. The site contains a moat which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.



Wigan Hall

Historic Monuments

There are nearly 500 listed buildings of national importance in the Wigan Borough and 500 of local interest. There are also 12 Scheduled Ancient Monuments and 23 Conservation Areas.

Haigh Sough, Whelley – a 17th Century mine drainage channel constructed for the Haigh Estate canal coal mines. This is one of the oldest surviving examples of modern mining engineering.

New Hall, Astley – a 17th Century hall and moat. Timbers found in the hall suggest that the moat could have medieval origins.

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



Mesnes Park Restoration

B1 - Local Identity

Mining Industry

Astley Green Colliery

Astley Green Colliery is situated on the edge of Chat Moss in the East of the borough and has the only surviving headgear in Lancashire. Work started on the colliery in 1908, with the purpose of tapping into the coal reserves in the South Lancashire Coalfield. In 1928 the colliery was amalgamated with other pits to form part of Manchester Collieries. The winding gear was designed to lift eight tons of coal every two minutes from a depth of 80 metres.

The pit closed in 1970, after only 62 years in operation. The headgear, winding house and winding engine are Scheduled Monuments and Grade II listed structures.

The site is now Lancashire Mining Museum run by the Red Rose Steam Society, who have ambitious plans to develop the site as a tourist attraction and hope to enter Britain in Bloom North West as a large tourist attraction in the future.

The group are developing a woodland plan to enhance and maintain the 13 acres of woodland and meadow and have linked in to the City of Trees to safeguard the bat, bee and bird habitats within the site.

Future plans are to link in with the Greenheart and also the SSSI site and Millennium Meadow just across the canal.

Leeds Liverpool Canal

With the emergence of the coal and cotton industries, a faster route was required to transport goods and materials to the various sites across the borough. The borough's existing waterways were inefficient as they weren't connected.

The ground-breaking ceremony for the canal was held in Liverpool on 5 November 1770 and it took over 40 years to finish, incorporating connections to the Douglas Navigation and the Bridgewater Canal (Leigh Branch).

Wigan Flight is a series of 21 locks which cover two miles, with a rise of over 200 feet. At the bottom of the Wigan Flight is Wigan Pier.

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.

The last cargo of coal carried along the Leigh Branch to Wigan Power Station was in 1972.

Signage has been positioned along the canals indicating destinations and journey times for walkers and cyclists to encourage the canals to be used as a recreational amenity.

The Astley stretch of towpath has been re-surfaced which completes the footpath link between Wigan and Salford.

Many of the cotton mills around the borough are now listed buildings and plans are in place to bring them back to life.



Astley Green Colliery



Leeds and Liverpool Canal, Leigh Branch

B2 - Natural Environment

B2: Natural Environment - Biodiversity including the protection and conservation of the natural environment and wildlife habitat. The provision of appropriate wildflower areas, aquatic and if applicable marine conservation sites, bat and bird boxes as well as insect hotels.

City of Trees

Wigan Council is proud to be part of this project, which aims to plant three million trees - one for every man, woman and child - in Greater Manchester over the next 25 years.

The project is not only to green the region, but to improve our understanding of the benefits trees provide to society, including reducing stress and improve air quality.

There will also be a focus on planting more trees in urban streets and parks, which is something that Wigan Council are keen to implement.

Friends of Hindley Station

Friends of Hindley Station have installed bird and bat boxes and bee hotels. Areas have also been left wild and untouched to encourage nesting birds etc.



Tree Planting in Wigan Town Centre

Haigh Woodland Park

Haigh Woodland Park is fully committed to positive and proactive conservation and environment management. As part of this commitment, the Park, in partnership with the Conservation Pig Company, embarked on a project to utilise rare-breed pigs in the control of invasive weed and plant species.

The Haigh project uses Saddleback Pigs to graze within fenced plots of land measuring 1 Hectare. The plots are moved approximately every 6-8 months and to date over 4 Hectares of land have been naturally cleared.

The project, supported by the Forestry Commission, Red Rose Forest and delivered in partnership with Edge Hill University, is proving very popular with visitors, the local community and educational groups interested in biodiversity and sustainable woodland management.

This traditional way of animal and woodland management nearly died out in the Middle Ages. The English Saddleback Pigs effectively control some problem plant species. Large areas of the woodland have become dominated by Bramble, Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed. These invasive species out compete our native woodland wild flowers. Luckily all these invaders are high on the pigs' favourite food menu and they have had a great effect in removing areas which will once again be coloured up with Wood Anemone, Lesser Celandine, Wood Sorrel and Bluebells.

The pigs are a real benefit to the woodland, as not only do they clear the unwanted species, but they help to create natural regeneration by turning the ground layer over and encroaching seedlings to grow. As pigs are non-selective in their approach they encourage multi-species richness within the ground flora and a multi-age structure to the woodland.

The park also has a woodland management plan in place as conservation of the species populating Haigh is of high priority.



Conservation Pigs

B2 - Natural Environment

Mesnes Park Community Allotments

Mesnes Park Community Allotments are positioned alongside a local public park and a natural environment and consider themselves to be lucky to have a diverse range of wildlife. Wherever possible they ensure wildlife will not be disturbed and actively encourage their presence, for example planting schemes always include plants for pollinators, leave large pieces of rotting wood for the insects and are currently building bird boxes and feeders.

They challenge themselves to use whatever is at hand to create something new. A border was created from broken wheelie bins, large herb spiral from blocks and bricks found in the yard or dug from the ground and stone benches from paving that had been buried over the years all add to the aesthetic of the allotment. But by using these items in a creative way they are helping the environment and saving money.



Mesnes Park Community Allotments



Wigan & Leigh Hospice

The new Amberswood Wildflower Garden within the grounds of Wigan & Leigh Hospice looks out onto Amberswood Common, an area which previously was an open cast mine, but which is now a nature reserve. The Hospice was keen for their gardens to have an area that was more wild to blend in with this borrowed landscape over the fence. The wildflower seed mix was one consisting of native perennial wildflowers.

Dotted around the grounds of the Hospice are bird boxes and feeding stations, and a hedgehog box. There is a bug hotel in the Amberswood garden. And they try to compost as much of the garden waste as we can, and also vegetable peelings from the kitchen.

B2 - Natural Environment

Carbon Landscape Programme

The industrial landscape that dominated South Lancashire is being transformed into one of the greenest areas of the North West. Wigan Council is proud to be part of the Carbon Landscape project which will bring together previous restoration achievements with new works without losing sight of the ground-breaking heritage that made the region famous.

The programme area covers former coalfields to the north and west and mosslands and riverside environments to the south providing a combination of peatscapes and brownfield sites.

The Carbon Landscape is changing the way in which we approach landscapes and communities in Wigan, Salford and Warrington. 22 interlinked projects across Salford, Warrington and Wigan will provide a forward-thinking and effective programme that will have lasting benefits for local communities and wildlife.

The Carbon Landscape Partnership operates at the heart of the Greater Manchester Wetlands Nature Improvement Area, offering a step change in the conservation and enhancement of the unique natural and cultural heritage of the Nature Improvement Area.

Thanks to a 3.2 million pound Heritage Lottery Fund grant, the project will restore an ancient landscape transformed by industry.

Today's landscape has developed from a carbon base - coal measures and peat deposits. The coal and peat extraction industries have left their mark on the landscape, but part of the legacy is an extraordinarily rich and diverse natural heritage. Today, this landscape is primarily wetland in its form, characterised by open water, fen, wet grassland, wet woodland and lowland raised bog. This is a Carbon Landscape, not just in terms of the underlying geology and evolution of the landscape, but also in terms of industrial and cultural heritage, and of the ability of this landscape to adapt and mitigate against climate change. The restoration of the peat base to lowland raised bog will provide an excellent opportunity for carbon sequestration and storage.



Three Sisters Wetlands



Carbon Landscape visit to Amberswood

B2 - Natural Environment

Greenheart

Greenheart stretches from Leigh to Haigh 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.



Wigan Flashes LNR

B2 - Natural Environment

Former Bedford Colliery Site

This site has benefitted 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 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.

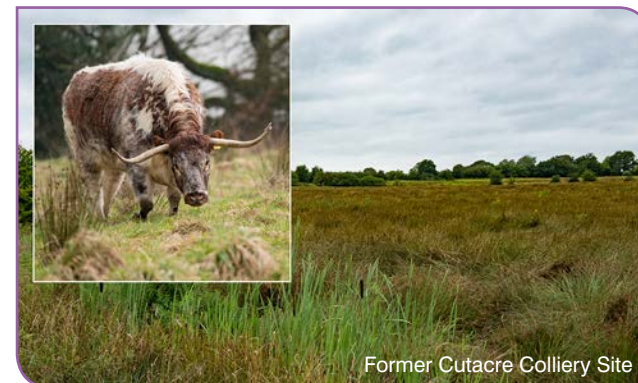
Over the three years of the investment the site will undergo three phases of essential access and habitat improvements, establishing a clear and accessible path network, signage and safe entrances to enable the surrounding and wider community of Wigan and Leigh to discover this potentially fantastic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

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 have been improved to provide food and shelter for many species of plants and animals.



Former Cutacre Colliery Site



Former Bickershaw Colliery Site

B2 - Natural Environment

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 planted 400 hedgerow plants from the Woodland Trust and spare plants were shared with other groups.



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 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.



B2 - Natural Environment

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.

Astley Moss

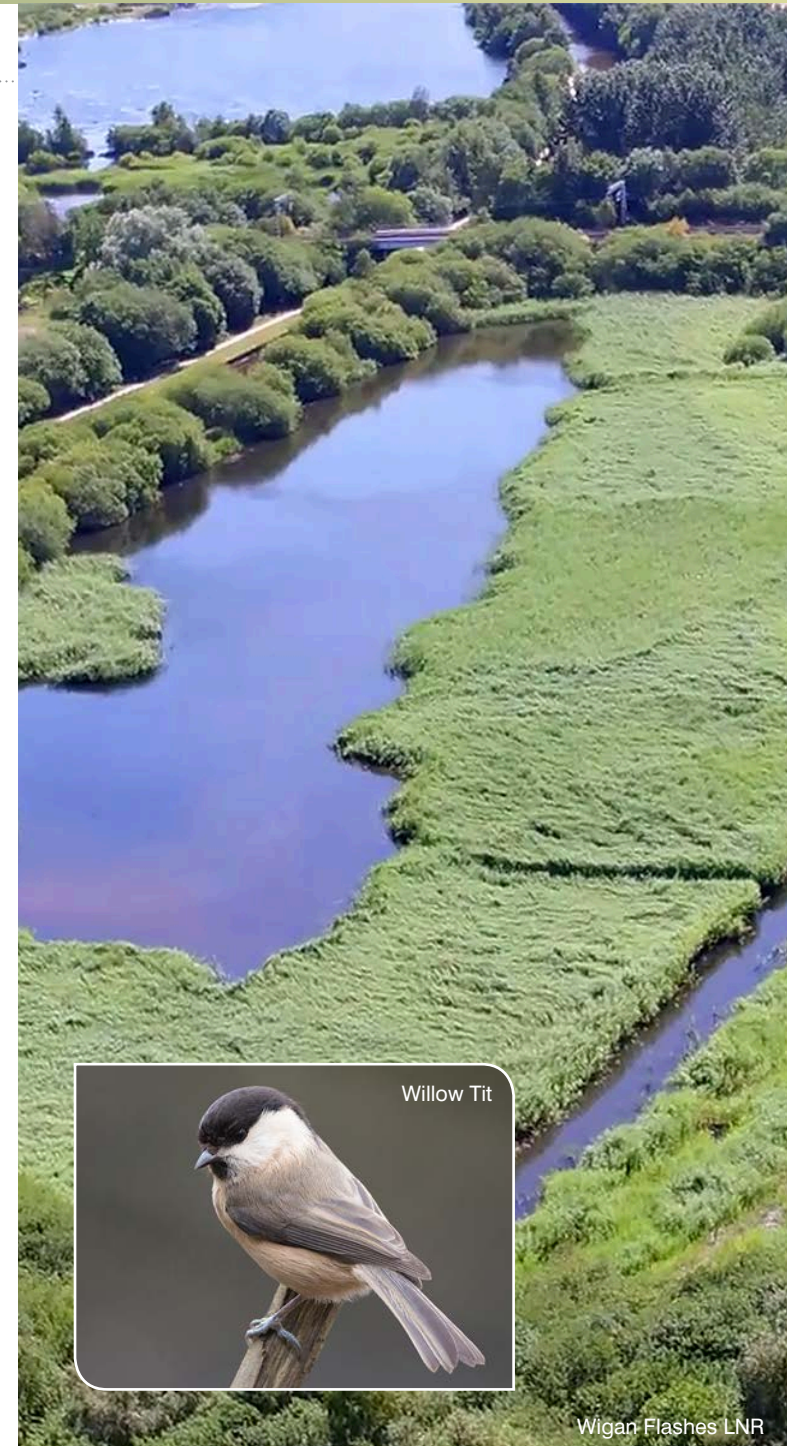
This site is part of the important Manchester Mosslands Special Area of Conservation. There has been considerable work on the reserve; removing scrub and re-wetting. The area of mire building sphagnum has significantly increased due to recent work and this year sphagnum magellanicum was found. Round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

Borsdane Wood

Borsdane Wood is a semi-natural ancient woodland which lies between Aspull and Hindley. Borsdane Brook runs through the centre of the wood, which over hundreds of years has eroded to produce a valley like woodland with steep banks. It was designated Local Nature Reserve status in 1986, making it the first LNR in Wigan. The wood consists of roughly 2.55 hectares of mixed broadleaf trees such as oak and ash and 1.54 hectares of open ground. Borsdane Wood is part of the 1% of ancient woodland that now remains in England making it extremely rare. As part of the conservation work in the woodland there is an initiative to replace any non-native plants with native ones essentially restoring the woodland to its natural state. There is a great community spirit at Borsdane with a strong, committed group of volunteers who help monitor the woods, complete any maintenance that is needed such as drain clearing and 'balsam bashing' and help raise any funding needed. Each year the Friends of Borsdane Wood group organise educational walks via various specialists, such as the City of Trees, to teach the community about various aspects of the woodland wildlife and its importance. The local councillors have also been involved and paid for and supported the group in installing three litter bins, producing leaflets about the Friends of Group and installing an information board at the Hindley end of the wood.



Willow Tit

B2 - Natural Environment

Golborne Community Wetland

The Golborne Community Wetland Project was created by GoALCo - The Golborne and Lowton Cooperative Learning Partnership Trust for the community. The Murphy Group, a global engineering and construction company who are based in Golborne and other local businesses, groups and educational facilities have been part of this creation.

The site has developed further this year and the hide has been used more as a learning resource. The school are now a Green Flag, Eco School. GoALCo pupils are busy designing bug hunts and resources for visiting pupils. A local resident is going to build some more benches to encourage local residents to visit.

The group are working with Council departments regarding reed management and introducing other plants that will attract bees. Wildlife are now settling on the wetland which saw frogspawn and ducks nesting. They have installed a bug hotel and hope to get some bat boxes and hedgehog boxes in the future.

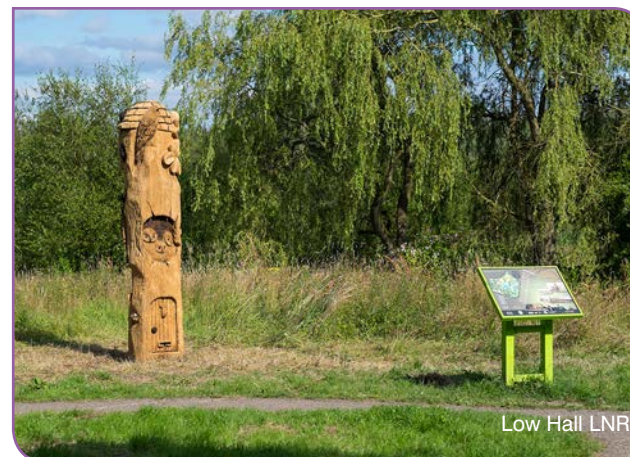


Low Hall Local Nature Reserve

The Friends of Low Hall are a group of committed volunteers that work in partnership with Wigan Council to maintain and enhance the diverse habitats at Low Hall LNR.

The group have been together for over 10 years and are the backbone of the site. As well as removing invasive plants, cutting back scrub and trees, they help remove the large amounts of litter brought in by Borsdane Brook and general maintenance of the site, they have helped gain funding which has provided wooden carvings, information boards and stone structures to be introduced to the site to make it fun for families. The group meet at least once a week to help at the site and are host to a number of nature and history walks.

Low Hall LNR was formed due to mining subsidence and flooding, leaving a large body of water and an extensive wetland mosaic of fen, open water and wet woodlands. Approximately 35 years ago the site underwent a reclamation scheme to restore and improve the site.



As part of this scheme, native and non-native trees were planted, which, along with the heavy build-up of silt are beginning to dominate areas of the wetland. Friends of Low Hall volunteer group and Wigan Council are helping to prevent this succession of the wetland. A wild flower meadow is currently being established with rich nectar plants to attract butterflies and invertebrates and help increase the declining bee populations. There are already several butterfly species present, including White letter hairstreak which is a protected species and an identification board has been installed to encourage visitors to learn how to identify the different species. Low Hall is popular, not just with birdwatchers and other wildlife enthusiasts, but also due to its easy access and recreational facilities, making it perfect for families.



B2 - Natural Environment

Pennington Flash

Pennington Flash Country Park is a 200 hectare designated Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and is home to some of the richest biodiversity in the borough. The flash itself was created as a result of coal mining subsidence from Bickershaw Colliery and flooding. When the water levels in the flash subside the remnants of an old cottage can still be seen on the flash basin. It is a spectacular example of Wigan's industrial heritage and natural development into a nationally rare wetland habitat.

The site is home to several protected species including the nationally protected water vole. Over 230 bird species, many of which are RSPB red listed, have been observed at the Pennington due to its distinctive matrix of habitats offering ideal breeding ground for rare birds and a staging post for migratory species.

Bird hides have been installed around the wetlands to allow bird enthusiasts and families to enjoy undisturbed views of the wildlife. It's well maintained pathways and disability access mean it's accessible to everyone, including cyclists and horse riders. There are health walks and runs as well as substantial opportunities for volunteering and recreation making it a highly valued local amenity. Substantial conservation work is underway to restore and maintain the site so that its rich biodiversity can be enjoyed by the whole community for years to come.

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 officially designated, as part of the rights of way network.



B2 - Natural Environment



Pennington Flash

B3 - Hard Surfaces and Open Grass Areas

B3: Hard Surfaces and Open Grass Areas, including streets and open spaces.

To include cleanliness, absence of litter, street weeds, graffiti vandalism, flyposting and chewing gum, water conservation and recycling initiatives, hard landscape, open spaces and street furniture maintenance and effective dog fouling control measures.

Each year the council carries out an annual planned programme of works to maintain its highway footways and carriageways. This involves resurfacing around 30,000 sq.m of footways and 60,000 sq.m of carriageways. The council recycles 100% of the existing paving flags, kerbs and bituminous material that is removed as a part of this work, which typically equates to 14,000 tons of material.

Various teams within the Council have restructured to form the new Street Scene Team. There is now a joined up, co-ordinated approach to grass cutting, grounds maintenance, street cleaning (including dog fouling and graffiti) and estate caretaking. The various divisions of Street Scene have a more holistic approach and work collectively rather than in isolation.

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, including 72 football and 5 rugby pitches
- 169 bowling greens
- 2 golf courses & 1 golf academy
- 9 cemeteries
- 10 war memorials
- 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

Wigan Borough has 4 Green Flag Sites: Mesnes Park, Jubilee Park, Alexandra Park and Pennington Hall Park. Mesnes Park has held the award for 3 years whilst the other sites have held the award for nearly 9 years.

The Green Flag Award is the National Standard for Parks and Green spaces and as such Wigan Council values these beautiful spaces and values both the staff and community that contribute to these sites.

Residents across the borough have taken part in various recycling environmental initiatives, including the Great British Spring Clean. There were 24 organised events across the borough and over 400 bags of rubbish were collected.

Residents will also have an opportunity to join the Great Plastic Pick Up and we expect a similar response.

Many In Bloom community groups use animal/bird-friendly slug pellets as necessary. Where slugs and snails are a particular problem, groups choose plants which are less tempting. Regular watering of both annuals and perennials in dry weather is essential and cannot be avoided, but communities have water

collection systems in various locations which reduces demand.

Most of what our groups use is recycled; either unwanted wood, plants or furniture.

Wigan Wallgate Wallflowers have an agreement in place with Arriva Rail North so that they can use their station recycling facilities.

Haigh Woodland Park has installed recycling schemes for visitors to the park, including new bins which separate general waste to mixed recyclables. There are two collections of waste for the site, a general waste and recyclables in which everyone is encouraged to separate any waste before collection.

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.

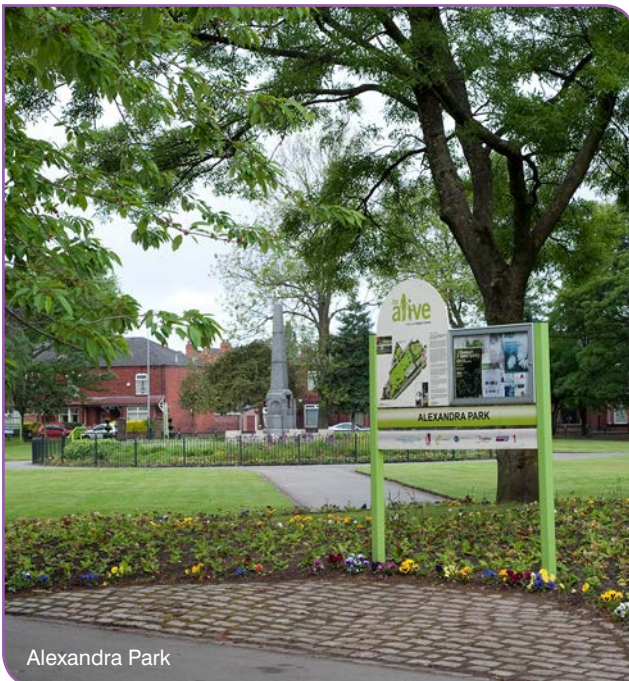
The Spinning Gate Shopping Centre processed 107,000kg of waste of which 100% has been diverted from landfill, saving the equivalent of 70 x trees and 30,000 car miles during 2017 alone.

B3 - Hard Surfaces and Open Grass Areas

Alexandra Park

The park is split in two by Victoria Street. One side of the road consists of two bowling greens, a pavilion and community allotment. 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, two play areas for 0-12 year olds, two tennis courts an extreme sports facility and an outdoor gym facility. Additional equipment has been installed to expand and enhance the skate park.

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



Alexandra Park

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 vandalised and had to be removed, but the local community rallied and raised money to provide a replacement.



Blue Bell Garden

Friends of Atherton Parks

Friends of Atherton Parks are a small volunteer group with the aim of improving the parks in the Atherton area, making them a more safe and approachable environment for all ages and abilities to enjoy. 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 new arches installed. The group have also created a sensory garden containing lavender, 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.



Atherton Park

B3 - Hard Surfaces and Open Grass Areas

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 eight years. The area has also been awarded an International Green Flag. During the feedback sessions with the Green Flag judges, they have frequently said they are impressed with the area and make no recommendations for improvements.

Over the years extras features have been added, such as the coal miner's truck and also the wicker pony has been replaced as the original had started to deteriorate.



Collier's Corner

Friends of Ashton Community Garden

The creation of the community garden on Liverpool Road, Ashton in Makerfield, has been an ongoing project for over fifteen years.

Prior to the land remediation, the area was derelict and overgrown; it was an unsightly gateway into Ashton Town Centre. Now, it is an established welcoming piece of land, very much appreciated by local residents, businesses and visitors.

In spring the garden 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.

Throughout the year, the garden is planted up with seasonal flowers and maintained by the Friends of Ashton volunteers.

Local school children created the Community Garden mosaic and this too is planted up throughout the year. They enjoy helping on "Twig Pick" days!

At the east end of the garden, a memorial section has been created to commemorate those from the community that lost their lives in the First World War. Interpretation panels are set in attractive cast iron frameworks featuring red poppies. This artwork is mirrored in the seating provision around the nearby trees.

The community garden continues to develop and over the next year it is proposed to plant a variety of native trees. It is, without doubt, an outstanding community asset.



Friends of Ashton Community Garden



Friends of Ashton Community Garden

B3 - Hard Surfaces and Open Grass Areas

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 Coalbrookdale Fountain, 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 was awarded a National Green Flag Award for the last three years.

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.

The park has a vibrant Friends group who put promote the park by hosting lots of events throughout the year. The Park has a Green Flag Award.

Lilford Park

Lilford Park has a very strong and active friends group, within the last 12 months the group has organised several events, Wigan council staff volunteer days, engaged with local companies, this has resulted in bulb and tree planting, the development of a new sculpture and new bin provision. The friends group are also responsible for the opening and closing of the public toilets that had previously been closed due to vandalism, the provision of public toilets has resulted in a large increase in the number of school groups using the park as an educational resource.

Pennington Hall Park

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

An autism friendly café has recently opened within the park that has proved to be extremely popular with the community groups and members of the public that visit the park.

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.



Friends of Lilford Park



Pennington Hall Park

B3 - Hard Surfaces and Open Grass Areas

Recycling

As a fundamental part of 'The Deal', Wigan's recycling strategy aims to encourage residents to 'recycle more, recycle right.' Now it has become more of a habit and a learned behaviour, we have been able to keep any increases in council tax to a minimum whilst implementing a new collection regime. Around three quarters of the waste created by householders is collected at the kerbside, so changes to this service have the greatest potential to encourage residents to recycle more.

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 when compared with recycling so there is a significant reduction in cost.

During 2018/19 the recycling rate rose to 53%. In September 2017 we implemented new service changes including a three weekly refuse collection which has significantly increased our recycling rate above our target of 50%. Much of our focus is providing help and assistance to residents on the changes so that they can manage their waste and recycle more. This has led to us now collecting more green and food waste in the green bins than refuse in the black bins on certain days for the first time ever. This has been helped by introducing a kerbside caddy liner drop off service rather than having to collect from libraries and public buildings which has made it much easier for residents to participate in food recycling.

Residents are required to tie their last liner onto the handle of the green bin and the collection crew will leave a replacement roll on top of the bin. On some days our kerbside recycling rate has been over 64%.

Work still continues to reduce contamination within the recycling bins and a number of roadshows have been run showing residents what they should be putting into the bins, (as well as what they shouldn't).



B3 - Hard Surfaces and Open Grass Areas

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.

Energy Efficient Social Housing

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.

During the pilot the pumps were connected to a "smart grid" system which monitored and controlled heating in people's homes helping to 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 this type of demand response pilot was used in social 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.

Energy efficient 'A' rated condensing boilers are being installed and the programme to remove the remaining inefficient boilers will continue over the next 4 years and beyond.

Over 3600 bathrooms have had LED lighting installed, along with low voltage fans to extract any moisture created.

During cyclical maintenance programmes, timber doors are replaced with composite, doubled glazed instead of single, with improved energy efficiency.

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 a part of The Deal we decided to keep our street lights turned on; and over the last four years the council has invested over £10m to replace all of the 36,500 street lights with more efficient LEDs, which will be sustainable for the next 20 years.

The use of LED street lights has significantly reduced our electricity usage by around 63% or 9,100,000 kWh per year. Savings in associated carbon emissions has been around 4,900 tonnes per year. Additionally, the LED lighting units will be controlled by a central computerised management system and will require less planned maintenance than conventional lights. The use of LED lighting units has also reduced the amount of 'spill' light that conventional lighting units can give off, which gives additional environmental benefits such as reducing sky glow.



LED Street Lighting

B3 - Hard Surfaces and Open Grass Areas

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

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.

The Environmental Enforcement Team promotes borough cleanliness by engaging communities and utilising environmental legislation to tackle environmental crime. They carry out waste amnesties within local communities and are supported by local councillors, community groups, residents and businesses. These events demonstrate that working together can produce great results with limited resource, encourages self-reliance and introduces pride back into local communities. A typical waste amnesty would include the provision of skips to dispose of waste and the provision advice regarding general waste disposal or recycling at our mobile information station. We also work with other agencies such as Keep Britain Tidy on projects like The Great British Spring Clean where officers volunteer their time to organise community litter picks, again promoting community cohesion and pride.

The enforcement team has adopted new “Littering from vehicles” legislation which allows officers to target this problematic litter issue at source by issuing Penalty Notices directly to the persons responsible. Other existing enforcement duties such as flytipping, waste accumulations and Fly posting also contributes to the overall cleanliness of the borough making it a more attractive place to live, work and visit.

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.



B3 - Hard Surfaces and Open Grass Areas



Wigan Flashes with Leeds and Liverpool Canal - Leigh Branch



Section C : Community

46 – C1 – Year-round Activity and Future Commitment

56 – C2 – Communication and Awareness

68 – C3 – Funding and Support



C1 - Year-round Activity and Future Commitment

C1: Year Round Activity and Future Commitment - evidence of forward planning and year-round activity highlighting adding value, highlighting any events that make this entry unique and demonstrate the present strengths of the entry.

Community Support

Our communities prefer to just get on with their projects, rather than attend meetings to discuss them. One to one support is available for all groups and wherever possible, new In Bloom groups are put in contact with long-established groups who offer peer support. Many of our community groups also pair up to work on larger projects, for example Shevington in Bloom and Mesnes Community Allotments joined forces to re-vamp the growing area in St Bernadette's Primary School.

Wigan Borough in Bloom Network Meeting

At the start of the year communities are invited to come together to find out about plans for the forthcoming year. This is an opportunity to catch up with each other and meet one of the regional judges who provides the latest up to date information from the RHS.



North West in Bloom Co-Ordinators Meeting

This year was the first time that some of our communities attended this meeting at Myerscough College. They all found it very interesting and informative and have encouraged other groups to attend next year.

Wigan Borough in Bloom Awards Ceremony

The In Bloom Garden Competition Group organise and manage the annual garden competition on behalf of Wigan Council. The competition is open to anyone who lives in the borough. Winners of the garden competition come together with In Bloom community groups to celebrate their achievements at the end of the season. This celebration event takes place in early autumn and is an opportunity to thank individuals, groups, schools, businesses and partners for their contribution to the overall Wigan Borough in Bloom campaign.



Mayor's Afternoon Tea Party

All of the entrants from 2018 were invited to the Mayor's Parlour for Afternoon Tea. The Mayor of the Wigan Borough, Councillor Susan Greensmith, wanted to personally thank everyone for their hard work and their contribution to improving the appearance of the borough.



C1 - Year-round Activity and Future Commitment

In Bloom Garden Competition

Since the In Bloom Garden Competition was opened up to all residents within the borough, regardless of tenure, it has gone from strength to strength. But this brought new challenges for our amateur judges; last year they changed their scoring system to include a Silver-Gilt bracket and this year they have totally re-written their judging criteria to meet the needs of the different styles of gardens that are now entering.

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 communal garden
- Best edible garden
- Best hanging baskets or containers
- Best junior edible or wildlife garden
- Best ornamental garden
- Best traditional garden

The Gold winners of each of the categories are considered for the coveted title of Best Individual Garden, Best Communal/Community Garden or Best Junior Garden.

The People's Choice is for all residents to vote for their favourite In Bloom entrant. Last year we had over 1500 votes and Shevington in Bloom received 16% of the share and were awarded machine-planted bulbs by Peter Lubbe & Sons

Our In Bloom groups have the opportunity to nominate a member of the grounds maintenance team for an award for going the extra mile to support them. This year it will be extended to the modern apprentices.

All our gardening communities, including sponsors and staff come together at the In Bloom Celebration and Awards Ceremony to receive their prizes and certificates of recognition for their contribution to In Bloom or Incredible Edible.



C1 - Year-round Activity and Future Commitment

Wigan Council is blessed with a fantastic group of In Bloom community groups across the borough.

There are over 50 active groups and this year their volunteers have embraced the Council's decision to lift the profile of Borough in Bloom by entering into the various commercial categories. Our In Bloom groups are the embodiment of The Deal and the Street Scene Team use their staff volunteer days to help the communities prepare for their In Bloom judging days.

As the Wigan Borough covers 77 square miles, it is impossible to showcase everything to the judges. The Council have therefore decided to split the borough geographically into three. This will result in the whole of the borough being seen by the judges over a three year period. This also gives our passionate and enthusiastic community In Bloom groups to shine and show off their hard work.

Haigh Woodland Park

Following £3.7m of investment by Wigan Council, Haigh Woodland Park is today one of the top day visitor destinations in the North West of England, attracting 500,000 visitors annually.

The Park's attractions include; Woodland Adventure Golf, High Ropes Adventure Course, Children's Adventure Play Park, Kitchen Courtyard, 15" Gauge Railway, Miniature Railway, Walled Gardens, 9 and 18 hole Golf Courses, many miles of woodland trails and the Visitor Centre.

Haigh Woodland Park is recognised as a Visit England Quality Assured Attraction, has a Certificate of Excellence (Trip Advisor) and was awarded Environment and Conservation Award from North West in Bloom (2018).

This year Haigh will be the first ever Large Tourist Attraction to represent the Borough.

As part of Phase II of developments, work is underway on programmes to refurbish and reinstate the historic assets of the Park – hopefully funded with the support of Heritage Lottery.



C1 - Year-round Activity and Future Commitment

Friends of Hindley Train 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.

The group are very active in their local community and encourage as many as possible to visit the station.

They have had a very busy year due to the alterations at the station, but they have formed a good relationship with Murphy's who have been carrying out civil engineering work to extend the platform. A new wildlife garden, bug hotel, pond and hedgehog houses have been created in the new area.

Wigan Wallgate Wallflowers

Within the Wigan Wallgate Railway Station boundary, a community group have officially adopted a portion of the platform from Arriva Rail North with permission from Network Rail. The volunteers look after the area all the year round; they have created feature flower beds and undertake regular litterpicks along the platform.



Wigan Wallgate Station

Friends of Orrell Station

Orrell Station opened in November 1848, on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway. At that time Orrell was a bustling community, with industry aplenty. A paper mill, brick works and local coal mines provided employment for all. Farms surrounded the village, their names still reflected in our schools and streets, Newfold school and Lawns avenue.

Today the village is a residential part of Wigan, residents travelling to their work and using the station to do that. It is a Gateway to Winstanley College, bringing students from Manchester and Liverpool to study at one of the best Further Education facilities in the country.

In the summer of 2017 a group of locals banded together to try and improve the station.

They started off with the simple idea of making the station a nice place to travel through, but they began to have bigger ideas. They split into teams but overlap skills, so the planning team has a gardener in it and the 'brushketeers' (the cleaning team) join in planting events. The constructors make things for the gardeners. They meet over a pint, of lemonade of course, once a month in the local pub, to discuss new ideas.



Hindley Station

C1 - Year-round Activity and Future Commitment

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. The garden is also home to birds and bats.

The residents rely on donations of plants and equipment and try to upcycle unwanted materials as much as possible to make their garden sustainable.

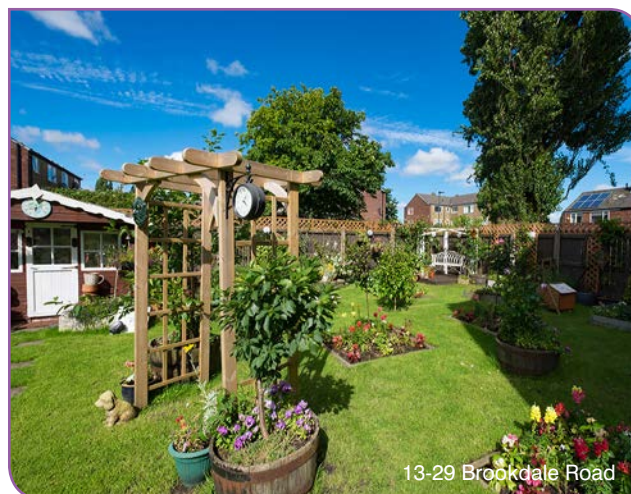


Abram Centenary Garden

Abram Centenary Garden was the brainchild of a local tenants and residents association who wanted to safeguard a small parcel of land that had been earmarked for housing.

Wigan Council granted a lease and Fairshare Community Foundation awarded funding to create a community garden and carpark area.

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 garden 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.

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.



C1 - Year-round Activity and Future Commitment

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.



Cansfield Estate



Ellen Higginbottom Memorial Garden

Ellen's garden is a celebration of a young life tragically lost in 2017.

The volunteers focus on aspects that Ellen was interested in. Wildlife was a huge passion of hers and so the planting schemes have reflected that, including plants to attract bees and butterflies. Wildflower seeds have been sown in a hope to develop one area into a thrive of

insect and wildlife activity.

There are plans to include more perennials to minimise the need to replant every year. Six thousand bulbs have been planted in the grassed area to provide a range of colour throughout the early seasons.

Two wildlife areas have been created with piles of wood, sticks and leaves. There is also a Bug

Hotel, which has been built in the wildlife area, in a secluded place, with attempts to blend it into the environment.

As the garden runs adjacent to the road and public pavement, cleanliness and litter is an issue. On a whole the garden is well respected. All the volunteers are local and so do collect rubbish and dog mess when passing.

C1 - Year-round Activity and Future Commitment

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.



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. A resident who lives in the former Warden's house has now caught the gardening bug and has created his own garden.



St Philips Primary School

The school grounds now have a more sustainable and budget-friendly planting system that allows them to look lush and beautiful, whilst attracting natural wild life and pollinators.

The children are looking forward to eating their very own apples from the first full crop growing in the orchard. The school has moved towards healthy lifestyle areas in the playgrounds and have installed outdoor gym equipment, a climbing wall and they have re-purposed a tree that sadly had to be felled; it is now a climbing tree in the wild garden and loved by all the children.

The children have grown most of their plants from seed this year and sprouts and parsnips are coming along nicely ready for school's Christmas dinner. The sweetcorn is thriving and hopefully will produce enough for the barbeque. Strawberries will be sold at various events and people are invited to join them to sample some of the produce and hopefully generate funds for next years resources. Half term plant shops are proving a success, the produce planted in re-purposed tins looked great and sold fast!

All the children have been involved in community activities with their class teachers or helping around school to look after their local environment. The In Bloom Young Gardeners garden is looking fantastic. The children have only used re purposed items to plant in and on, they have grown everything from seed and used beautiful, edible and wild flowers to create their display. It has been an action-packed year with our all year round planting system firmly in place.

C1 - Year-round Activity and Future Commitment

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.



Wigan and Leigh Hospice

Wigan & Leigh Hospice provides specialist palliative and end of life care to hundreds of people every year. The aim of the garden is to look good at all times of the year, with colour and interest in each season. Patients and their families, and staff are encouraged to explore the gardens when they can.

The local school partnership (The Keys Academy) has been involved in an arts project in the gardens. They have designed and made four totem poles representing the different seasons.



Wigan Council Staff Volunteers

C1 - Year-round Activity and Future Commitment

Allotments

Wigan Council has 13 statutory and 34 non-statutory allotment sites which total individual 615 plots.

In line with the Deal for the Future, Wigan Council has reviewed the allotment strategy. As allotments generally contribute directly to the health and wellbeing of residents, we are looking to work in partnership with the community and voluntary sector to align provision to match need and demand in the changing world. This will result in a mixed economy of allotment provision, traditional plots, community growing spaces, plots of varying sizes, Community Asset Transfers etc. The purpose of this is to increase the availability and opportunity of growing spaces by making the offer more flexible by introducing smaller plots, thereby creating more to meet demand.

Community Asset Transfer

By encouraging the community and voluntary sector to take over sites through the Community Asset Transfer process, 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.

Balcarres Allotments

This former Council allotment site has now been asset transferred over to the community. The new Balcarres Allotment Society have made short work clearing the site of debris and Japanese Knotweed. Once the remodelling works have been completed, there will be 15 plots and one for the community and school children.

Worsley Hall Allotments

This was a former garage site that had been developed in the past as a community allotment. Unfortunately, the previous user ceased and it was handed back to the council. A new organisation has recently been through the asset transfer process and is about to set up.

Amberswood Community Allotments

This overgrown derelict plot of land is on the edge of Amberswood Local Nature Reserve. The association has secured one long term lease of the sites which will enable them to secure further funding to improve and develop the sites.

Community Allotments

Mesnes Community Allotments

Since Mesnes Community Allotments started in 2014, the group has managed and maintained the allotment site and is showing signs of growth. The group have successfully grown a diverse range of fruit and vegetables throughout the year and are improving their planting schemes to include more perennials, alongside annuals and spring bulb planting.

Their first entry in 2017 into the RHS North West in Bloom resulted in a level 5 outstanding award and they also secured a Gold, Best Fruit and Veg award and the Kieron Moss shield in the Council's garden competition.

The group successfully applied for funding to renovate some disused buildings on the site to create new welfare facilities and an additional space which will be used as a shop to sell their produce from.

They continue to welcome visitors to the site and are happy to share their experiences and skills with anyone who asks. They have teamed up with Shevington in Bloom to help St Bernadette's Primary school to create a new growing area for the children.

Edible Appley Bridge

With help from The Deal for Communities Investment Fund and Shevington Parish Council a small community orchard and seven raised beds for vegetable, fruit and herbs has been created. The produce from which is available to local residents.

Uniform groups and school children continue to be involved again in sowing vegetable seeds and plants and keeping the area maintained.

The group also make sure that anyone visiting the site is made aware of which items are ready for harvesting and where to locate them and are hoping to have sufficient excess produce this year to be able to put on cookery demonstrations open to all.

Golborne Community Members Club Allotments

The allotments started off life as part of the recreational facilities of the former Conservative Members Club, which was created for the conservative miners in the Golborne area. The club changed to a Community Members Club a number of years ago and the allotments fell into disrepair. The current plot holders took up the challenge approximately seven years and re-instated the 12 plots.

Last year, one of the members won Gold in Wigan Council's In Bloom Garden Competition for his fruit and vegetables.

C1 - Year-round Activity and Future Commitment

Haigh Walled Garden

The former walled kitchen garden of Haigh Hall has been transformed into a community allotment run by volunteers. The original layout has been recreated to replicate an era when it would have served the Hall and estate with fruit and vegetables. The garden features cordon and fan trained fruit trees, archways, raised beds and greenhouses. All the volunteers share the workload and the produce.

As far as possible, pesticides are avoided so that the produce is organic. Composted manure is used to enrich the soil which features flowers to attract pollinators and as companion plants to attract and deter predators.

A number of bee hives have also been installed in the garden.

Hindley Community Allotment and Garden Society

Hindley Community Allotment and Garden Society was formed in 2012. They have turned a piece of barren, contaminated land into a colourful oasis. They have achieved Level 5 Outstanding since they first entered in 2012.

The members of the group encourage anyone who has an interest in growing their own vegetables.

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.

The site is looked after and maintained by local primary schools.

New Springs Horticultural Society Allotments

With 70 plots and members of all ages and backgrounds this is a thriving community-led allotment who promote health and wellbeing through gardening and growing their own fruit and vegetables.

They have an on-site shop to sell produce and run a variety of events throughout the year to encourage the wider community to get involved. One successful event is their annual competition which this year will be judged by Ray Hickey from the In Bloom Garden Competition Group and the Council's Borough in Bloom Co-Ordinator.



C2 - Community and Awareness

C2: Communication and Awareness - within the immediate area through regional and local marketing, involving all sections of the community. Communication and media involvement evidenced. Use of suitable interpretation, enabling learning and a greater understanding.

Golborne Community Wetland

The project is managed by the Wetland Committee which is made up of pupils and staff from the school, staff from Murphy's and members from Golborne Tenants & Residents Association. Through these various channels they are able to reach a wide cross-section of people.

As the Community Wetland is within the grounds of a school it is difficult to be open to the wider general public, but small groups and environmentalists are welcome to visit the site by appointment.



C2 - Community and Awareness

Wigan & Leigh Hospice

The local school partnership (The Keys Academy) has been involved in an arts project in the gardens of Wigan & Leigh Hospice. The school children have designed and made four totem poles representing the different seasons which have been located around the gardens.

Environmental Education

The Environmental Education Team continues to raise awareness of environmental issues across the borough to a range of audiences. The team delivers regular roadshows across the borough to promote waste and recycling messages. Last year, these roadshows reached over 3,000 members of the public.

The team also carries out regular school visits to deliver education as well as offer practical advice to help schools become more sustainable. Schools are also kept up to date via a termly Eco-Schools Newsletter.

Support can range from implementing waste and recycling schemes, help with setting up (or progressing) as an Eco-School, to taking part in wider environmental campaigns. Once such campaign was the Great British Spring Clean where several schools took part in a litter pick throughout March and April 2019.

In October 2018, 34 schools attended the annual Wigan Borough Eco-Schools Conference where schools can find out the latest eco information, share good practice and meet a range of service providers. A big focus of the conference was plastic and the event provided the opportunity to raise awareness of the effects of plastic on our environment, with the aim of encouraging schools to look at their own plastic consumption and implement change.

As a result, the Environmental Education team has supported several schools to make significant changes. This has ranged from swapping single-use plastics bottles for reusable drinks bottles, disposable sauce sachets to reusable bottles and even contacting their suppliers to look at alternative packaging ideas for the things they purchase.

Schools are currently supporting the Council's 'Waste Not' Garden, to be exhibited at the RHS Southport Flower show in August, which will be created using reused and reclaimed items. School children have been creating 600 'eco-bricks', using soft plastic wrappers to fill empty plastic bottles, which will be used to create furniture for the garden and will later be used in community spaces throughout the borough. Children will also be growing 300 potted marigold's to distribute during the event along with the poem, 'Watch Me Grow', to highlight the work of Adoption Services.

The Environmental Education Team are now supported by a Re-use Recycle Education Co-ordinator employed by a local charity The Brick. This post is funded by the Community Investment Fund set up by Wigan Council. This post is to help educate residents of Wigan Borough particularly in re-use and upcycling which compliments the work and facilities the charity has. Items that have been donated at the recycling centres in the borough are also sent to the Charity for either upcycling or for reuse. This will benefit the charity directly and will provide a wide range of household items and furniture to the local community at low cost.



Wigan & Leigh Hospice



Eco-Schools Conference



Eco-Schools Conference

C2 - Community and Awareness

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 given a make-over for 2019. The new logo has now been changed to the Council's corporate colours which makes it instantly recognisable as being part of the Council family.

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.



Staff volunteer days

Every year through The Deal Wigan Council staff are encouraged to take three 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.



Volunteers at Three Sisters LNR

Social Media

As well as being part of Wigan Council's corporate social media pages, Wigan Borough in Bloom has its own Twitter account. This allows us to interact with communities, elected members, businesses and other Twitter users on a more informal basis.

C2 - Community and Awareness

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.

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

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



Atherton Environmental Projects

This community group mainly operate in the Atherton and Howe Bridge area of the borough. They also assist new groups across the borough to start up and establish themselves.

Their aim is to maintain, improve areas that have been neglected and enhance areas for community use and a desirable place to live.

The group have worked on numerous projects including community clean ups, bulb planting, school activities and helping local churches.



Boroughwide Community Network

Boroughwide Community Network is a strategic community organisation covering the whole borough that supports 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 caters for male social isolation issues, Men In Sheds, will be building the boxes.

C2 - Community and Awareness

Friends of Hindley Station

As well as keeping their own station in tip top condition, their volunteers have been supporting Friends of Orrell Station and Wigan Wallgate Wallflowers

They have still found time to take part in the centenary celebrations around Hindley to commemorate the end of the first world war and hold their annual strawberry fayre.



C2 - Community and Awareness

Friends of Orrell Station

This new group wasted no time linking in with their wider community; BeeCause We Care made the planters for the platforms and local uniform groups prepared bird and bug boxes as part of their badge work.

The group are exploring the idea of primary schools getting involved with an art installation. Sports clubs have donated funds, as well as offers of physical help with large or heavy projects.

The group have also secured support from the Co-Op and are one of their local causes. They also have a very active social media presence and their pages are filled with compliments and positive comments and the street-based noticeboard is popular with bus travellers and passers-by.



C2 - Community and Awareness

Incredible Edible Wigan

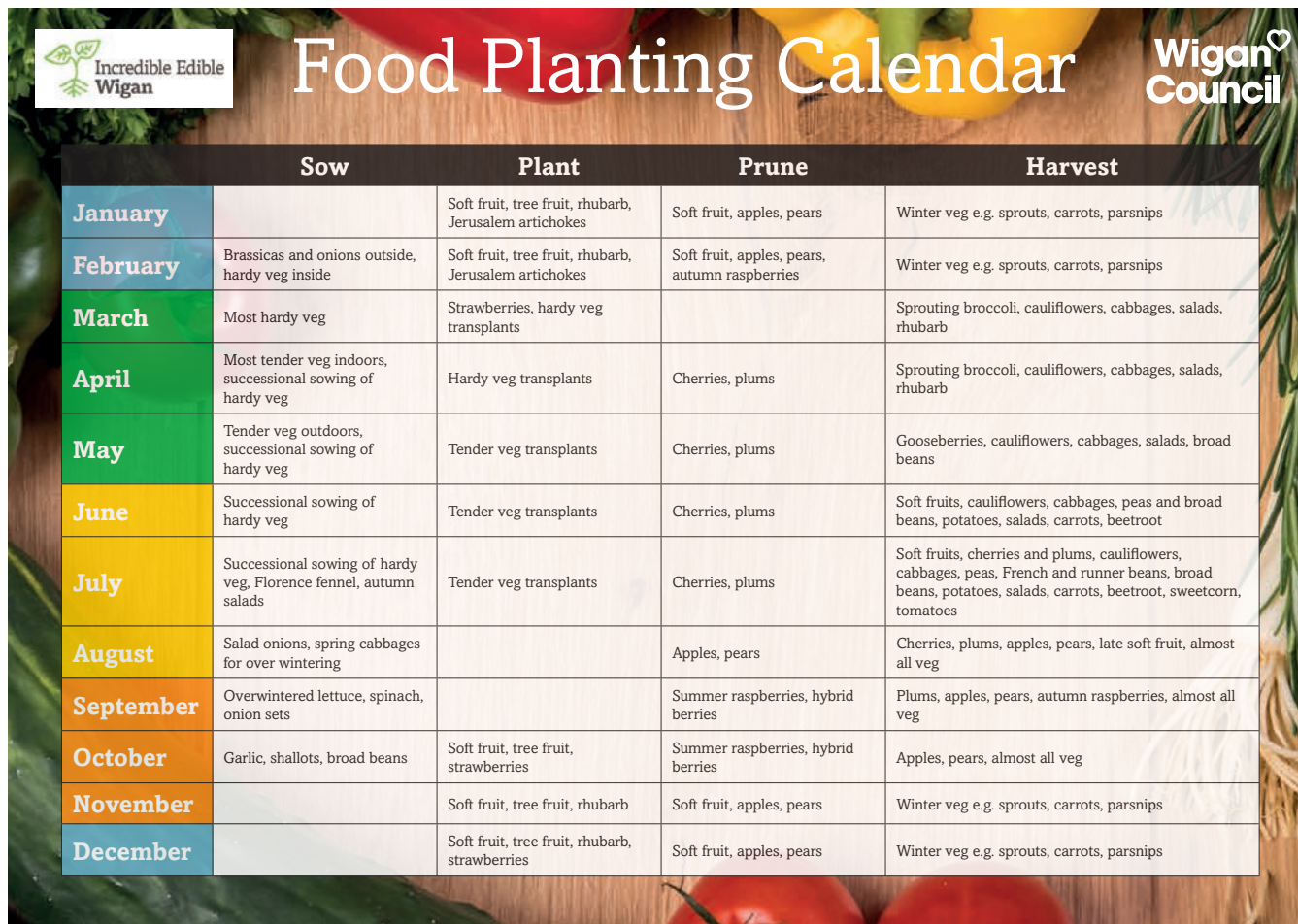
The Incredible Edible movement started in Todmorden, Lancashire in 2007 by a group of people who were looking for ways that everyone could help improve their own community. The solution they came up with was food as it can get people talking and maybe even inspire people to take action. The group started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

Incredible Edible Wigan communities came together with members of the public at a network event. The groups shared their journeys and successes, but they were also honest by admitting the mistakes they had made and what they had done to rectify it.



| | Sow | Plant | Prune | Harvest |
|------------------|--|---|---|---|
| January | | Soft fruit, tree fruit, rhubarb, Jerusalem artichokes | Soft fruit, apples, pears | Winter veg e.g. sprouts, carrots, parsnips |
| February | Brassicas and onions outside, hardy veg inside | Soft fruit, tree fruit, rhubarb, Jerusalem artichokes | Soft fruit, apples, pears, autumn raspberries | Winter veg e.g. sprouts, carrots, parsnips |
| March | Most hardy veg | Strawberries, hardy veg transplants | | Sprouting broccoli, cauliflowers, cabbages, salads, rhubarb |
| April | Most tender veg indoors, successional sowing of hardy veg | Hardy veg transplants | Cherries, plums | Sprouting broccoli, cauliflowers, cabbages, salads, rhubarb |
| May | Tender veg outdoors, successional sowing of hardy veg | Tender veg transplants | Cherries, plums | Gooseberries, cauliflowers, cabbages, salads, broad beans |
| June | Successional sowing of hardy veg | Tender veg transplants | Cherries, plums | Soft fruits, cauliflowers, cabbages, peas and broad beans, potatoes, salads, carrots, beetroot |
| July | Successional sowing of hardy veg, Florence fennel, autumn salads | Tender veg transplants | Cherries, plums | Soft fruits, cherries and plums, cauliflowers, cabbages, peas, French and runner beans, broad beans, potatoes, salads, carrots, beetroot, sweetcorn, tomatoes |
| August | Salad onions, spring cabbages for over wintering | | Apples, pears | Cherries, plums, apples, pears, late soft fruit, almost all veg |
| September | Overwintered lettuce, spinach, onion sets | | Summer raspberries, hybrid berries | Plums, apples, pears, autumn raspberries, almost all veg |
| October | Garlic, shallots, broad beans | Soft fruit, tree fruit, strawberries | Summer raspberries, hybrid berries | Apples, pears, almost all veg |
| November | | Soft fruit, tree fruit, rhubarb | Soft fruit, apples, pears | Winter veg e.g. sprouts, carrots, parsnips |
| December | | Soft fruit, tree fruit, rhubarb, strawberries | Soft fruit, apples, pears | Winter veg e.g. sprouts, carrots, parsnips |

C2 - Community and Awareness

Appley Bridge in Bloom

This project grew out of working with Shevington in Bloom and has been working and entering Its Your Neighbourhood competitions for 5 years with varying outcomes including an Outstanding result.

The group focuses on three areas across the village:-

- At Randall's Corner they have attempted to create a focal point/village centre which also reflects the heritage link with the Leeds and Liverpool Canal. Planting covers all seasons and the group have strong commercial support from Booths Fuels and Oils and local shops. This is also the site of their annual fundraising event with home-made cakes, savouries, jams, gifts and a plant sale.
- On Woodnook Road, in co-operation with shop and supermarket owners, the group have planted up barrels and large wooden planters as well as an area of ground planting which is really appreciated by local residents.
- The area surrounding the canal bridge is the most recent project and this year the group are working in conjunction with the Canal and River Trust to introduce several small wild flower areas.

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.

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.



Aspull In Bloom



Appley Bridge In Bloom



Standish in Bloom

C2 - Community and Awareness

Crooke Village Residents Association

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.

Howe Bridge

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.

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 town's 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.

Mesnes Park Community Allotments

Mesnes Park Community Allotments have been able to show the public how they have changed what once was an unkempt and untidy area into a beautiful working environment and have encouraged some of their visitors to look at their gardens in a different way. Many have been amazed by their initiative and have taken their ideas as inspiration. They freely offer advice and share their experience.

Their regular volunteers range from 18 - 75 years and have a diverse range of abilities; everyone works to their own level. Volunteers haven't just been local, they cover the whole of the Wigan borough but have had people volunteer whilst visiting family in the area from Nottingham, Kent and Scotland and they always ask if they can return on their next visit. They have been able to provide work experience to a local alternative education facility, visits from local schools and the Anger's dignitaries along with French students. They recently secured funding to expand the allotment for a new joint venture which is now well under way and are expecting to work with more groups in the future.

C2 - Community and Awareness

Mesnes Park Community Allotments



C2 - Community and Awareness



Shevington in Bloom

Shevington in Bloom's aim is to brighten their community – which they do their best to achieve. Their community of residents, businesses, schools, church, Parish and Wigan Councillors, Community Association and Library, not only support them, but are keen that they do well when they enter North West in Bloom. Without them, they would not do so well as in 2018 they were awarded Gold and Best in Category at North West in Bloom and were invited to enter Britain in Bloom.

They vary their planting by having recycled beds, formal beds, informal beds and planters including pit tub planting and planting around the field plough. They have bird boxes and there is a set of bee hives in the village and one set on the edge of the village. They will be painting our circular bench this year and the Parish Council are re-painting their black planters. Several individuals have litter picking routes in and around the village and there are numerous bins for dog fouling.

The group work with all three primary schools in the village this year by helping them to raise funds for three additional raised beds at one school, look after other beds with boys with special needs at a second school and make a new wildflower and butterfly garden at the third. Their main project this year is to recreate a mosaic made by children of the 200 year old school which was closed in 2016 to put on our Library wall for all to see.

C2 - Community and Awareness



C3 - Funding and Support

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. We are fortunate that one of our partners, Mears, has donated money to pay for some planters near to their offices in Bryn and they have also sponsored the In Bloom Awards Ceremony.

A new, small garden centre, The Blooming Nursery have also taken on the planting and maintenance of some ground planters in Golborne in return for advertising space.

To increase the awareness of the wider general public and to also extend the In Bloom season into Autumn, all residents were invited to vote for a People's Choice Award from all the Wigan Borough in Bloom entrants. Voting was open on social media for one week.

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.

Some groups are now embracing perennials and permanent landscaping themes which creates all year round interest whilst saving money.

Appley Bridge in Bloom have a good relationship with the Community Association, and IKO Ltd., who are big local employers and have supported them for three years. As well as planting up their entrance areas. It is hoped that local schoolchildren will help to create a canal-related mural this year.

Wherever possible, as many plants as possible are over-wintered to add to their stock from cuttings and from seed, with an aim to move more and more to perennial planting.

Edible Appley Bridge supplied Brussel sprouts, parsnips and turnips throughout the winter of 2018/2019, before being cleared for spring seeding.

Shevington in Bloom advertise their events in the Parish Council Newsletter and local businesses provide prizes so they can raise funds at the annual Community Summer Fete. They are also fortunate enough to receive donations from individuals and a local business makes an annual donation to the group.

Haigh Walled Kitchen Garden save all spare winter bedding plants as well as spring bulbs by planting them in the Nuttery and wildflowers and half hardy perennials are planted in Butterfly garden

The volunteers were proud recipients of a Silver award in the Council's garden competition in 2018 and the certificate is on display in the Visitor Centre and in the Garden. They also shared the good news on social media.

The garden holds two main public events in the year; the Bee Line and Apple Day. The volunteers also help with the Park's 40's Event in September.

Friends of Hindley Station have had a very busy year due to the alterations at the station, but they have formed a good relationship with Murphy's who have been carrying out civil engineering work to extend the platform. Murphy's have been very helpful and their staff have carried out 'extras' for the volunteers. A new wildlife garden, bug hotel, pond and hedgehog houses have been created in the new area.

They take their own presentation, display boards and portfolio to showcase their work wherever they go

Howe Bridge in Bloom has again held successful plant sales, supported by Moss Bank Nurseries.

C3 - Funding and Support

Wigan & Leigh Hospice. The annual garden party in August which is open to the general public is always a success. For the last 2 years the Hospice has also opened up the gardens as part of the National Garden Scheme and this is being repeated this year.

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 hold a dog show, a free concert, a festive wreath workshop and a race night – all of which are always well attended and appreciated by the residents.

Wigan & Leigh Hospice hold numerous fundraising events, such as an annual ball, garden party, and in 2017 they opened their gardens for the NGS Open Gardens. This was very successful and is being repeated this year. This is an opportunity for patients and their families to explore the gardens.

Many of the borough's In Bloom community groups have forged good relations with businesses in the area.

Moss Bank Nurseries donate on average 10,000 plants to gardening and In Bloom communities

Bickershaw Hall Nurseries provide Friends of Hindley Station with plants for the barrel planters on the Manchester-bound line and also the Royal Train Wigan-bound line. They also donate plants throughout the year and give them a discount on their summer bedding plant purchases.

Green Thumb treat the station lawns free of charge.

We are fortunate that one of our partners, **Mears**, has donated money to pay for some planters near to their offices in Bryn and they have also sponsored the In Bloom Awards Ceremony.

A new, small garden centre, **The Blooming Nursery** have also taken on the planting and maintenance of some ground planters in Golborne in return for advertising space.

Murphy's have been very helpful to Friends of Hindley Station and their staff have carried out 'extras' for the volunteers.

Most of the In Bloom communities run successful social media and web pages. This is a cost effective method of spreading the word to the wider community. Many groups also utilise local free magazines and newsletters.

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.



C3 - Funding and Support

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 The Council has supported community groups and projects who are working towards improving outcomes for local residents with £10million invested to date. This demonstrates an ongoing commitment to supporting the borough's 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

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.



Brighter Borough Fund

C3 - Funding and Support

Local Businesses

Most businesses within the borough are responsible for looking after their own environment, but there are some instances where the Council, due to their attention to detail, have secured external contracts to carry out private business' grounds maintenance.

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 centre. 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.

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.

The Galleries

The Galleries shopping complex, including Marketgate and Makinson Arcade is in the centre of Wigan. Planters are located at the many entrances into the complex. In the internal atrium there are numerous containers on the railings on the first floor which create a greenhouse feel. Each year activities are held over the summer holidays to encourage visitors.

The Grand Arcade

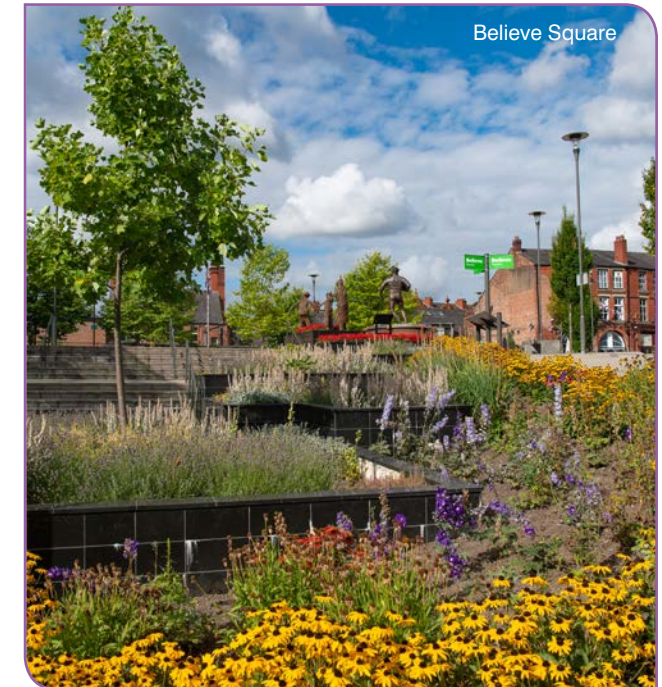
The Grand Arcade is another shopping destination in Wigan Town Centre, attracting up to 7 million visitors per year.

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.

Spinning Gate Shopping Centre

Over on the Leigh side of the borough, the Spinning Gate Shopping Centre also has a high footfall over 4 million visitors per year.

The centre features 29 hanging baskets at high level around the external perimeter. There are also three large wooden planters near to the carpark and extensive landscaped turf areas which are maintained by the Council's Street Scene Team.



Believe Square

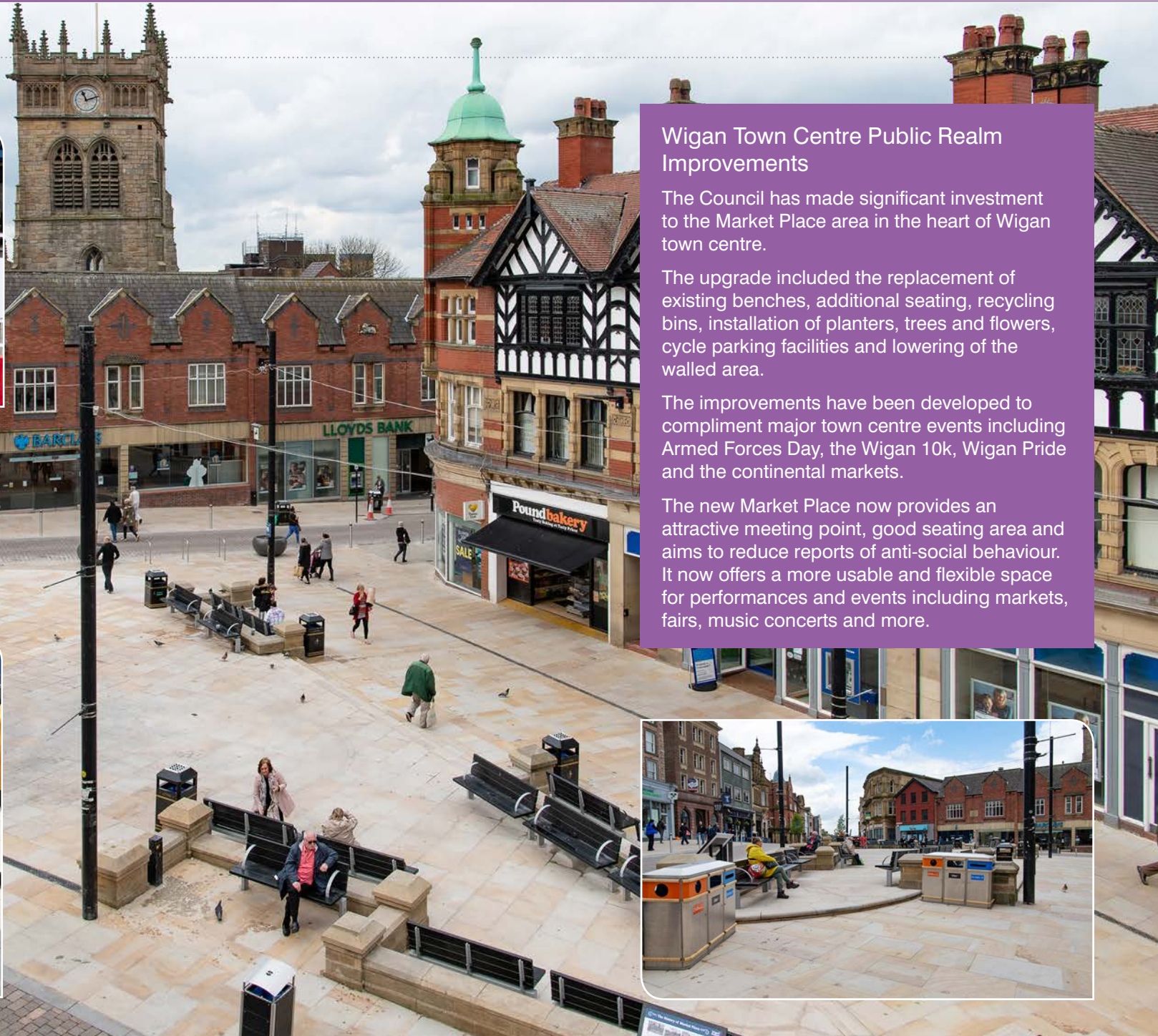


The Face on The Wiend



The Galleries

C3 - Funding and Support



Wigan Town Centre Public Realm Improvements

The Council has made significant investment to the Market Place area in the heart of Wigan town centre.

The upgrade included the replacement of existing benches, additional seating, recycling bins, installation of planters, trees and flowers, cycle parking facilities and lowering of the walled area.

The improvements have been developed to compliment major town centre events including Armed Forces Day, the Wigan 10k, Wigan Pride and the continental markets.

The new Market Place now provides an attractive meeting point, good seating area and aims to reduce reports of anti-social behaviour. It now offers a more usable and flexible space for performances and events including markets, fairs, music concerts and more.



C3 - Funding and Support

Business Involvement

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

The council now has formal sponsorship process for businesses. There are various options to choose from dependant on the size and type of their particular business, including 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. Mr Fothergill, Thompson & Morgan, Kings Seeds and Suttons Seeds donate packets of seeds to our winners. Amateur Garden and Kitchen Garden magazines provide numerous back issues for all of our winners.



Sponsored planter





Wigan Borough In Bloom

