

Wigan 
Borough
In Bloom

Wigan 
Council



WIGAN BOROUGH IN BLOOM

PORTFOLIO 2022

The  Deal



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Executive Overview



Alison McKenzie-Folan – Chief Executive, Wigan Council

Alison is Chief Executive at Wigan Council having work in Local Government for the last twelve years and previously in the Civil Service for twenty years.

Alison is also the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) lead Chief Executive for Culture.

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 Solace (Society of Local Authority Chief Executives) and spokesperson for Solace on the digital agenda. Alison also sits on the Board of Open Data Manchester.

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

Wigan Council was named LGC Council of the Year 2019 and Northern Power Women Large Organisation.



Councillor Paul Prescott, Portfolio Holder for Planning, Environmental Services and Transport

Cllr Paul Prescott was first elected to Wigan Council in 2004 for the Pemberton Ward and he has been the portfolio holder for Planning, Environmental Services and Transport since 2019.

Paul has a background in civil engineering and served as chairman of the Planning Committee and Regulation & Licensing Committees between 2009 and 2019.

His key responsibilities include the operational delivery of services such as ensuring the borough's highways network functions efficiently and helping the council to reach its carbon neutral targets by overseeing long-term recycling and future management of the borough's waste.



Cllr Chris Ready, Portfolio Holder for Communities, Leisure and Wellbeing, Parks, Public Relations, Corporate Land, Community Assets and Culture

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 worked 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.

Among his key responsibilities is the implementation of the Deal 2030, an ambitious strategy for the borough which was formed from the views of thousands of residents.

Introduction

Welcome to our Wigan in Bloom Portfolio for 2021-22.

With a population of approximately 328,000, 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. The borough has 4 SSSI's, 7 Local Nature Reserves, which are a legacy of our industrial past. Spanning the length and breadth of the borough, this area includes stunning parks, woodlands, mossland, 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

Paul Gallagher

Borough in Bloom Co-Ordinator

Andy Bond

Service Manager Environmental Education and Enforcement

Dave Green

Photographer

Heather Farmer

Operational Manager - Infrastructure Maintenance

Ian Sayer

Operations Manager - Parks and Street Scene

Jane Kneale

Operations Manager

Kerrell Walley

Climate Change Manager

Martin Purcell

Greenheart Project Officer

Matt Kelly

Service Manager - Street Scene Services

Mike King

Parks and Streetscene Area Manager (East)

Michael Fishwick

Senior Greenspace Officer

Mike Cheers

Parks and Streetscene Area Manager (West)

Steve Shaw

Media Officer

Wigan & Leigh College Photography Students

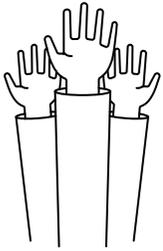
Leah Farrimond, Megan Causey, Phoebe Burns and Rebecca Harris

Meet our partners and supporters

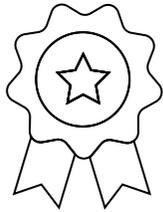
- Boroughwide Community Network
- Brighter Borough Fund
- Canals and Rivers Trust
- Carbon Landscape
- Children's Centres, schools, and colleges
- City of Trees
- Community Rail Network
- Conservation volunteers
- CVSE Sector
- Greenheart
- Groundwork
- Keep Britain Tidy
- Lancashire Wildlife Trust
- Local businesses
- 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
- Wigan Council Elected Members
- Wigan and Leigh College

Key Statistics

Over **80** In Bloom community groups across the borough

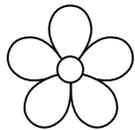


1000 volunteers



34 certificates and special awards

28 In Bloom community group entries



4 SSSI'S

7 nature reserves and parks

70% of the borough is Greenspace



89 Sites of Biological Importance

10

10 countryside sites

2 golf courses & **1** golf academy



1 community managed Green Flag Park at Colliers Corner

Volunteering

989 volunteers that are supporting Community Recovery Fund projects

1396 volunteers that are supporting Community Investment Fund Round 7 Projects

76 active volunteer opportunities on the Volunteering Hub.



19 formal parks

12,000 trees planted

169 bowling greens

44 playing fields, including **72** football and **5** rugby pitches

60 hectares of highway verges

10 war memorials

500 hectares of recreational green space

9 cemeteries

150 hectares of council housing land

1500 hectares in countryside management

4 Green Flag parks

Our Town 2021



- A deep clean of **12** district shopping centres, including **10,000 square metres** of jet washing and the installation of **176** new bins
- Engagement with over **1,000** local businesses
- A targeted clean-up of **28** grot spots with **45 tonnes** of litter and fly tipping removed
- Over **40,000 linear metres** of line markings refreshed on the highway
- Engagement with **94** volunteers with over **280 hours** of litter picking
- Over **1,700** lighting columns, bollards and other items of street furniture painted
- **24 miles** of roads and pavements swept
- Decluttering the high street with over **1400** unnecessary signs and bollards removed
- **78** Our Town banners and **41** Be Kind vinyls installed across the borough
- Delivery of the Our Town Live events programme with **7** community fun days held

Wigan Council's Street Scene team:

- Mow **3 million square metres** of grass per week
- Maintain **19** formal parks
- **4** Green Flag parks
- **11,000** Trees planted in 2021

Waste Collection and Recycling:

- **141,000 tonnes** of waste are collected in the last year.
- **53%** of all waste is recycled
- **43.8%** of all waste is sent for energy recovery.
- **95%** of all schools registered on the Eco-Schools Programme



Britain in Bloom Awards 2021

| | |
|--|------------------------|
| Wigan Council in Bloom | (Large City) Gold |
| Wigan Council in Bloom | Best Large City |
| Shevington in Bloom | (Small Town) Gold |
| Wigan Council - Mesnes Park | (Large Park) Silver |
| Wigan Council - Jubilee Park | (Small Park) Gold |
| Wigan Council - Pennington Hall Park | (Small Park) Gold |
| Shevington Parish Council - Memorial Park, Shevington | (Small Park) Gold |



Aims and objectives – The Deal 2030, 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. The Deal 2030 sets out these priorities and ambitions for the borough:

Our People, Our Place, Our Future.

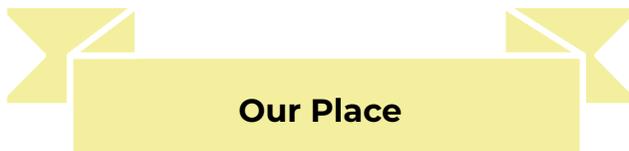


By 2030 we will:

- 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



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



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



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

As we all know a lot has changed since 2018. During the Summer of 2021 we held The Big Listening Festival which will help us refresh, refocus and strengthen The Deal 2030 as we move out of Covid and look to the future with creativity and optimism.

The choice of big topics was influenced by everyone who took part in the COVID Impact engagement series during Summer 2020 (which over 4,500 people responded to).

The festival which ran from June to September 2021 covered a variety of topics and below are some of the initial outcomes.

General findings

- Overall residents welcomed the opportunity to be listened to and want the conversations to continue
- Residents want to be part of the solution to local problems, to be communicated with in a timely manner and to have an open and honest conversation with the Council.

Sustainable Transport

- Leisure walks and some cycle routes help bring people together
- Many people are now choosing to walk, use public transport or cycle when they can.

Communities and Safety

- Most people saw communities become closer and help each other during the pandemic and feel this community spirit has continued
- Many adults and young people feel safe in their local community. However, raised some safety concerns that need to be addressed. For example, anti-social behaviour and traffic speeds
- Lots of people feel the streets are tidy and well presented.

Environment and Climate Change

- Most people love their local parks, canals, flashes, and green spaces
- Some residents are helping the environment by recycling, growing their own food, avoiding waste, reducing meat consumption, supporting local businesses and ethical companies
- Some residents are also lobbying large companies and central government.

District Centres

- Lots of people feel their local town centre has community spirit and enjoy shopping locally
- Local town centres are convenient and easy to get to

Children and Young People.

- Anti-social behaviour should be addressed more effectively
- High School groups talked about not feeling safe when walking on their own
- Protect wildlife and have more green spaces
- Have more organised activities but also more informal safe spaces to meet with friends
- Reduce traffic and speeding cars to increase pedestrian safety
- Young people are very ambitious, but many feel they might need to leave the borough to pursue their ambitions
- They would like to know more about volunteer opportunities and would like more support with career planning and with the transition to high school and then to college
- Young people's main worries include pressure from social media, friendships, transition to high school and road safety
- They shared ideas that could help support their mental health





Section A – Horticulture

A1 – Overall Impression

A2 – Maintenance of Planted Areas

A3 – Plant Selection

A4 – Plant Quality

A1: Overall Impression – Taking account of all relevant factors, how strong is the impact of the entry in creating a memorable impression?

Are designs and materials used appropriate to their locations? Emphasis here is on co-ordination and overall quality.

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 - 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. However, as part of No Mow May grass cutting is suspended in some areas of the borough allow the grass to grow and attract more pollinators and improve biodiversity.

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 arboriculture 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 - Are the plants or trees used in the planting schemes suited to their growing conditions, locations and purposes? Is there a diverse range of plant species to attract a variety of wildlife? Is there year-round interest where appropriate?

Moss Bank have been the main contractor to supply and maintain our containers across the Wigan borough for twelve 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 Council work 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 and with the ever-changing climate we monitor the weather closely to make sure that our blooms stay out for the maximum amount of time, for example, in 2019 we kept out summer planting scheme out well into October, but in previous years it used to be September. Our summer schedule is between June and October and for winter/spring it is between November 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. All winter planters are planted with additional spring bulbs to extend the season.

Most of our containers feature annual plants, this is purely down to cost as it is expensive to replace perennials if they are stolen or vandalised. We do have a significant number of large ground containers that have permanent, perennial planting. These are supplemented with annuals to enhance the colour and appearance throughout the seasons. Perennial plants such as Phormiums are chosen for their year-round structure, whilst herbaceous plants such as Phygelius and ware chosen for their unusual striking colour and long flowering periods and Cupressus Macrocarpa adds height and interest to winter flower containers

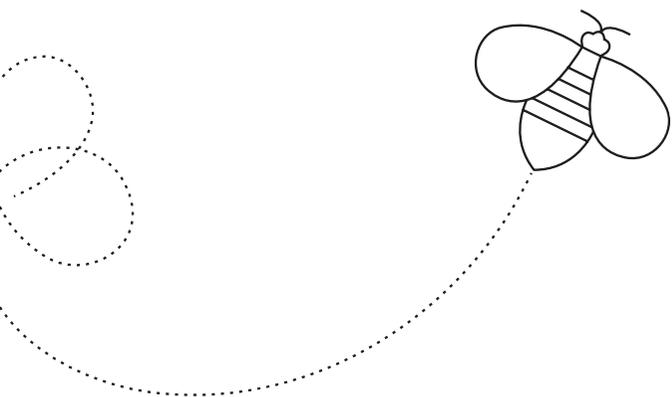


A4: Plant Quality - Are the plants or trees vibrant and grown to their full potential? Are they generally free of all pests and diseases?

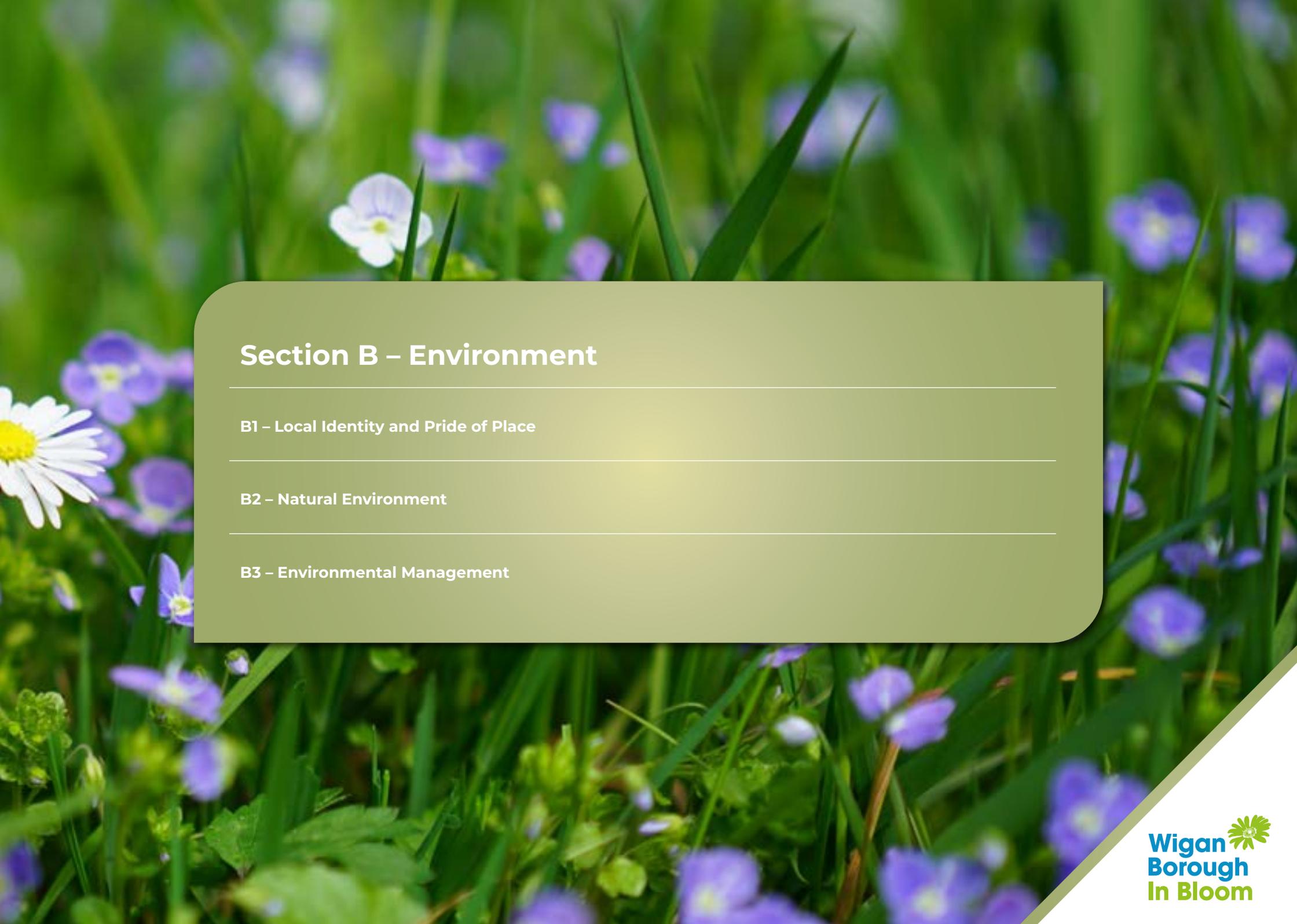
Plants are delivered to the nursery early spring and late summer and grown on under glass for two weeks to ensure that they recover from transportation. Where possible, containers are planted up on the nursery, so the plants have time to settle and start filling out before they are moved to their final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

In summer Moss Bank Nurseries will plant up and maintain over 65,000 plants in nearly 1100 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.







Section B – Environment

B1 – Local Identity and Pride of Place

B2 – Natural Environment

B3 – Environmental Management



B1: Local Identity and Pride of Place - Is there a sense of place, with appropriate acknowledgement of local heritage, (Local biodiversity) and its relevance for the community.e.g. art in the landscape, signage, and interpretation?

Consider the pride taken in hard landscape (including streets) open spaces (including grass areas, wild areas and beaches if appropriate (street furniture maintenance etc. To include, cleanliness, absence of litter, graffiti vandalism, flyposting/temporary signage, chewing gum, and effective dog fouling control measures.

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

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

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



During the Big Listening Project and Festival our residents told us that community was an important part of day-to-day life. Knowing neighbours, keeping in touch with those nearby and being a friendly place to live was at the heart of this borough and key to its success.

The Our Town campaign aims to build on this sense of community and pride by bringing people together to share their stories and to celebrate our borough, its heritage, its beauty, and the people that make it great.

#OurTown

It was clear to us that residents feel a deep sense of belonging to their individual wards rather than the wider borough which is where the #OurTown campaign comes in. Tailored to each ward, the #OurTown campaign will address the issues raised during the consultation.



Cleaner Greener Project Works



During our Big Listening Project, residents said they wanted to see improvements in their local town centres.

Wigan Council has committed £1 million to fund these improvements. The money has been reserved for 12 district centres, not including Wigan and Leigh, the borough's two main towns.

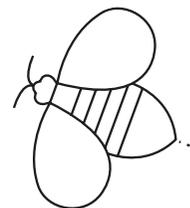
The funding will be earmarked for public realm, Streetscene and environmental projects, such as better street signs, more litter or recycling bins and more attractive shop fronts.

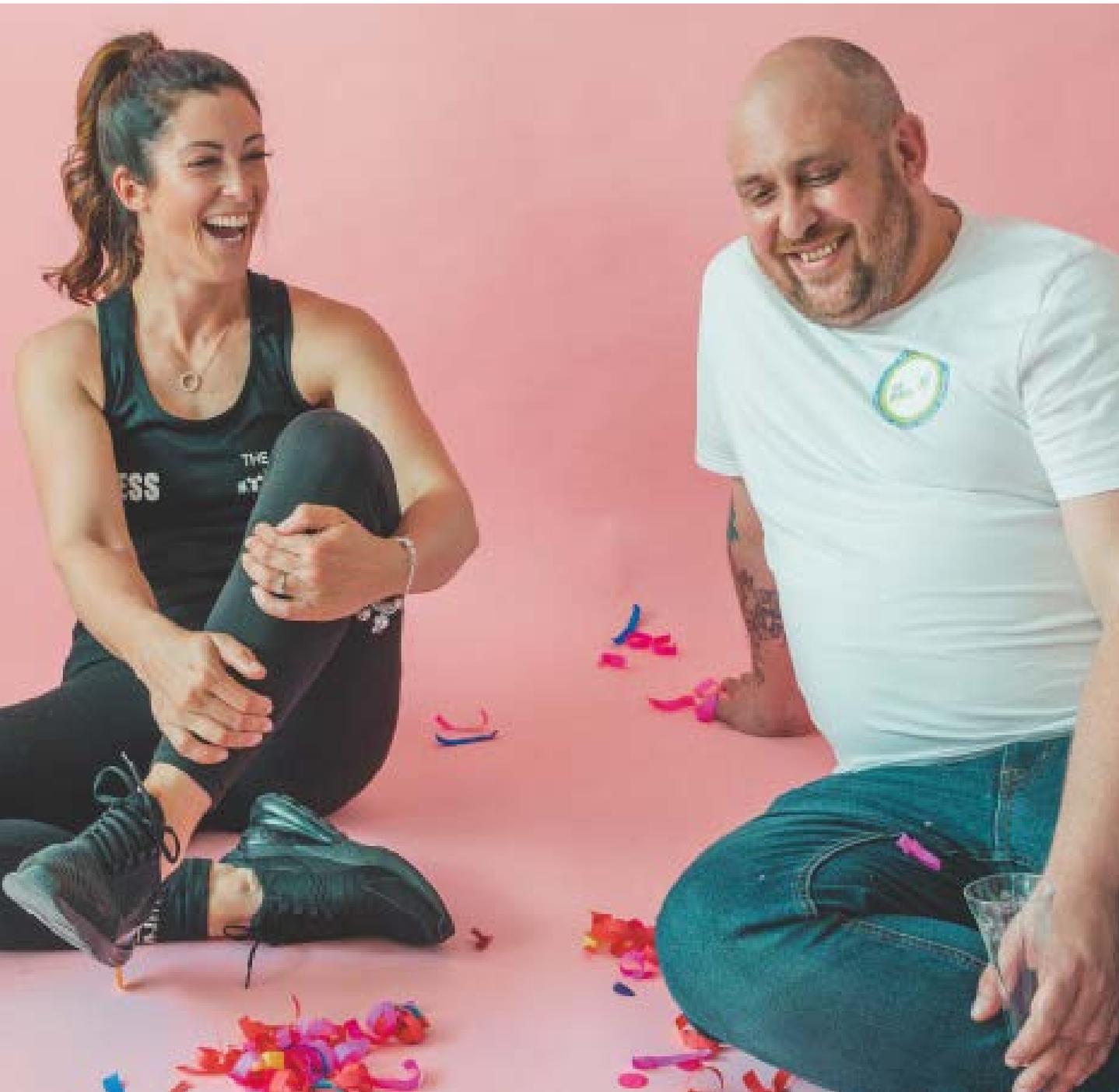
The package includes replacement bins and additional bins, repainting and replacing street signs and benches, new or improved street lighting and repainting road markings.

Each area will get a deep clean, including jet-washing, weeding and pruning to tidy up the streets. New trees will also be planted in each district and new flower planters installed.

The 12 district centres of Hindley, Golborne, Ince, Orrell, Aspull, Lowton, Standish, Pemberton, Ashton, Atherton, Platt Bridge and Tyldesley. A deep clean of 12 district shopping centres, including 10,000 squares metres of jet washing and the installation of 176 new bins

- Engagement with over 1,000 local businesses
- A targeted clean-up of 28 grot spots with 45 tonnes of litter and fly tipping removed
- Over 40,000 linear metres of line markings refreshed on the highway
- Engagement with 94 volunteers with over 280 hours of litter picking
- Over 1,700 lighting columns, bollards and other items of street furniture painted
- 24 miles of roads and pavements swept
- Decluttering the high street with over 1400 unnecessary signs and bollards removed
- 78 Our Town banners and 41 Be Kind vinyls installed across the borough
- Delivery of the Our Town Live events programme with 7 community fun days held
- Our Town will continue in 2022.





Our Town Awards

The covid pandemic and lockdown restrictions have tested all of us, but our community spirit has been unwavering. We have witnessed extraordinary acts of kindness from people all over the borough, from those working on the frontline of the COVID-19 pandemic to a friendly neighbour checking in on vulnerable residents. In 2021 we held the first ever Our Town awards ceremony with winners in the following categories.

Neighbourhood Hero

Winner – Jes and Sam Rusling

Community Hero

Winner – Kieran Jones

Environmental Hero

Winner – Mark Whittaker

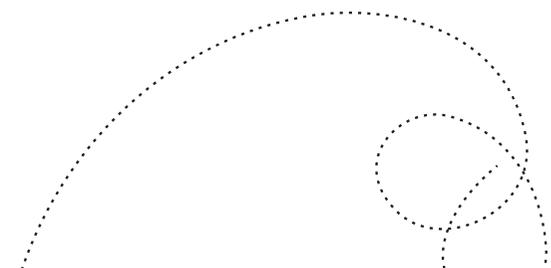
COVID-19 Superheroes

Winner - Jessica Holt

Extraordinary Acts of Kindness

Winner – Ruth Connor

The Our Town Awards will return in 2022 and nominations will open again during the summer.



Historic Environment Strategy

In 2021 Wigan adopted its first Historic Environment Strategy which recognises that Wigan's heritage belongs to the people of the borough. We all have a responsibility to protect it and a right to enjoy it. Our historic environment is a key part of that heritage. This includes historic buildings, structures and ruins, conservation areas, historic gardens and landscapes.

The strategy covers three themes:

- Understanding our historic environment
- Valuing our historic environment
- Managing and protecting our historic environment

The Council owns several heritage assets, but most are owned and managed privately by people and businesses, or by local community groups and voluntary bodies. We want this strategy to be used by all those groups, so that they can work in co-operation with local communities and the council to help conserve and enhance the borough's historic environment.

Wigan Wallgate Townscape Heritage Initiative



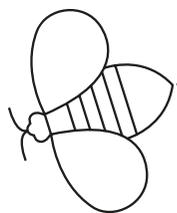
We have secured funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund to create a Townscape Heritage Initiative for the Wallgate area of Wigan. Funding is available for repairs to buildings within the area



Public Artwork



There are over 44 pieces of public art around the borough including: Interpretation figures around Wigan Pier Quarter, The Face at the Wiend, Ince Mosaic, Walmsley Park, Atherton Mosaic, Standish Sculpture, Wigan Tree, Leigh Willow Sculpture, Dragonfly at Flashes, Rose Bridge Arch, Spirit of Wigan, 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. Newly installed in 2020 is a statue in Wigan Town centre which depicts a man, woman and child in tribute to the generations who laboured in the pits and were involved in the mining industry.



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, Morley's 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.

Historic Monuments



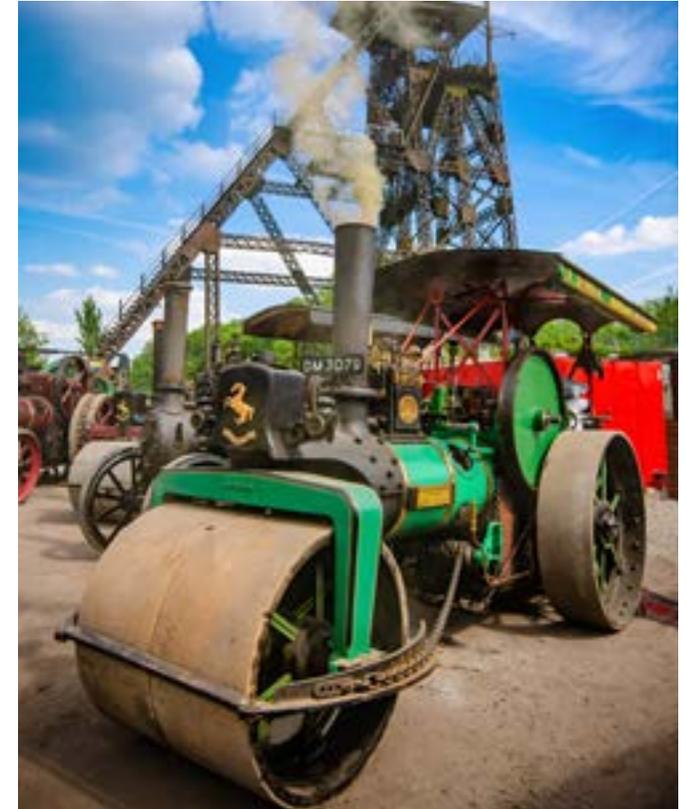
There are nearly 500 listed buildings of national importance in the Wigan Borough and 500 of local interest. There are also 12 Scheduled Ancient Monuments and 23 Conservation Areas.

Mab's Cross on Standishgate at Wigan

Mab's Cross is the stump of a 13th century cross now located in the grounds of Mab's Cross school on Standishgate, but originally positioned on the opposite side of the road outside no.138 Standishgate. It is known as 'Mab's Cross' after Lady Mabel Bradshaigh who in 1323 had to walk barefoot from her home, Haigh Hall, to the cross as penance for bigamy.

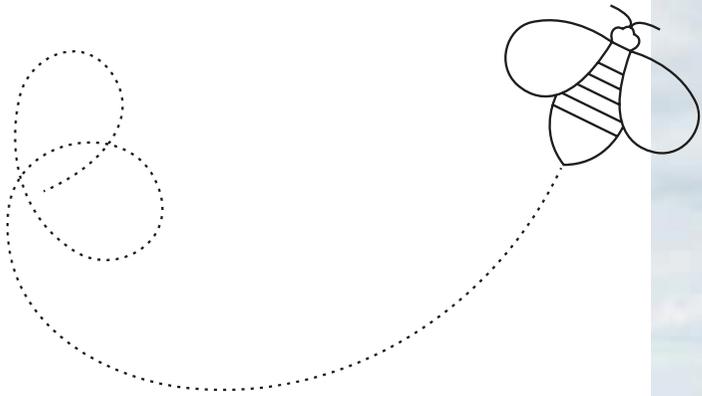
Market Cross in Market Place at Standish
The Market Cross stands on its original site close to the Roman Road between Wigan and Preston. It is located to the west of St Wilfrid's church and consists of three stone steps on which stands the gritstone base of a 14th century cross with an early 19th century stone cross above. Stocks dating from the 18th century stand next to it. The cross base and the ground below the stocks are included in the scheduling with the 19th century cross being grade II listed.

Mining Industry



Astley Green Colliery is situated on the edge of Chat Moss to 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.



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 were not 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 location.

The Astley stretch of the canal was resurfaced in 2019 and has improved access between Wigan and Salford and also to the Newly opened RHS Bridgewater Gardens at Worsley.

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



B2: Natural Environment – Is there an understanding of what biodiversity means locally? Have efforts been made to create, restore or maintain appropriate habitats to support wildlife?

What has been done to assess the effectiveness of any interventions? e.g. through surveys. Is nature being considered in all activities rather than just restricting wildlife-friendly practices to a specific project area?

Climate Change Emergency

Wigan Council declared on 17th July 2019 in a bid to acknowledge the urgency surrounding this complex and vital issue. We will display strong leadership and work collaboratively with communities, partners and organisations to ensure our Council reaches the target of net zero carbon by 2038, with a strong influence to reduce the borough's emissions.

Our Outline Climate Change Strategy was adopted by Cabinet in October 2020. The plan sets out Wigan Council's ambition and a road map as to how we will tackle these challenges together, ensuring we take advantage of the opportunities that will emerge from early action on the climate emergency.

As a council we have already undertaken several innovative and bold initiatives that are aimed at reducing our impact on the climate and reducing our borough's carbon emissions. We also recognise that limiting the harmful effects of climate change cannot be achieved by a single organisation and the effort requires changes to how we all live and work.

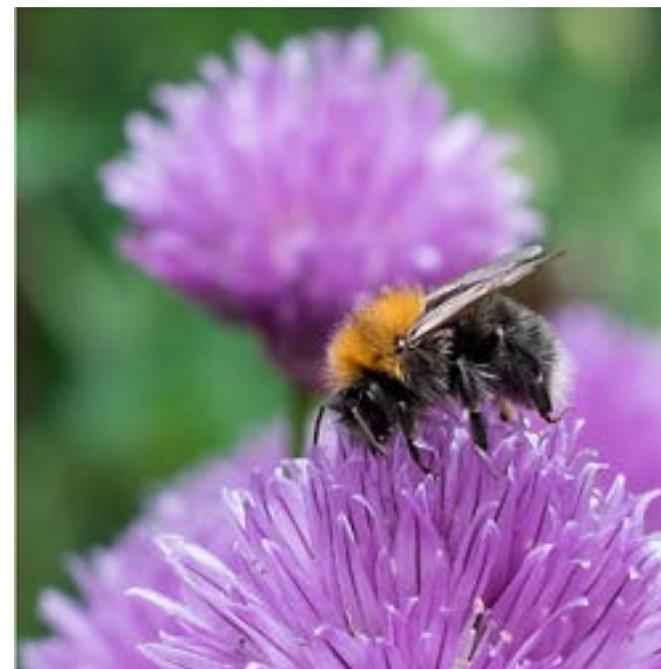
Every resident has a role to play in securing a climate resilient future. It was identified by our residents, community groups and young people

that the state of the environment was a key issue and presented a major concern.

Common issues raised included:

- Air quality
- Recycling and single use plastics
- Effects of climate change
- Our natural environment and its biodiversity.

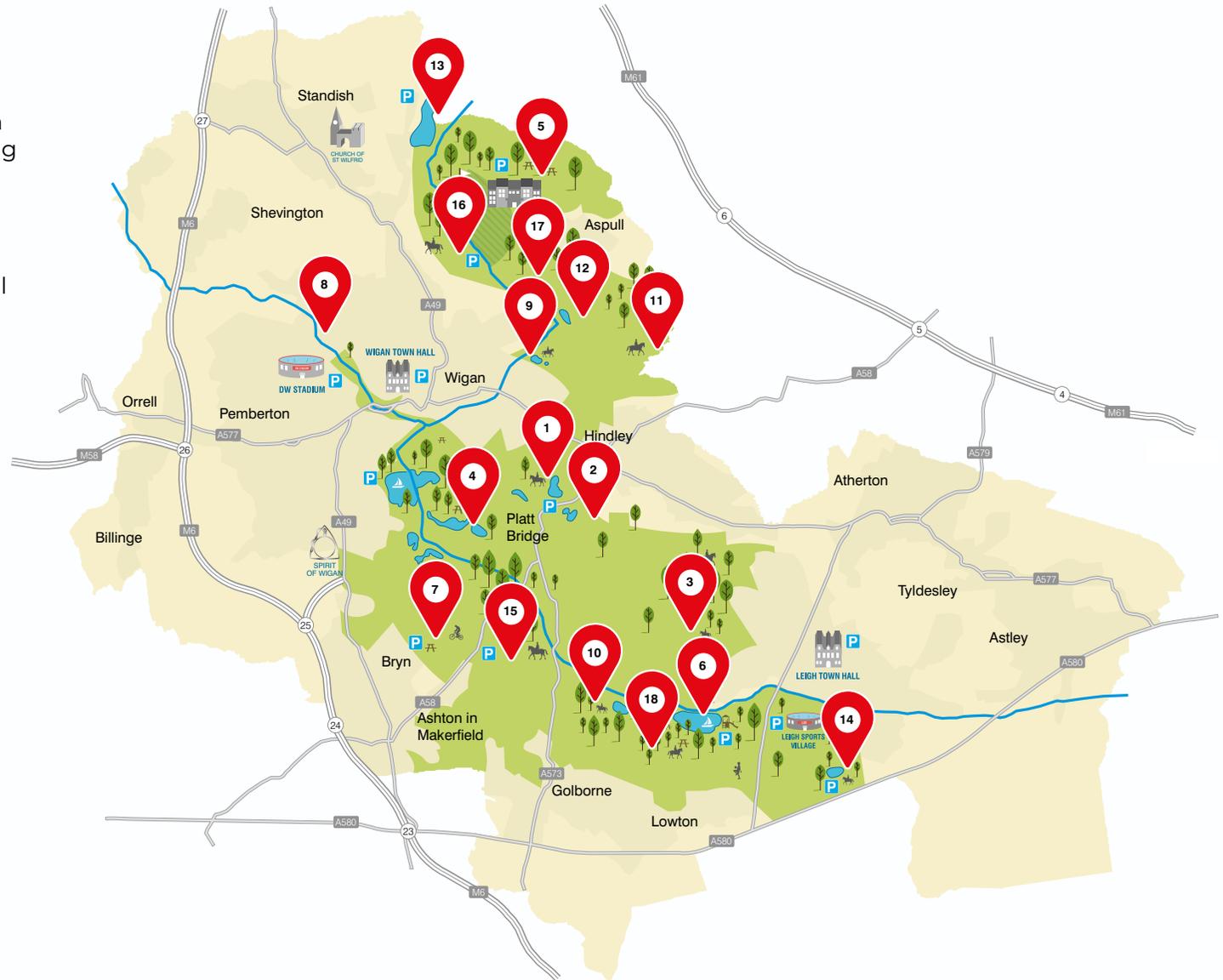
In terms of the Natural Environment and biodiversity and meeting our climate change responsibilities we have an abundance of greenspace. 70% of the borough and the work of Greenheart and Naturalisation of Borough projects are key to this.



Greenheart

Our Greenheart stretches from Leigh to Haigh and includes parks, woodlands, wetlands, canals and green spaces. Since the 1970s the council and its partners have been working to improve these areas. Many have developed into exciting 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'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.

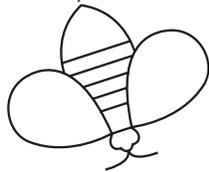
Within Wigan borough there are **4 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's)** and **7 Local Nature Reserves (LNR)**. The Council and partners currently have an application under consideration with Natural England for the creation of a National Nature Reserve, which will incorporate some of the LNR's. If successful it will be the first National Nature Reserve in the country in a predominately urban setting. A Decision will be made in Early Summer.



Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are areas of land and water protected by law to conserve wildlife and geology.

Scientific interest can be due to the diversity of plants, animals and habitats, rocks and landforms, or a combination of natural features.



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.

The peatland has been restored by raising the water table and reversing the effects of drying where the mire community was replaced by a monospecific sward of purple moor grass in which very few other species are present. Downy birch *Betula pubescens* also began to establish, this was removed as part of the restoration in 2006.

The site is important for birds, in particular wintering raptors such as hen harrier, short-eared owl and merlin, and it supports breeding species such as curlew and long-eared owl.

Bryn Marsh and Ince Moss,



They form two of a series of wetlands that run partly along the Hey Brook valley, stretching for some 10 km between Wigan and Leigh, known as the Wigan Flashes. Both lie adjacent to, but are separated by, the Leeds and Liverpool Canal and the Preston to Liverpool railway line.

Agricultural and industrial activity have had a profound effect on the vegetation of the area, resulting in a complex system of habitats dominated by open water and swamp but still retaining fragments of the original mossland. This site supports the best example of swamp and tall fen vegetation in Greater Manchester and Merseyside as well as important populations of dragonflies and breeding birds.

The breeding bird community support a characteristic range of wetland species such as little grebe, great crested grebe, mute swan, tufted duck, snipe, redshank, reed and sedge warblers.

Roosts of migrant swallows and wagtails, and passerines (especially warblers), use the reedbeds for roosting or on passage in autumn, and the site is also used by raptors such as sparrowhawk and long-eared owls, especially in winter.

Highfield Moss



Although the site is relatively small, the peatland vegetation is the best remaining example of the mires, which once covered large areas of lowland Greater Manchester and Merseyside.

This Site of Special Scientific Interest 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. The pools support good dragonfly populations including the locally scarce black darter *Sympetrum scoticum*. The site also supports breeding and wintering bird populations.

Abram Flashes

The Flashes are shallow open water-bodies originally formed through the flooding of land which has subsided through deep-mining activities. Their gradual colonisation has resulted in a mosaic of different habitats, including:

- Open water
- Swamp
- Tall herb fen
- Wet marshy grassland
- Parts of the site and most of the surrounding land is farmed.

The breeding waterfowl community is of particular interest and includes mute swan, mallard, tufted duck, pochard, garganey, shoveler, gadwell, yellow wagtails and waders such as lapwing, snipe and redshank, who breed in the tall fen grassland, itself a nationally declining habitat.

Characteristic birds of swamp and fen such as reed bunting, reed warbler and sedge warbler are well represented. The Hey Brook provides suitable conditions for species such as kingfisher and grey wagtail.

The site is also locally important for wintering waterfowl, which use the whole Wigan Flashes complex. Lower water levels, particularly in autumn, can provide a valuable feeding and roosting habitat for migrant waders such as greenshank, ruff and dunlin.



Local Nature Reserves

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.

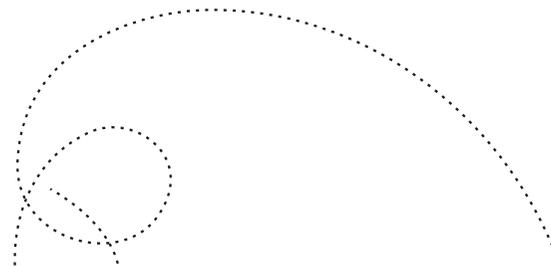
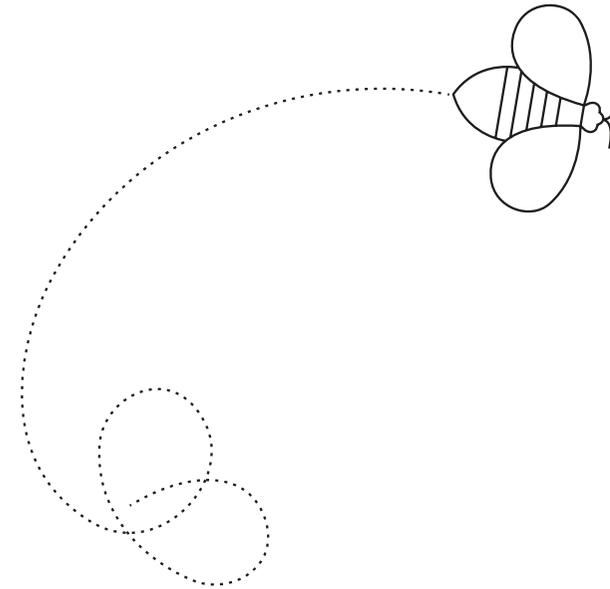
The area has an abundance of wildlife, including water vole, willow tit and bittern.

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.

Today the area has an abundance of wildlife, including water vole, willow tit (one of five RSPB red listed birds in the area) and the very rare and shy bittern. The ease of access, proximity to housing and links with local rights of way provides a much-valued community resource.





Three Sisters Nature Reserve



This site was once famous for its three large spoil heaps known locally as the 'Three Sisters' and from this the site officially became the Three Sisters Recreation Area. Natural regeneration following past mining has re-colonised parts of the reserve and now provides an interesting and diverse mix of grassland species.

The Three Sisters (LNR) is a wildlife wetland reserve providing the local community and visitors a gateway into the wider Wigan Flashes Nature reserve.

Visitors will be impressed by the tranquil beauty of the lake which plays home to a variety of birdlife including goosanders, mute swans, grey heron and kingfisher.

The locally famous bird feeding station, which draws in ornithologists from the local area and further afield, offers the perfect opportunity to enjoy closer views of local wildlife including the nationally rare Willow Tit (one of five RSPB red listed birds in the area), plus the Jay, Chaffinch and Great Spotted Woodpecker.

Borsdane Wood LNR

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.

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 several nature and history walks.

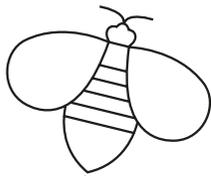
Low Hall LNR was formed due to mining subsidence and flooding, leaving a large body of water and an extensive wetland mosaic of fen, open water, and wet woodlands. Approximately 35 years ago the site underwent a reclamation scheme to restore and improve the site. As part of this scheme, native and non-native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

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 because 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 is 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.



Kirkless Nature Reserve



Kirkless boasts panoramic views of Wigan, offering woodland walks, meadows and ponds. The site has strong industrial heritage links, as it was previously part of the Wigan Iron and Steel Works and was a major area for locomotive repairs and flagstone production. Building remains from its industrial past have become unique features of the landscape.

Perhaps one of the most significant effects of industrial activity on the site is that it is now home to a plant community found nowhere else in the area, and more likely seen on coastal dunes. A highly successful, yet unusual form of natural regeneration has colonised areas, providing an interesting mix of species that have developed as a result of the iron ore extraction process.

Greenslate Local Nature Reserve



Greenslate (LNR) was created 20 years ago when three ponds were excavated, creating open water and swamp land and the area planted with native tree species, which have all done exceptionally well. The LNR now has a high biodiversity value

The area is home to a diverse group of mammals, birds and insects, including four RSPB red listed birds, nineteen species of butterfly and the protected water vole. It is particularly important for its sighting of thirteen species of dragonflies and w.

The ease of access, close proximity to housing and links with local rights of way provides a much-valued community resource and is seen as a very positive benefit to future plans.



CARBON LANDSCAPE

The industrial landscape that dominated South Lancashire is being transformed into one of the greenest areas of the Northwest. 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, wildlife and biodiversity.

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 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.



Naturalising the Borough

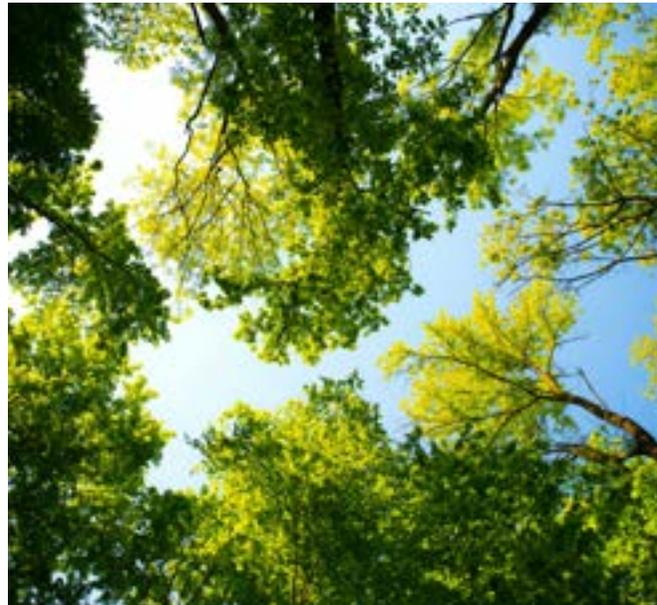
A key part of our Climate Change Strategy is our Naturalising the Borough (NTB) project, a very exciting and ambitious initiative.

Naturalising the Borough aims to tackle the climate crisis by:

- Increasing areas of species rich grasslands
- Increasing the boroughs tree stock
- Restoring peatland
- Restoring heathland
- Creating new habitats
- Increasing perennial planting schemes
- Reducing the use of herbicides
- Improving the management of ponds, wetlands and Local Nature Reserves.

Through these actions we aim to increase biodiversity across the borough, as well as reduce the negative impact on the environment. We are working closely with community groups, schools and other organisations to achieve these aims.

Tree planting

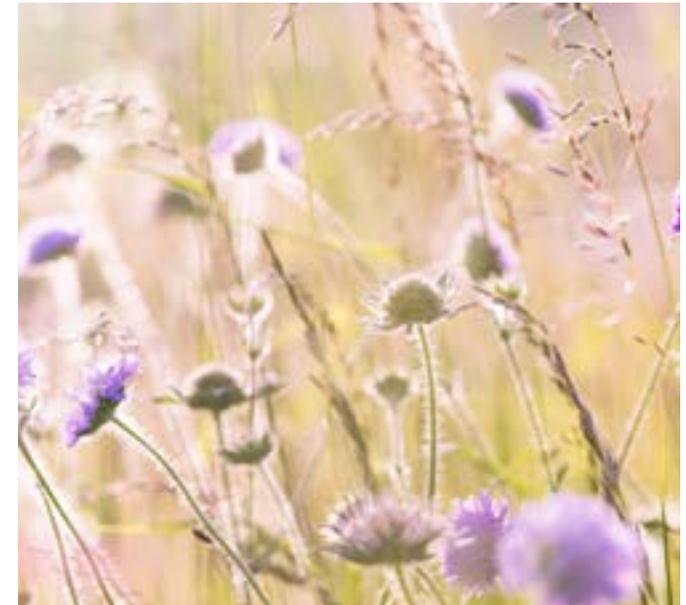


A key part of our plan is tree planting, so that we can increase the number of trees in our borough. We have pledged to plant 1 million trees in the borough by 2030.

However, it is just as important to recognise that a species rich grassland is not only better than woodland from an ecological point of view, e.g., food for pollinators, but the grasslands are also far better at carbon sequestration and will lock the CO₂ in the soil.

We will therefore always take these factors into consideration when identifying areas for tree planting.

What have we done so far?



The Naturalising the Borough project began at the end of January 2020, and, despite the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, we have made a fantastic start by working with various community groups and other organisations.

We have already planted over 60,000 trees across the borough and created nearly 60,000 m² of wildflower meadows. In 2021 we planted a further 12,000 trees.

We have implemented No Mow May; grass cutting is suspended in some areas of the borough to allow the grass to grow and attract more pollinators and improve biodiversity.

Recent schemes

A580, East Lancs Road

Wildflowers on grass verges along this stretch of a major road through the borough between Manchester and Liverpool. Yellow rattle and wildflower mix



Holgate Park, Orrell

Creation of a community orchard, tree planting and a wildflower meadow, in conjunction with a local community group, Brighter Better Orrell.

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.



Edge Green Common

Restoration works have commenced at Edge Green Common, sitting on the urban fringes of Golborne and Ashton in Makerfield. This five-hectare site is made up of a mosaic of habitats including peatland, ponds, acidic grassland and plantation woodland, supporting a fantastic array of plants including sphagnum mosses, sundews, cotton grasses and bilberry.

The site will become a vital steppingstone helping to connect fragments of peatland and other wetlands throughout Greater Manchester. This will not only support habitat for wetland species such as the white-faced darter dragonfly, but the project will also help to alleviate flooding from Golborne Road and Edge Green Lane where the water currently runs off the site and into the road and associated drains.

City of Trees

As well as our local ambitions, Wigan Council is proud to be part of this project, which aims to plant three million trees - one for every person 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.

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.



Golborne Park

Golborne and Lowton West Voice, a community group have been working in partnership with the Councils Naturalising the borough on a joint vision enhance their local township park. The site was once a large coal colliery shutting in the late 70s, the land was redeveloped in the 90s into Golborne Park. In more recent years the park has been a hotspot for ASB and overall unloved.

More than 4,500 new trees have been planted on Golborne Park in a bid to create a cleaner, greener environment. A large wildflower meadow has been rejuvenated, taking advice from Lancashire Wildlife Trust. The trees have been planted as part of a partnership between Wigan Council, Golborne and Lowton West Voice, City of Trees and sponsorship from local business, Wetherby Building Systems Ltd.

The Voice were successful in applying for funding and bought tools so they can undertake some of the maintenance of the park, the volunteers have been working to clear path, collect litter, create dead hedging and over the winter embarked on a project to remove low ecological value self-seeding trees to improve the habitat for orchids and other native pollinating wildflowers. This regular volunteering day brings the community together and builds a sense of ownership withing the community

The new trees will contribute to a cleaner, greener borough as part of efforts to make the local landscape more resilient to the impacts of climate change and to allow nature to thrive. The site continues to be transformed year on year and is a great example of how the Deal supports community ideas to develop the areas they live.

Former Bedford Colliery Site

The 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.

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, 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 residents to visit.

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

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 wildflowers. 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.

Future plans for Haigh Hall Woodland Park include the Historic Hall now back into Council ownership. We are also developing a Heritage, Nature and People project to develop an application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Further tree planting is proposed and an ambitious scheme to reintroduce Red Squirrel.

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 several 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.

Wigan & Leigh Hospice

The gardens are maintained throughout the year as they are open for Hospice patients and their families all year round. They are there to be enjoyed and to lift spirits. They are a place to take time out and to reflect, and somewhere to go when things get too much. They are also somewhere where children can explore when visiting a relative. The aim is for the gardens to look good at all times of the year – with colour in each season.

There is a wide variety of plants in the gardens.

Wherever possible they are perennials, rather than annual bedding plants. However, annuals are important at filling in some spaces and for adding some colour at times of the year when there is not much else. They can also add that “wow factor” – so some bedding plants are added to the raised beds near the Hospice entrance to create a good first impression.

There are many bulbs planted around the grounds, most of them providing spring colour. There are a wide range of trees in the gardens, including native ones and some fruit trees. There are many perennials around the patients' rooms. These provide colour in the summer months

and come back year on year. These are divided whenever possible, to fill in gaps elsewhere.

The Amberswood Garden is a wildflower garden. It provides masses of colour in an area where patients and their families can take some time out.

Over the Christmas period low energy lights are installed in the trees, along with 30 lit Christmas trees along the path outside the patients' rooms. The trees were sponsored by local businesses. This fundraising event was thoroughly enjoyed by all the patient's and their families during the dark winter's nights.

Former Bickershaw Colliery site

The former colliery was closed in 1992. Bickershaw Country Park development proposals will provide much needed opportunities for recreation and leisure facilities for the local community. In addition, habitat management and improvements will be undertaken. The overall site is approximately 247 hectares in size consisting of a mix of previously remediated colliery land and three large water bodies, Diggle Flash in the north, and Firs Flash and Nevison's Flash in the south.

The landscape master plan aims to provide a site for informal recreation and passive activities that reflect the quiet nature of the area and respects its diverse natural assets.

Highland Bullocks was introduced at Bickershaw in 2019 to control the tough overgrown vegetation. Cows are perfect for grazing the grassland at Bickershaw as, unlike sheep, they

wrap their tongues around clumps of vegetation to pull it up, rather than simply cropping it. Grazing in this way creates small patches of bare earth ready to be populated by new seeds. The highland cows are also less picky eaters, with their hardy gut capable of digesting tougher vegetation.

The area of Bickershaw which the highland cattle will be grazing will not only be important for wildlife, but also encompasses part of the Environment Agency funded 'Slow the Flow' works. The Slow the Flow scheme is all about returning the watercourses on Bickershaw – a former colliery site – to their former glory; extending the route of streams, creating new wetland and connecting fragmented watercourses to slow the flow of water and improve the floodplain, protecting residents downstream.

An extensive network of informal footpaths, rights of way and bridleways offer a range of

routes for walking, cycling and horse riding both within and beyond the site. Strategic routes, including the recently upgraded Leeds and Liverpool Canal and Bridgewater Canal towpaths, offer safe and off-road connectivity into the wider Greenheart network.





B3: Environmental Management
Have steps been taken to employ sustainable or ecological gardening practices? E.g. Avoiding chemicals like pesticides and using other biological and physical controls like hand weeding or companion planting. Elimination of the use of peat, implementing solutions, like composting, reducing the use of plastics and recycling those used. Taking measures to minimise the use of water. Where local environmental issues have been identified, have plants or greening solutions been considered, e.g., as rain garden, green roofs/walls or as barriers for pollution?

With regarding to our parks, nature reserves and in the floral container displays across the borough Wigan Council and our contractors are on a continual journey in terms of sustainable and ecological gardening practice. The new flower contract will have a greater focus on ensuring there is a more sustainable mix of planting, including more perennials and pollinator friendly planting. Along with peat free sourced planting.

As part of our Climate Change Strategy, Wigan Council is an organisation who works to minimise waste in all aspects of the organisation. In our parks and greenspaces Green waste, leaf mulch and chipped arisings from tree and shrub pruning are reused on site –around the car parks, Bowling Green borders, community allotment, wildlife garden etc. These materials are also given away to local allotment and In Bloom groups free of charge and the public can arrange to collection wood chip.

The Streetscene team is continually looking at monitoring and reviewing and reducing the amount of waste which the park generates. Some recycled materials are stored and used elsewhere but, Wigan Council recycles most green waste on site.

Where green material has been chipped, we will make an assessment to establish whether these can be used within our parks. However, some parks are typically formal in design, in some areas this is not appropriate, so helping our community groups is a great way to recycle.



Chemical Use

Chemical use will only be considered if all other mechanical methods have been explored. In addition, where a chemical must be used the most effective, and if possible specific, treatment will be used for maximum efficiency. Persistent use of chemicals will be avoided.

Peat Free

Plants are only ever sourced from peat free suppliers. The contract for the supply of bedding plants has recently been tendered, as one of the social values / outcomes, we asked for the plants to be grown in peat free conditions.

Climate Change Adaption Priorities

To demonstrate its commitment to sound environmental practices new fleet vehicles will run on LPG where this option is practicably achievable, Vehicle use is regularly monitored to ensure that journeys are not duplicated, and vehicles are being used efficiently.

Energy consumption in buildings is regularly monitored to prevent wastage and to identify costs. Inefficient energy systems will be replaced as and when is possible. Wigan Council has invested in a new software system to improve monitoring of energy usage and assessing patterns of usage.

Street lighting around our parks has been replaced with LED lights which help the Council reduce energy consumption by 95%.

A new work strand for our Corporate Land Management team is to look at how we can mitigate the effects of climate change corporately and whether we need to look at

adapting our maintenance regimes accordingly. As temperatures change, we see great opportunities to manage our portfolio of land differently, review maintenance regimes, plant appropriate tree species, utilising land as part of land-based solutions.

As part of our overall Corporate environmental management responsibilities, we have a number of other initiatives to achieve this.

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 which includes collecting residual waste every three weeks. Around two thirds 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.

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%. During 2021/22 we collected 141,000 tonnes of household waste. The recycling rate rose to 53%. Energy



recovery accounted for 43.7% 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 greener/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 several roadshows have been run showing residents what they should be putting into the bins, (as well as what they should not).



Composting

Free compost bins have been supplied to local groups and allotments and green waste collected from residential bin collections is reused as agricultural grade compost.

Wood chipping

We use wood chippings in our parks and public display beds. We also provide woodchipping's to community groups who request them

Waterbutts.

Disused 240 litre waste bins have been repurposed and converted into waterbutts, which some of our community groups have used. Leigh Spinners Mill, have also donated a number of waterbutts to other community groups.

Energy Efficient Social Housing

We are guided by the principles of our Deal 2030 with the aim to provide a "Home for All". We are committed to building new homes which meet the needs of our residents, creating a variety of homes across the borough that will cater for future generations and for our growing numbers of older people.

We want our new homes to support the health and wellbeing of residents, to create local economic benefits and to contribute to our climate change commitments.

We recognise the impact of energy use in our homes on the environment and we are committed to achieving a revolution in low carbon homes.

We aim to develop on previously developed land and build our homes in sustainable locations, close to local amenities to reduce travel. We adopt a "fabric first" approach to design, with high levels of insulation included to reduce energy demand.

We are currently working towards the target of net zero carbon new build homes in our programme by 2028. We are removing gas heating and hot water systems in new homes and piloting low carbon technologies in our new build programme, these technologies have the capacity to become net zero in future as the technology and cost improves.

Low carbon technology adopted includes.

- Ground source heat pumps
- Air source heat pumps
- Photovoltaic solar panels
- Electric vehicle charging points



Future developments that will feature low carbon technology

Longridge Avenue/ Almond Brook Road, Standish – 12 one-bedroom apartments for older households, due for completion December 2021. Features include a high level of insulation, air source heat pumps and electric vehicle charging points.

Wharfdale, Leigh – 56-unit extra care scheme, due to complete in December 2022. Features include a high level of insulation, ground source heat pumps.

Sandalwood Drive, Beech Hill – 51-unit extra care scheme and 18 bungalows, due to complete in January 2023. Features include a high level of insulation, ground source heat pumps, solar PV and electric vehicle charging points.

Railway Arches, Leigh – 40 general needs apartments, due to complete in summer 2022. The block will include all electric heating with solar PV panels and electric vehicle charging points.

Pemberton Primary Playing Field – planning approval is currently waited for a new development at the site for a 9 unit supported housing scheme and a mix of bungalows and family houses. The proposal is to adopt air source heat pumps, solar PV, along with a highly insulated building specification.

Low carbon initiatives

Since the installation of solar panels on 1,465 council owned homes in 2012/13 they have produced a total of 23,427,261 kilo watt hours of free electricity for those tenants to use. Data is collected to corroborate this through remote meters in each property. Although solar panels are only installed on 6% of the housing stock, they do reduce the risk of fuel poverty issues arising for these tenants. The energy efficiency of these homes has been improved, average SAP moving up from C to B in some cases.

The total income received from the generation of electric from the government grant scheme, the Feed in Tariff, is £9.75m, which has paid off the original investment of £7.9m and will help fund other improvement works for the next 17 years or so due to an ongoing annual income of approx. £1.2m.

We have installed Air Source Heat Pumps to 307 properties under the NEDO smart communities project since October 2014, helping tenants save money on their fuel bills, with one tenant claiming they were saving 39% on electric bills on an annual basis. The new heating system replaced inefficient storage heaters or old inefficient gas boilers.

'A' rated condensing boilers or 'A' rated condensing combination boiler with a feature electric fire have been installed in some properties. The remaining stock will receive new boilers and gas fires within the current boiler replacement programme. It is the intention that within a few years we will have no boilers older than 15 years.

Non-traditional stock has received external wall insulation via a phased approach over several years, including whole house treatment,

replacing windows and doors with A rated components, added loft insulation to 400mm depth.

Six of our high-rise flats have also received external wall insulation and ventilation upgrades to help reduce mould and dampness.

Mechanical ventilation systems have been installed to properties where there is an existing condensation issue or there is an increased risk from added external wall insulation, mainly non-traditional properties.

Cavity wall and loft insulation have been installed to some properties, as some are not suitable.

An LED lighting upgrade programme to communal areas in low rise block flats is ongoing



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 streetlights turned on; and over the last four years the council has invested over £10m to replace all of the 36,500 streetlights with more efficient LEDs, which will be sustainable for the next 20 years.

The use of LED streetlights has delivered significant outcomes including the annual energy consumption reducing from 14.5 MW to 5.37 MW (63%) and avoiding 4,927 tonnes CO2 emissions. And more recently, in 2020, the street lighting service has trialled the use of Solar powered LED streetlights. This will potentially offer the opportunity to making a step-change towards delivering the council's Outline Climate Change Strategy of achieving a 'net-zero' carbon emission by 2038.

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.

Wigan Borough has 4 Green Flag Sites: Mesnes Park, Jubilee Park, Alexandra Park and Pennington Hall Park. Mesnes Park has held the award for 4 years whilst the other sites have held the award for nearly 12 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.

The Council have recently started Talk with and Tidy Tuesdays as part of our statutory requirement to engage with our tenants and another way to help them keep their local areas clean and free from waste. Also it will be used to gain people's views on naturalising the borough.

During lockdown a number of residents started to do litter picks as part of their daily exercise. These informal litter picks were highlighted on social media, and it started a growing trend of residents and neighbours coming together to collect litter and some have formed into small armies of litter pickers who are helping to keep our borough clean and tidy.

Many In Bloom community groups use animal / bird-friendly slug pellets, as necessary. Where slugs and snails are a 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.

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.



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 and an extreme sports facility and an outdoor gym facility. An additional five pieces of gym equipment was installed in 2018 and the friends' group have started preliminary work to secure funding for further pieces of equipment. In 2019 over 50 native fruit trees and wildflowers were planted in the park, this is to support pollinators and to extend the green corridor that links the park to Parsons Meadow LNR

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

Collier's Corner, Howe Bridge



Created in 2002 by Atherton Environmental Projects, in conjunction with the Youth Offending Team, 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 Northwest in Bloom entries.

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

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

In 2020 the group created a floral tribute to the keyworkers of the NHS.

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 safer and more 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.

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 Entrance Lodge, Pulham water feature, Dalton steps, 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.

Friends of Standish Recreation Ground



The volunteers help to care for the recreation ground and encourage the community to make more use of it.

Their aim is to increase biodiversity through hedge planting and woodland management with the support of the Tree Council and Woodland Trust

Local uniform groups helped to plant the hedging and educational sessions were held to stress the importance of the value of hedgerows.

The appearance of the recreation ground has been enhanced with the use of planters which include spring, summer, and winter planting.

The group hold regular tidy-up sessions to clear litter and debris.

Jubilee Park



Jubilee Park 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 helped organised several events such as Halloween, rock n stroll etc, Wigan council staff and other community groups regularly volunteer in the park, 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.





Section C – Community

C1 – Year-Round Activity and Future Commitment

C2 – Communication Education and Awareness

C3 – Support and Funding

C1: Year-Round Activity and Future Commitment - Evidence of forward planning and year-round activities, initiatives or events, highlighting where they are adding value and demonstrating the strengths or uniqueness of the entry.

In Wigan borough we have approximately 80 In Bloom groups, a large number of litters picking groups and numerous informal litter pickers across the borough.

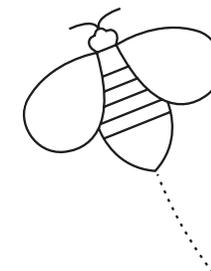
In the 2021 NW In Bloom competitions 28 In Bloom community groups entered and were awarded 34 certificates and special awards.



North West In Bloom Awards 2021

| | |
|---|-----------------------|
| Give it a Grow Wigan | Level 2 – Improving |
| Hindley Green in Bloom | Level 2 – Improving |
| Haigh Walled Kitchen Garden | Level 3 – Advancing |
| Balcarres Allotment Community Society | Level 3 – Advancing |
| Borsdane Friends Group | Level 4 - Thriving |
| Brighter Better Orrell | Level 4 - Thriving |
| Cansfield Estate, Wigan | Level 4 - Thriving |
| Friends of Alexandra Park Wigan Community Garden and Triangular Bed | Level 4 - Thriving |
| Golborne in Bloom | Level 4 - Thriving |
| Harvey Lane Community Garden | Level 4 - Thriving |
| Hindley community Allotment volunteers' group | Level 4 - Thriving |
| Hindley Veterans Memorial Garden | Level 4 - Thriving |
| Leigh Building Preservation Trust | Level 4 - Thriving |
| Hindley Green St Johns Community Garden Top Er't Sands Community Garden Managed by Hindley Green Residents Association | Level 4 - Thriving |
| Ambergate Gardens | Level 5 – Outstanding |
| Amberswood Community Allotments | Level 5 – Outstanding |
| Appley Bridge in Bloom | Level 5 – Outstanding |
| Colliers Corner, Howe Bridge | Level 5 – Outstanding |
| Friends of Ashton in Makerfield Community Garden | Level 5 – Outstanding |
| Friends of Hindley Station | Level 5 – Outstanding |
| Friends of Orrell Station | Level 5 – Outstanding |
| Friends of the Cherries Community Garden | Level 5 – Outstanding |
| Hindley Community Allotment and Garden Society | Level 5 – Outstanding |

| | |
|---|--|
| The Hamlet, Wigan | Level 5 – Outstanding |
| Wigan and Leigh Hospice | Level 5 – Outstanding |
| The Hamlet, Wigan | RHS National Certificate of Distinction |
| Haigh Woodland Park | Large Tourist Attraction / Visitor Centre) Gold |
| Lancashire Mining Museum | (Small Tourist Attraction / Visitor Centre) Gold |
| Hindley All Saints Primary School | (School Award) |
| Millbrook Primary School, Shevington | (School Award) |
| Lancashire Mining Museum | Heritage Award |
| Leigh Building Preservation Trust | Heritage Award |
| Wigan Council Jubilee Park, Wigan | Kieron Moss Award for Bedding Displays |
| Friends of Hindley Station | 5 Year Award RHS Outstanding |
| Eric Alker | 2021 Award for Outstanding Contribution |



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. However in addition to this the Deal For Communities Team officers support groups and offer funding advice and connect them to other community groups.

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 on the upcoming competitions.

Recognition

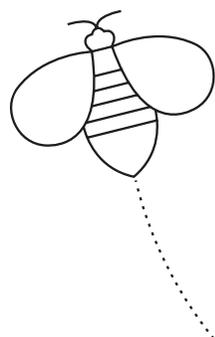
All our gardening communities, sponsors and partners come together at the annual NW in Bloom Awards Ceremony to receive their prizes and certificates of recognition for their contribution to In Bloom. Also, in previous years we have held a Mayors Afternoon Tea Party in which the mayor personally thanks the groups for their hard work and contribution to improving the appearance of the borough.

In 2020 due to Covid an Our Town's Bloom Marvellous Gardening competition was held and environmental achievements was recognised at our recent Our Town Awards.

Volunteers

We cannot do all this work without our wonderful volunteers who are the unsung heroes and backbone of our communities.

- **989** volunteers that are supporting Community Recovery Fund projects
- **1396** volunteers that are supporting Community Investment Fund Round 7 Projects
- **76** active volunteer opportunities on the Volunteering Hub.



Volunteer Hub



In July 2021 we took over the management of the Wigan Borough Volunteer Hub. This had previously been run by the Community Partnership however when it closed community groups were concerned that this would become a gap for the Wigan VCFSE sector and was an essential service. The online hub provides a space for Community organisations and Wigan Council to advertise volunteer opportunities and for volunteers to apply for roles. We have an admin officer who oversees that running of the site and provides support to groups as well as to individual volunteers.

Since July the Hub as advertised 76 volunteer opportunities with 29 of them being Wigan Council opportunities. We have matched 195 volunteers to a volunteer placement.

As part of the ongoing support that we offer volunteers we send out surveys to capture individual stories of volunteers and to measure how we are doing. Below is a response from one volunteer who has been delivering Oximeters for the NHS, reducing the pressure on our hospitals.

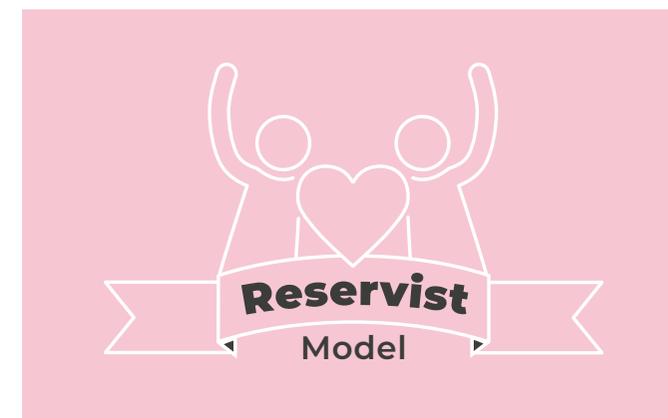
"I have been delivering oxygen monitors to people with covid during the pandemic, I found the opportunity on the Volunteer Hub, it was really easy to apply. I wanted to do something useful for other people and helping people and the NHS made me feel really proud. It's made me feel like I am useful to people other than just my own family & friends. If anyone wants to try volunteering, I will tell them if they have time then they should definitely go for it"

This role was so important and without volunteers the vital service would not have been possible. Each volunteer who gave their time to support the delivery of Oximetry devices received a thank you letter from our Chief Executive.

Development of bank volunteers

During the pandemic we saw over 500 people come forward and offer to volunteer as a Be Kind volunteer, since then we have seen the number of registered volunteers rise to 644. However, many of these volunteers have gone back to work and are no longer available.

We are looking into developing a bank of Council volunteers that will be able to support Council events and priorities and work alongside the reservist model.



Queen's Platinum Jubilee

In 2022, Her Majesty the Queen will become the first British Monarch to celebrate a Platinum Jubilee after 70 years of service to our country. Wigan Council organised a number of events across the borough to celebrate this unique landmark.

- Official Jubilee Beacon Lighting -at Haigh woodland Park
- Mayor's Jubilee Gala at Pennington Hall
- Jubilee Party in the Park at Mesnes Park

In addition to these large-scale events residents were encouraged to come together and host events and activities organised with your families, communities, neighbours, and friends.

The Queen's Green Canopy

The Queen's Green Canopy (QGC) is a unique tree planting initiative created to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee in 2022 inviting people from across the United Kingdom to 'Plant a Tree for the Jubilee'.

Everyone from individuals to Scout and girl guiding groups, villages, cities, counties, schools, and corporates will be encouraged to play their part to enhance the environment by planting trees during the official planting season (October to March).

Tree planting will commence again in October 2022



BEACON LIGHTING

Thursday 2 June, 6pm – 10pm
Haigh Woodland Park

Wigan Council
Wigan Girlguiding



MAYOR'S GALA

Friday 3 June, 10am – 4pm
Pennington Hall Park



JUBILEE PARTY IN THE PARK & UEFA WOMEN'S EURO 2022 ROADSHOW

Saturday 4 June, 11am - 4pm
Mesnes Park



STREET PARTY

THE BIG JUBILEE LUNCH

Thursday 2 June – Sunday 5 June
Community locations across Wigan Borough



Search Visit Wigan
www.wigan.gov.uk/platinumjubilee

Women's Euro's 2022

Wigan Council is one of ten local authorities across England that will host a vibrant arts programme as part of the UEFA Women's EURO 2022 in England this summer – part of an exciting national cultural programme supported by £800,000 funding from Arts Council England, thanks to National Lottery players.

Running alongside the tournament from 6-31 July and delivered in collaboration with the ten local authorities, across nine Host Cities - Brighton & Hove, London, Manchester, Milton Keynes, Rotherham, Sheffield, Southampton, Trafford and Wigan & Leigh - the cultural programme is set to reach nearly 3 million people and invite sports audiences and participants to engage with culture at an important moment for the country.

Three specially commissioned projects led by artist Emma Smith, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Idle Women, will share the rich history of women's football and its players and harness culture to encourage more people, particularly women and girls, to be inspired by the competition.

There will also be the opportunity for the public to create an original anthem to celebrate UEFA Women's EURO 2022 in England, expressing the passion evident in the women's football community through music.

The arts programme will be managed by The Football Association (FA), the national governing body of football in England. It will be the first time the organisation has run such a programme alongside a major tournament, and it hopes to establish female role models for both girls and boys through the arts.

Over 26 action-packed days, 31 UEFA Women's EURO 2022 matches will be played by 16 teams across nine English cities from 6- 31 July. A record number of fans are set to attend in person with a further 250 million across the world watching the action unfold on TV. It promises to be the biggest women's European sporting event in history.

National Lottery Project Grants is the Arts Council's open access programme for arts, museums and libraries projects. The fund supports thousands of individual artists, community and cultural organisations thanks to National Lottery investment.

With support from the Arts Council, local artists from across Wigan and Leigh will have the opportunity to bring arts and sport together in a project that will be an inspiration to so many, especially women and girls.



Well Fest

In recent years we have held Wellfest as a way to showcase ways to improve health and wellbeing and also a great way for our communities to connect.

Events this year included A Family Cook Up Knitted Bliss Bump, Buggy and Beyond walk Ride Social bike ride. Crafting Club, Golborne in Bloom, book clubs and open mic poetry.

One of the best ways to improve your mental health is to get out and about, meet other people and join in with an activity that you enjoy.

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 Northwest 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 Northwest 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.

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, working with Primary, High Schools and Colleges.

This past year after works on the station were completed, they gained more land, with the support of TfGM and Northern, which is now being made into an allotment. Each week young adults with special needs (from Thrive CiC) come along to work on the area. In the

autumn they planted garlic and onions in the first two planters which had been recycled and having now received funding for two more intend to plant those out this year.

They also have a student from Wigan College working with them to gain his Duke of Edinburgh Award.

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 always open to the community, 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.

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 great success.

The group focus 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 wildflower areas.

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

Cansfield Estate

The 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 resident's co-ordinate their hanging baskets in a show of unity and this year 200 have been installed. This demonstrates their community spirit, pride

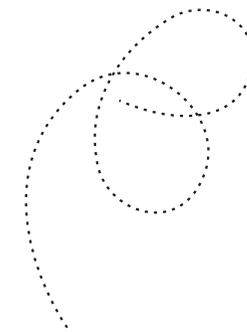
and brings people closer together, resulting in a cleaner, greener and tidier place to live. The residents take part in regular clean up campaigns and estate inspections to ensure that their estate is always looking its best.

Friends of Ambergate

Ambergate is a housing complex specifically designed to meet the needs of older people. In this scheme 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 to maintain the gardens. Communal gardens are a good meeting place for all residents. Adactus Housing Association,

who manage the scheme, 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.



Lancashire Mining Museum

The Lancashire Mining Museum sits on the edge of Chat Moss in an area once full of collieries. However, unlike other collieries in the area, the headgear and the winding engine have survived destruction and now have Listed Building status. The Wages House also survived the destruction and now houses a replica Miners Cottage and a Tea Room where events take place throughout the year. The site is now run entirely by an enthusiastic team of 75 volunteers who take on a wide diversity of roles, but with the ultimate aim of saving and improving the site for the education and enjoyment of generations to come.

From an In Bloom point of view the 15-acre

site was almost completely devoid of plant life at the time when the mine closed in 1970 and when it was taken over by the Red Rose Steam Society after years of decay the first priority was to preserve the buildings and machinery. Woodland was planted by Manchester University on the wider site, and we are now fortunate to have a range of invertebrates, small mammals and birds including owls and raptors visiting the site. The main visitor area is largely covered in concrete/cobbles and any planting areas incorporate heavy rubble. Which means we are using our ingenuity to create other planting opportunities including within used tyres, sleepers and upcycled rubble sacks plus 3 railway carriages. This is carried out with the aim of maintaining the industrial feel of the site, but adding colour, scent, and interest for our visitors to enjoy.

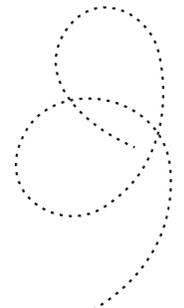
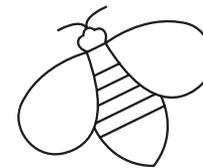
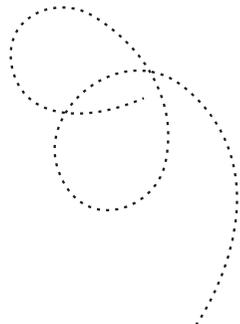
There are many different groups who use the site for a variety of different reasons. These include Astley Village Residents and the Rotary Club; Green Crew who assist with the maintenance of the planting areas; Scouts and Guides; School parties; a number of cycle groups including those attracted by the Cycle Hub, Tweed Rides, Breeze cycle group; Art Clubs; four Camping and Caravanning Groups; Velocette Group and the Little Engine Velometer Group; Greater Manchester Police Dogs and British Transport Police (for training purposes); two Ukulele Bands; Radio Hams; Peaky Blinders Film Crew; Co-op; Screamathon; Balfour Beatty; Greater Manchester Walking Group and staff from Wigan Council use their Employer Volunteer Scheme.

Wigan and Leigh Hospice

The new Amberswood Wildflower Garden looks out onto Amberswood Common, an area which previously was an open-cast mine, but which

is now a nature reserve. The Hospice were keen for the gardens have an area that was "wilder" to blend in with this nature reserve. The wildflower seed mix was one consisting of native perennial wildflowers.

Wildlife is encouraged and there are bird boxes, feeding stations, and a hedgehog box dotted around the gardens. There is also a bug hotel in the Amberswood Wildflower Garden. As much garden waste and vegetable peelings from the kitchen are composted as possible.



Allotments



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

In line with the Deal 2030, 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. The council, in partnership with a developer will soon take ownership of a new allotment site, this will provide 18 plots in the Standish area.

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. The society have been successful in applying for external funding to improve the site, this included increased number of plots, community building and toilets

Amberswood Community Allotments

The Friends of Amberswood secured the site under a community asset transfer and they have been very successful in developing and improving the site to include a range of growing facilities, increasing the number of plots and greatly increasing participation.

Community Allotments

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 vegetables, fruit and herbs have 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.

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.

Haigh Walled Kitchen Garden

The former walled kitchen garden of Haigh Hall has been transformed into a community allotment run by volunteers. The layout has been designed 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, a nuttery, soft fruits, pergolas with trained vines, and raised beds for vegetables. The volunteers share the workload and produce. Surplus produce is made available to visitors for donations.

Pesticides and other chemicals are avoided as far as is possible so that the produce is organic. Composted manure is used to enrich the soil. The garden features flowers to attract pollinators and as companion plants to attract and deter predators.

Several beehives have been installed in the garden by a local beekeeper.

This group are a key stakeholder involved in a wider funding program for Haigh and they are looking at investing into the site to make it more open to visitors and looking at selling some of their produce. The changes hope to inspire more of the community to engage and volunteer with the work that they do

Give it a Grow

They are a newly formed group, and they Campaign to make Wigan bee-friendly and increase biodiversity in our town. They hope to help residents, and the council to focus on bringing bees and wildlife to our urban spaces.

They have four main aims.

- Plant wildflower seeds and pollinating plants
- Let natural grasses grow
- Stop using weed killers with Glyphosate in
- Reduce littering

They have been distributing wildflowers seed packs to local residents over 600 in total, to spread in their gardens.

Give it a Grow have been supporting several community groups, such as Hindley Green Residents Association, Friends of Atherton Cemetery and Beech Hill Community Garden. Through their Facebook page they have over 180 followers and provide information and share knowledge amount their community. They also participate in local litter picks and clearing unloved spaces with the borough.

C2: Communication and Awareness – Use of interpretation, enabling learning and a greater understanding of purpose and environmental importance. Engagement with schools, young people or other groups. Promotion within the immediate area through local and regional communications. Appropriate communications and media involvement evidenced.

OUR BLOOMING FUTURE

Our Bloomin Future

This is to showcase activities of our young people within the borough and also how they can shape our future and more importantly their future.

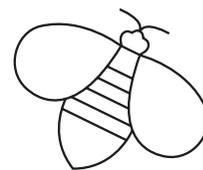
Our Climate Response Team carry out regular school visits to deliver education as well as offer practical advice to help schools become more sustainable. They also support school who are on the Eco School journey. Schools are also kept up to date via a termly Eco-Schools Newsletter.

The Team supports our Youth Cabinet and actively promote local and national awareness campaigns throughout the year.



As part of Go Green Week, our Youth Cabinet members declared their 'Promises' to act on climate change.

- Buying more sustainable products to produce less waste
- Walking to school rather than getting a lift in a car
- Using less plastic packaged items
- Recycling more and using less single-use plastic
- Reusing water bottles to reduce plastic waste
- Using public transport to get to college
- Eat more veggie options
- Work on environmental campaigns
- Not eating red meats
- Using less electricity
- Not littering
- Growing their own vegetables
- Spread awareness on climate change and talk about it with people
- Encouraging schools and colleges to be more environmentally friendly.



Wigan's first ever Youth Climate Summit will be taking place this year. This will be open to all schools and further education providers across the borough.

The event aims to bring together young minds from across the borough to discuss climate issues and inspire climate action

This summer, our Climate Response Team will be visiting the borough's libraries for a series of fun family eco days, where children will be able to take part in our fun climate trail quiz, listen to stories about our wonderful planet and make their very own bug house.

Wigan Council support schools who wish to join the Eco Schools programme. Eco Schools are passionate about engaging young people in environmental education and action. They do this by providing a simple, seven-step framework that guides, empowers and motivates pupils to drive change and improve environmental awareness in their school, local community and beyond.

Aspull Church Primary and Our Lady's Primary Schools.



Pupils from Aspull Church Primary and Our Lady's Primary took part in a 'Love Your Community Week', to show their love for their environment. They did lots of things to help the environment, including a litter pick to tidy up around their school, and had a special visit from the Climate Response Team's Environmental Officer, to learn all about Climate Change

Winstanley Primary School



The Eco Committee at Winstanley Primary have been working hard to make their school eco-friendlier and more sustainable. Last week the school took part in the RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch. To prepare, the children created bird feeders to attract as many birds as possible and the children in Early Years even made their own bird hides and binoculars!

Energy has been a big priority for the school, and they have recently had work done to replace all of the schools lighting with energy efficient LED bulbs. The new system (installed by Wigan based WN1 -Lighting Solutions) will save the school an estimated 23 tonnes of CO2 per year, saving a staggering £5,315 every year. They also took part in 'Switch-off Fortnight' in a bid to encourage their school to save energy where possible, through the creation of posters and stickers on electrical items reminding people to 'switch off!'.

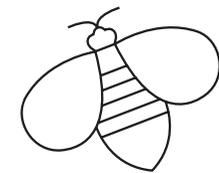
Their next venture will be to create a gardening and eco club in the school's outdoor classroom, 'Bluebell Garden', with the aim of creating more wildlife habitats around school. Well done to all involved!

ST Patricks School



St Patrick's visit to Goosemeadow Farm with the Country Trust

Y4 pupils recently enjoyed a visit to a Lancashire arable farm, Goosemeadow Farm in Lydiate, hosted by Farmers Lisa and Simon and arranged The Country Trust. The farm visits connect children in disadvantaged areas with the land that connects us all.



RL Hughes School



To celebrate World Bee Day, pupils and staff from RL Hughes took part in lots of bee-related activities in school. Throughout the week, they had 4 beekeepers visit their school to teach the children all about bees and each year group made bee themed products to sell on Bee Day. They also had lots of help and donations from families, grandparents and the local community. On Bee Day the children tapped into their 'inner-bee' by wearing black, white and yellow. They are kindly donating £400 to the Ormskirk Beekeeper's Association, which go a long way to help our most important pollinators. Well done to you all!

Hindley Green Junior Volunteers Club

Flourishing Hindley Green a gardening and environmental project run by the Hindley Green Junior Volunteers Club. In 2021 the junior volunteers, led by William aged 10, dipped their toes in the In Bloom competitions, by supporting an existing group.

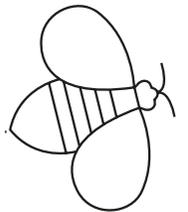
The junior volunteers were truly inspired by the kind words and encouragement when they met the In Bloom judges so decided on a more ambitious project and Flourishing Hindley Green was born. In the last 6 months they have secured an allotment plot at Brunswick Recreation Community Allotments. Through their hard work and commitment, they are creating their own larder of produce in a short space of time, whilst learning some truly great skills including using tools safely and teamwork. The junior volunteers have dug the ground, laid paths, created raised beds and planted seeds, growing and caring for everything from carrots to cabbages, potatoes to tomatoes, strawberries, blackcurrants and more. They have grown their own flowers and created a floral union flag in an old wheelbarrow. The junior volunteers have also made a scarecrow called Bob and an Aunt Sally for their plot. All this bodes well for what is hoped are flourishing young people, community minded, adults of the future.



Hindley All Saints School



This school have a vast area of land at the rear. The groundskeeper and his wife who also works at the school, have with the agreement of the head, created a wonderful wild space within the grounds that can be used as an additional learning resource to compliment what is taken place within the school buildings. They have installed a pond, they look after chickens, have a couple of beehives and numerous bug hotels and homes for hedgehogs. They have also created a forest school outdoor classroom, along with wildflowers, and an orchard.



Wanderland Project

Wanderland is nature and arts project part funded by our Community Investment Fund. The project is run by Lancashire Wildlife Trust, Carbon Landscape in partnership with community arts organisations, Turnpike CIC and Steam CIC.

108 workshops and events.

4000 people cross the borough

Here are some of the comments from people who attended.

“The project has motivated me to connect with people that I wouldn’t normally have met

It’s a good place for researching plants and wildlife

“The project gave me a distraction, made me appreciate the heritage right on my doorstep”

Here are just some of the exciting events that have been undertaken

Wigan Arts Festival

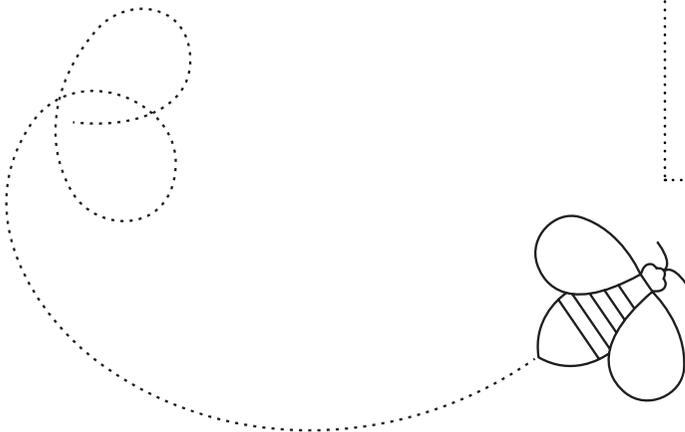


We ran multiple events over the Wigan Arts festival which attracted over 400 people across various sites around Wigan and Leigh.

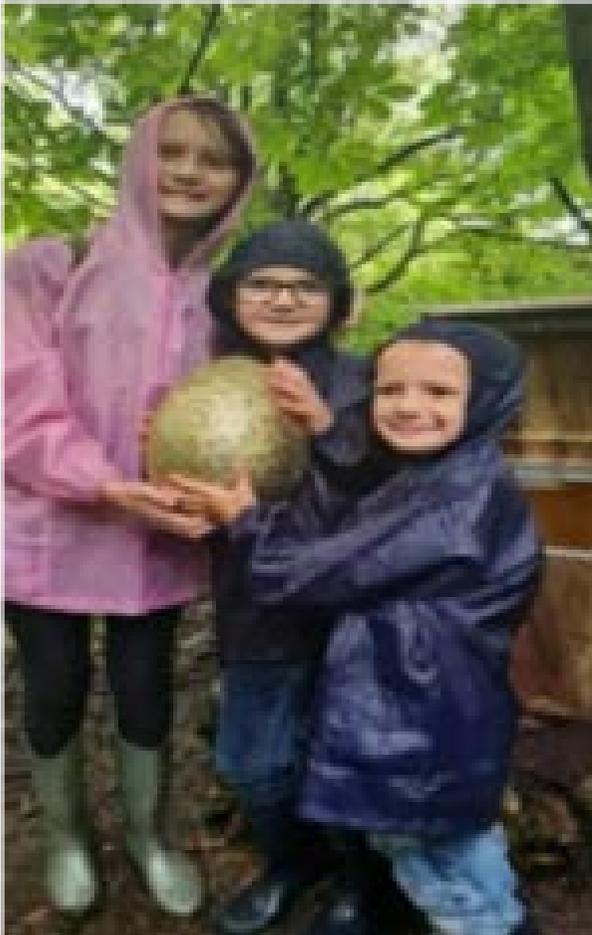
Manchester Literature Festival



Poet Clare Shaw spoke with local people within the landscape to hear how they feel about the nature and heritage on their doorstep. Clare took these findings to produce poetry which we were able to turn into an audio trail



Dragon Quest Launch



An interactive trail on Three Sister Recreational Area involved following clues and answering questions to create a code which would open the chest at the end which contain the Dragon Egg

Light Night at Pennington



The event was a huge success with over 20,000 people attending. We held a stall where we were able to speak to over 1,000 people about Wanderland and our work within the Wigan and Leigh area.

Rooted-[Routes]



The young people were able to learn a lot about nature and ways to capture it either by film or photography. The artwork produced will be become a Virtual Trail in Spring 2022



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 such as grow your own and hanging basket workshops. Following a recent move to smaller premises with insufficient space for storage the remainder of the stock e.g., trays, compost etc have been donated to a local group responsible for adults with learning difficulties who are happy to continue with the project.

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 Britain in Bloom Northwest. They arrange and decorate the venues to raise the profile of groups who were not visited on the judging route. They also facilitate a series of meetings during the year; the first is an opportunity for the community groups to feed back any issues that may have arisen throughout the judging process. Secondly at the beginning of the year to plan the year ahead and learn of any changes in the judging criteria, and thirdly a Big Thank You Event in November for all the groups involved during the year.

They successfully applied for funding to

1. 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.

2. Purchase wildflower seeds including a mixture of seasonal and perennial for donation to community groups for their use to cover difficult areas in their locality
3. Funding to encourage groups to enter the competition and for representatives of the groups to attend the North West In Bloom Presentation event in October.

Friends of Hindley Station

As an established Friends Group they are asked to support new groups as they are setting up, the latest station is Bryn who they have supported with time, tools and plants.

The Group works within the community and are involved with the Hindley Community Christmas Group planning and working at the Christmas Market. They have also supported a new group which has recently been set up; The Friends of Hindley Cemetery and look forward to working with them.

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 present, and their pages are filled with compliments and positive comments and the

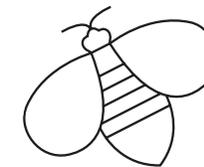
street-based noticeboard is popular with bus travellers and passers-by.

Shevington in Bloom

Shevington in Bloom took a sabbatical in 2019 but continued to work with and support Millbrook Primary School with their It is Your Neighbourhood and Shevington Memorial Park in the Small Parks category. The school were awarded level 3 and we are only one point away from level 4. For the second consecutive year the Park were awarded Gold.

They are continuing to work with all three primary schools in the village and with the help of Wigan Council employees using their volunteer days, have made wildflower beds at two of the schools with seeds sown by the pupils. The wildflowers at Millbrook will encourage insects and bees for their Bee Garden and the one at the front of St. Bernadette School is visible to the community.

In 2020 they have installed new metal "Wicker Man" called Jake to replace the wicker one that has deteriorated over the years. They were supported by the Deal for Communities Team to seek funding from Wigan Council's Crowdfunder initiative. They reached the target figure, and the metal Wicker Man was made by a local blacksmith.







C3: Support and Funding

Has the entry made every effort to be inclusive and engage the support of a wide variety of local groups and organisations? Participation should be representative of the local community. Evidence of fund raising and ongoing support from a range of businesses and organisations appropriate to the size of the entry, making it viable and able to continue moving forward.

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.

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 springtime. By holding diverse events at different times of the year, they can attract a wider audience and cater for different interests. During Covid the opportunity for fund raising activities has affected all groups. As part of the recovery from the pandemic, Wigan Council have earmarked £2 million in its Community Recovery Fund to support groups and to help them start again doing what they love.

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

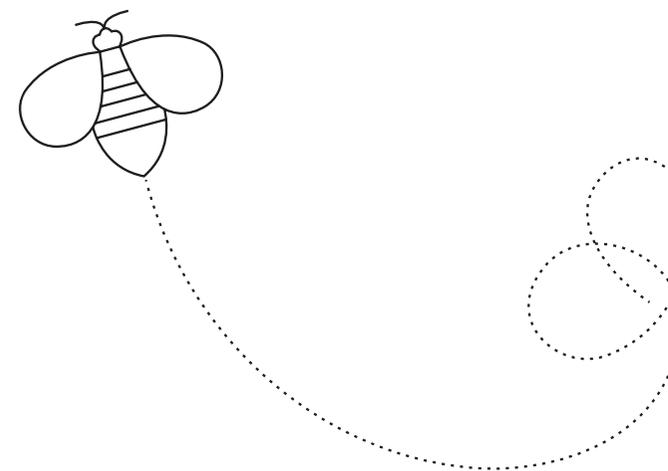
5th Tyldesley Scouts helped Friends of Astley Street Park to create a shrub border near the car park which took 3 months and some local teenagers helped to paint the teen meet. Pupils from Garret Hall Primary School planted bulbs, ferns and primroses in the woodland trail. A member of the public did the 3 peak challenge

and raised £1300 for us to use on maintaining the plants and so on.

Appley Bridge in Bloom are supported by IKO Limited, and they return the favour by caring for the entrance to their site.

Green Crew a local CIC, are a supported employment provider for people with learning difficulties and disabilities. Green Crew focus on Crew Members' assets. They build on abilities, generating person-centred and meaningful outcomes where each can make a real difference in their community. The activities offer physical, emotional and mental health benefits.

They provide services to Wigan Council, in our parks and nature reserves, Canal & River Trust, Wildlife Trust, Groundwork, Friends of Low Hall, Friends of Amberswood Common, Friends of Lilford Park, Friends of Leyland Park, Haigh Walled Gardens, The Hamlet and other In Bloom groups.



The Hamlet

A multi-disciplined project for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities. They offer ongoing educational opportunities and are an accredited DoE assessor centre. They have a café, printing company and on-site shops, which provided social and life skills for their young people. The Hamlet is located in the beautiful surroundings of 3 Sisters Local Nature Reserve and have developed and care for a beautiful greenspace at The Hamlet and wildlife garden tendered to by a friends of Group, the young people and volunteers. They have also forged great links with local and national companies to support the work they do.

As a DoE assessment centre, in June 2021 they were chosen as one of only 11 locations within Greater Manchester to plant a tree in recognition of what would have been The Duke of Edinburgh's 100th Birthday.

Shevington in Bloom

Shevington in Bloom were invited to give a talk to the Local Mothers' Union who donated £100 to the Metal Wicker Man fund. They were also delighted to be invited by Y1 pupils of St Bernadette's School to give a talk as Local Heroes – they also planted tete-a-tete daffodil bulbs with the children to take home.

Shevington in Bloom has the support of local businesses, Parish and Wigan Councillors and all aspects of an appreciative Community which will carry them through another year of fund raising and sustainable planting. 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

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 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

Friends of Hindley Station continue their relationship with Murphy's and the station in turn with TfGM support Ince C of E School and the work they are doing at Ince Train Station. In 2022 working in Partnership with Electricity North West, Cadnet and South East Lancashire Community Rail Partnership the group transformed a small piece of scrub in front of an electricity sub station, to create a small garden with a bench.

Friends of Orrell Station

Friends of Orrell Station secured the services of a local design and print company who produced their portfolio for them free of charge.

Howe Bridge and Lancashire Mining Museum

Howe Bridge and Lancashire Mining Museum hold successful plant sales, supported by Moss Bank Nurseries.

Bamfurlong Neighbourhood Group

Bamfurlong Neighbourhood Group are creating a community orchard. A local company SED Services Ltd, have been generous with their

time and resources, by carrying some of the preparatory site clearance works and providing large quantities of compost for the project.

Wigan & Leigh Hospice hold an annual garden party and open the gardens as part of the National Garden Scheme.

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 and give them a discount on their summer bedding plant purchases. Green Thumb treat the station lawns free of charge.

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 Council now has a dedicated community funding officer, formerly part of the VCSE sector. 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 voluntary In Bloom groups

The Community Recovery Fund



Deal 2030 sets out our ambition to work collaboratively with Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations to develop a thriving and sustainable sector to best serve the residents of the borough.

We recognise how difficult the period from March 2020 has been for everyone in our communities, and this has brought many challenges for us all. Many of our VCSE organisations have been instrumental in delivering the crisis response to our vulnerable residents whilst others have not been able to continue to operate as they had previously

This fund has been set up in response to the Covid -19 Pandemic for community groups who require support due to being affected or disrupted by Covid.19. £2million has been earmarked for our communities.

During the four phases of funding, we have we have supported 268 projects totalling a funding amount of £232,874.56 to allow groups start again and to welcome back their volunteers and the community. The fund will reopen in September 2022.

We have funded 286 community groups with a total of £227,066.06 being funded. The team have supported all of the organisations with the application process and continue to build the relationships.

In April we will host a Celebration event to acknowledge and thank the Wigan VCFSE sector for their commitment and support to our residents over the past two years. It will be a good opportunity to network and promote the fantastic work of the sector and how Wigan Council has contributed.

DFCIF (Deal for Communities Investment Fund)

The Deal for Communities Investment Fund was launched in 2013 and since then we have supported 626 community projects and have invested circa £11 million.

The Deal for Communities team have implemented the creation of the community noticeboard to link VCFSE sector with local businesses and contractor to better use their social value within the borough. Further work ongoing to promote and engage with the new build, procurement & business engagement team to increase the offer. CCO's work together with organisations to match their offer.

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.

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 and community In Bloom Groups throughout the borough are funded through Brighter Borough.

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, Gallimore's, 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 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

In Leigh 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.

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.

Further improvements are proposed in King Street Wigan and Elliot Street Tyldesley following a successful bid with Historic England for Heritage Action Zone funding up to £3.5 million with match funding.

Local Business – Galleries 25



In December 2020, Wigan Council appointed Galleries25 to redevelop The Galleries. The £135 million redevelopment aims to provide a vibrant new retail, leisure and residential scheme in the heart of the town centre, transforming Wigan town centre into a vibrant, attractive and accessible place to live, work, visit and learn.

Business Involvement

Wigan Council's Business Engagement Teamwork 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 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.

Shop Local Scheme

Spend, Support, Shop Local is a collaborative campaign between Wigan Council and small businesses in the borough.

It focuses on how businesses have had to adapt their ways of working throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, while encouraging residents to change their shopping habits to help safeguard the local economy.

As well as making uncertain times a little easier for those businesses needing a helping hand, the campaign will celebrate stories from businesses who have successfully diversified throughout the pandemic, utilising digital means to spur their business on.

Local businesses owners from across the borough are paving the way and leading the campaign, acting as ambassadors to encourage communities and business alike to get on board.

Find out what #SupportLocal means to our Business Ambassadors

Spend, Support, Shop Local is about putting the control of our economy in the hands of our communities, supporting our Community Wealth Building values by encouraging people to spend locally in all kinds of ways allowing them to shape a borough to be proud of.



