

ISSUE 70. WINTER 2022
THE MAGAZINE FOR
WIGAN BOROUGH
RESIDENTS

Wigan 
Council

BoroughLife



Royal tributes • Summer of sport • What's on guide

Welcome

The Leader's column



Welcome to the Winter 2022 edition of Borough Life.

This time last year we were predicting that 2022 was going to be a year to remember.

In many ways it has surpassed our expectations. It has been a year of firsts for our borough with lots of achievements to reflect on with pride.

The hosting of two major tournaments in the UEFA Women's EURO 2022 and the Rugby League World Cup have placed us on the international stage and provided scenes we will never forget.

Our neighbourhoods came together in celebration across the Platinum Jubilee weekend and later united in mourning for the passing of our monarch, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

We saw amazing sporting success with Wigan Athletic, Wigan Warriors and Leigh Centurions (now Leopards) gaining promotion or securing trophies, or both! And Ella Toone and Keely Hodgkinson continue to make us all feel proud.

This edition tries to capture some of those highlights from the year but also helps us to look ahead to the future and what 2023 might bring.

As we approach winter, we know the current financial crisis will be affecting many of our residents, putting more pressure on household budgets.

I hope you will already be aware of our campaign, Here For You, which aims to do just that; to be there to provide support if you need it.

There are a number of services available across the council and with our wonderful community partners so please reach out before those pressures grow to become unmanageable.

As ever, there are some exciting updates about major projects such as developments at Pennington Flash Nature Reserve, Leigh Sports Village and Haigh Woodland Park.

And we also place our winter maintenance teams in the spotlight as they do a great job of keeping us all moving during this period.

All that remains for me to say is I hope you enjoy a relaxed festive season with family and friends and reflect on what a remarkable year it has been across Wigan Borough.

Councillor David Molyneux MBE
Leader, Wigan Council

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If you are a resident of Wigan Borough but haven't had a copy of Borough Life delivered through your letterbox, view it online at www.wigan.gov.uk/boroughlife

For all the latest updates straight to your phone, sign up to the weekly My Wigan Borough email update. Visit: www.wigan.gov.uk/boroughlife

For general comments email: boroughlife@wigan.gov.uk



On the cover

What an amazing woodland scene!

At this time of year, we usually opt for a suitably festive image such as a frosty landscape shot or a cosy fireplace adorned with stockings. So to find out why we have chosen this picture and how it is a perfect tribute to Her Majesty, turn to pages 30 and 31.

You might notice that this edition is slighter smaller than previous versions. To ensure value for money for residents, we're always exploring how we can ensure the best content in the most innovative and efficient format.



Whenever you see this icon, you know there's more to see

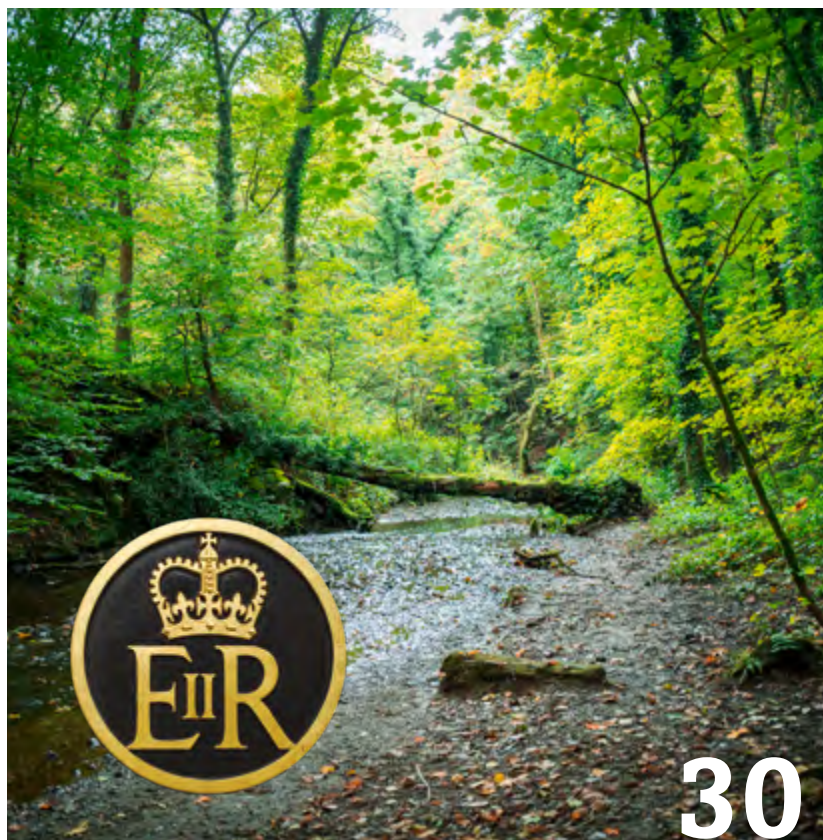
As usual, this edition of Borough Life is bursting with great stories, eye-catching images and handy tips.

So much so in fact that we have a whole bunch of extra content that didn't make it in. All is not lost though, as you can see all this bonus material by following this link:

www.wigan.gov.uk/BoroughLifePlus



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News in Brief

Fresh tribute to former council leader

The east stand at Leigh Sports Village (LSV) has been officially unveiled as the Lord Peter Smith Stand.

Plans for the permanent tribute to the former Leader of Wigan Council were first announced last year.

An official ceremony was held in September before Leigh Centurions' match with York City Knights.

Council representatives, including Leader Councillor David Molyneux MBE and chief executive Alison Mckenzie-Folan, joined the Smith family on the pitch prior to kick-off.

Councillor Molyneux said: "We believe this honour is a fitting tribute to a remarkable man who made such a significant impact across Wigan Borough.

"Peter was not just an inspirational leader and councillor, but a

husband, a father and a very good friend.

"He played the pivotal role in establishing the fantastic facilities we have here today at the LSV."

Lord Smith, who led the council for 27 years between 1991 and 2018, passed away last August aged 76.

Leigh Leopards owner Derek Beaumont said: "Lord Smith was a passionate supporter of our great club and we will never forget the ways in which he fought our corner and championed our cause.

"He was instrumental in the creation of the fantastic facility we now call home, which is pivotal to our recruitment and success, and so it is entirely right and appropriate that his name will live on as part of that legacy."

Parks retain Green Flag status

Four Wigan Borough parks had cause for celebration recently having retained their Green Flag status; the international quality mark for parks and green spaces.

Alexandra Park (Wigan), Jubilee Park (Ashton, pictured) and Pennington Hall Park (Leigh) are setting an impressive record as this is the 14th time in a row they have maintained their award.

Meanwhile, Mesnes Park (Wigan) secured its name on the list for the seventh year in a row.

Further brilliant work by the Bridgers Community group of volunteers has also been recognised as Colliers Corner in Atherton retained its Community Award status for the second year.

Crackdown on domestic abuse recognised

Wigan Borough's campaign to tackle domestic abuse - Love Is Not Abuse - has received a national award. Featured prominently in previous editions of Borough Life, the ground-breaking campaign highlights the warning signs of abuse against men and women and was developed alongside victims.

It was named 'Campaign of the Year' at the Local Government Chronicle Awards in July, recognising the work between

Wigan Council and partners such as the Wigan Borough Domestic Abuse Service.

For more information about the ongoing campaign activity, visit www.wigan.gov.uk/domesticabuse



News in Brief



Haigh projects receive funding boost

Exciting plans for Haigh Woodland Park have been backed by the National Lottery.

A £3.7m award for the project - which will be further supplemented by match funding from Wigan Council - was confirmed in September.

The old Bothy cottages and yard, which have been out of use for more than a decade, are to be transformed into a bustling community, training and volunteering zone.

Meanwhile, the Grade II* listed Plantation gates and Lodges - currently on the Heritage at Risk Register - are to be restored to their former glory to create a spectacular town centre gateway.

A new Woodland Hub offering outdoor adventure activities for both children and adults will also be created by Wigan Council's Heritage, Nature and People project, which aims to improve the experience of visitors, celebrate the park's rich history, and encourage residents to connect with nature.

Eilish McGuinness, Chief Executive of the National Lottery Heritage Fund, said: "I'm delighted that we are providing such significant support to the Heritage, Nature and People project, which recognises the vital role of our woodlands, parks and gardens as the lifeblood and heartland of communities.

"The project will help to ensure our natural heritage is preserved and enhanced for the benefit of all, thanks to National Lottery players."

Climate Summit makes an impact

The borough's first Youth Climate Summit saw more than 100 students join forces to discuss the future of our environment.

Held at The Edge Arena in September, the event saw youth-led workshops, activities and debates about our planet and green campaigns.

Aneeshwar Kunchala (pictured below), the inspiring seven-year-old who recently featured on Britain's Got Talent featured as a keynote speaker.

All the activity was overseen by the Wigan and Leigh Youth Cabinet with primary, secondary and college students taking part.



Blue Plaque for scientist

The extraordinary career of a Leigh scientist has been recognised with a blue heritage plaque.

Botanist Kathleen Mary Drew-Baker's research into the farming of seaweed means she is revered in Japan due to its impact on the sushi industry.

The plaque has been installed at the site of Sacred Heart RC and Leigh Central Primary Schools on Windermere Road, where Kathleen was born in 1901.

To many in Japan she has become known as the 'Mother of the Sea' and she is remembered in the country each year on April 14.

Pictured left are the Mayor of Wigan Borough Councillor Marie Morgan with students from the schools and community representatives.



News in Brief

Charity recognised with new star



An inspirational Wigan Borough charity backed by a team of sporting legends has become the latest recipient of a star on Believe Square in Wigan.

Joseph's Goal has been recognised for its work in the charity sector and contribution to the local community.

With borough youngster Joseph Kendrick as its figurehead, the charity raises vital funds and

awareness for Non-Ketotic Hyperglycinemia, (NKH).

Representatives - including the Kendrick family - gathered in Wigan Town Hall in October to formally receive their star around the time of the charity's 10th anniversary.

Over the last decade, Joseph's Goal - the only charity of its kind in the UK - has raised more than £880k to research into the rare genetic disorder.

Nature Reserves receive official status

Vast swathes of Wigan Borough have been formally recognised as a National Nature Reserve (NNR) for the first time by Natural England.

The areas of former coal mines have been reclaimed by nature and will now be known as the Flashes of Wigan and Leigh.

The new NNR will protect 738.21 hectares of precious wetland habitats, home to nationally significant wildlife populations including the willow tit, water voles and the great crested newt.

It will knit together eight separate sites including Wigan Flashes, Amberswood, Three Sisters, Bickershaw Country Park, Pennington Flash and Viridor Wood near Bamfurlong.

Ginny Hinton, Area Director of Natural England, said: "70 years from the creation of our first National Nature Reserves in England, these wonderful places are needed now more than ever as we face into the challenges of global warming, wildlife decline and reconnecting people with the natural world."

Jo Kennedy, of Lancashire Wildlife Trust, said: "This declaration is an opportunity to celebrate, protect and enhance this area where nature has taken back places once dominated by coalfields."

Purple Flag rises above town centre

Wigan town centre is flying high having been granted the prestigious Purple Flag accreditation in September.

The status is awarded to towns that demonstrate excellence in the evening and night-time economy.

Michael Pagett, chair of Wigan pub watch and business owner, said: "This is a fantastic outcome for Wigan town centre, and highlights what the town has to offer that often people don't realise.



"This accreditation will improve our profile and hopefully increase the number of visitors who can enjoy a great night out."

News in Brief

Best of our borough's time to shine

Pillars of Wigan Borough's communities were recognised at two glitzy awards ceremonies held in November.

Community heroes were recognised at the Our Town awards, and rising stars of the borough's sporting world celebrated at the Believe Sports Awards.

The Our Town awards shone a light on the unsung heroes, kind carers and community projects that make our borough so brilliant.

And the sporting volunteers - the cogs that keep our borough's sporting clubs running - were recognised at the Believe Sports Awards.

A more extensive round-up of the ceremonies will feature in the spring edition of Borough Life.



Free weekday parking boost

Council owned car parks in Wigan and Leigh town centres will be free to use from 3pm on weekdays ahead of the festive season.

To help everyone make a head-start on Christmas shopping, the scheme will run through until January 6.

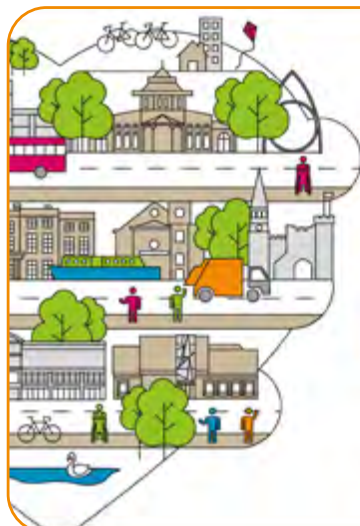
This offer is in addition to the usual free weekend parking schemes that are due to continue through to March 2023.

For full terms and conditions, and to see where council owned car parks are located in the borough, visit: www.wigan.gov.uk/carparking

Christmas bin collections

There are no changes to your bin collection day over the festive period for your black, brown or blue bins. Please put your bin out on your usual day by 6.30am.

Between Monday, December 27 and Friday, January 7 there will be no green bin collections, to help prioritise the collection of the other bins.



Have your say on future plans

There's still time to share your opinions to help shape Wigan Borough over the next few decades.

Feedback from the Planning For The Future consultation will influence the area's Local Plan, which outlines where development – such as homes, roads and facilities – can take place.

It also sets out some of the challenges the borough is facing,

such as climate change, housing availability and inequality, and asks for options on how these can be addressed.

The deadline for responses is approaching though, so please complete the online survey by Sunday, December 11.

Alternatively, visit a local library or call 01942 489004 for assistance on weekdays 8am to 6pm.

Best start in life for children and young people

A vision becomes reality

Back in May 2021, 400 young people made their voices heard responding to a survey about what a new youth facility in Leigh should look like.

The hub is opening soon and Borough Life tagged along as its steering group members were recently invited in for a preview.



It's the first time through the doors for Ben, Cheryl and Reece (pictured above).

The trio, all from Leigh, are from the group of young people who have been working alongside Leigh Sports Village and Wigan Council to ensure Leigh Youth Hub ticks the right boxes.

As we enter the two-storey building right next to the stadium, the excitement is clear. There's a sense of pride that their

ideas have played a huge role in shaping what they now see before them.

"I can't believe how quickly it has all progressed," says Ben.

The 17-year-old is one of the borough's UK Youth Parliament members as well as being on the Youth Hub's steering group.

As a wheelchair user he has been able to help ensure the facility is one that all young people

will enjoy, including those with disabilities.

"I've been impressed with what I've seen so far," he adds. "It will be valued by young people across the borough and I'm glad that our ideas and advice have been considered."

We move through the different rooms and Ben offers some friendly advice and tips about how to make one of the table football games more accessible,

Best start in life for children and young people

along with some of the other facilities. LSV operations manager Amanda Dumican and senior youth and community worker Karen Campbell (both pictured left) are noting down Ben's suggestions.

The fully-equipped catering kitchen - which provides the opportunity to gain qualifications and skills - has attracted the interest of 14-year-old Cheryl.

She is working towards a cookery GCSE and hopes to one day open her own restaurant.

"If you're a young person and you feel like you're bored and stuck inside, coming here will be a good change," she says.

"You could even come on your own because you will definitely make new friends here, just come along and see what you think.

"If you don't like it, there's nothing lost. But you might find something and see what it's all about."

The site features two gyms, one for young people and one for elite athletes from clubs including Leigh Leopards and Manchester United Women's and under 21s teams.

Karen explains that the athletes will have their own separate areas and entrance to the building, to make sure that the Youth Hub part of the building is just for local teenagers.

Tech-minded Reece is impressed with the hub's computer suite. He's also planning a music session in the multi-activity room, a flexible

space providing a wealth of options to members.

"We had our first meeting to share our ideas over a year ago and it has definitely met my expectations. I love it," says the 15-year-old.

"I've really enjoyed being part of the young people's steering group.

"In the past I haven't been very good at talking to adults but being involved in this project has shone a light on what adulthood is like as we've had to make lots of decisions.

"It's helped me get more in tune with myself and I'm finding it much easier to talk to everyone."



What's on offer at Leigh Youth Hub

Common Room



Sensory Room



Health and Wellbeing Suite



Enterprise Room



Catering Workshop



See more at Borough Life Plus



A bird's eye view

A new era is on the horizon at Pennington Flash with a major makeover set to benefit visitors from both the human and animal kingdoms.

Who better then to give a fresh perspective than one of its much-loved feathered inhabitants, The Willow Tit?



Pennington Flash
Nature Reserve

To find out more about Pennington Flash Nature Reserve go to www.wigan.gov.uk/PenningtonFlash



PenningtonFlashLeigh



pennington.flash

An environment to be proud of

As I perch within my beautiful willow copse on the waterside, I have plenty of natural cover.

The eyes, camera lenses and binoculars below are trying to stay hidden to make me feel safe.

But as I emerge to dart across to the nearby feeders, I am proud to perform for them here, in the place I call home.

And what a beautiful home it is; a varied, peaceful, wetland haven, where more than 230 species of mammals, insects, and fellow birds reside.

A place for humans to walk, sit, sail, or cycle. A place to be with family and friends or to relax in the silence of solitude and escape the strains of everyday life.

The more adventurous may choose to paddle along the surface of the water, or ride in a sailboat as the wind propels their giant sails.

But I'm sure they'd trade it all if they too were able to take flight with us.

"My home is also full of surprises."

Do you recall when a 10-metre globe, dazzling brightly in the darkness appeared to float on the surface of the water last winter?

More than 20,000 of you came to visit, perhaps gaining a new outlook on the environment that we share.

Evolving from an industrial past, this place has only become more beautiful through time. Land that was once mined for coal has been reclaimed by nature.

The progress continues. This will soon be an even more beautiful, informative, and comfortable place to visit with a new visitors' centre and café about to be unveiled.

From our nests, we see that new activity areas are appearing for your own hatchlings to practice spreading their wings.

Important improvements to take care of the wellbeing of fellow flyers like me have been carefully considered.

Conservation work to restore and preserve our habitats is ongoing, with plans to combat the dense, woodland cover so that my rare friends who live in fragile, wetland homes can thrive.

This winter, some birds will migrate to warmer climates, but I will stay. Why would I fly away when life is so beautiful here?

"I do hope you will come and visit."



What does the makeover include?

- The Hide Coffee House serving hot drinks, food and ice cream
- Inclusive nature themed adventure playground
- Improved toilet facilities, resurfaced footpaths and new signs
- Extended car parking, increased lighting and CCTV coverage

Woodland Challenge

Toadler Lake

Clambering Island





SCAN ME



Stay fit together...

and save!



Staying active and healthy together is heaps of fun with Be Well. Make a splash in the pool with the little ones or take on your partner in a 'friendly' workout challenge! Save money with our flexible family plan add-ons and start your family fitness journey today.

Add Junior Members from £12*

Joint Membership just £52* per month



High Spec Gyms



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Over 500 Classes

Start your fitness journey today

BeWellWigan.org



Wigan Council

*Terms & conditions apply

Our People

Here for You



Are you feeling the pressure of rising costs and would appreciate a nudge in the right direction?

You aren't alone and there are lots of organisations spread across our wonderful borough that are ready to help.

So that's our big message; **Wigan Council is Here For You**. To signpost you to these services, organisations and resources.

From support with working out your eligibility for benefits to borrowing wisely and keeping warm and keeping well, there are plenty of options available and friendly faces to chat to.

Warm, welcoming spaces

Earlier this year, Wigan Council opened its network of warm, welcoming spaces, a key part of our Here For You programme. Keen as always to get the inside track on what is on offer, Borough Life paid a visit.

A heavy mist hangs in the air this morning, autumn is giving way to winter and the first signs of frost.

With details of rising energy costs dominating the news agenda recently, the annual fall in temperature will bring with it a sense of trepidation for many of us.

It isn't unusual, therefore, for residents to be facing more difficult choices when it comes to keeping your home - and family - warm.

That's where the idea for Wigan Council's Warm, Welcoming Spaces came from.



And it's a lightbulb moment that has been shared across the borough.

"I don't think there's any hiding from the fact that we all have a challenging winter ahead of us," explains Peter Hughes, the local authority's customer services manager.

"That's why we want to remind all our residents that our public buildings - and many sites run by community partners - will be open, providing a place to stay warm throughout the day with the added bonus of providing access to our wide range of services.

"These are places that have always been here, you just may not have viewed them as a space to keep warm, charge your phone, or find a friendly face for a chat before."

From our vantage point nestled among the books at Leigh Library, there's a low buzz of children checking out their favourite books and characters.

The services on offer at libraries down the years has changed significantly, but one thing has remained constant here in the borough; they're free to join.

As well as books, you can also borrow audio books, e-books, e-magazines and comics and access computers and free Wifi.

The council is not the only organisation to pioneer this approach this winter. Many of our wonderful community partners are opening their doors too.



For a full list of warm welcoming spaces across the borough visit: www.wigan.gov.uk/HereForYou

“From Fur Clemt to Bookcycle, we’ve got a real network set up across the borough,” explains Peter (pictured left with team).

“Throughout the Covid pandemic, the strength of our borough’s community spirit shone bright and we’re so proud to see the strength and kindness being shown as we tackle this new challenge.

“You’ll receive a warm welcome at all of them and get access to the wide-range of support services available.”

Having hopped across to Wigan town centre, we visit another of our sites at the Museum of Wigan Life.

Receptionist Debbie is greeting visitors with a friendly smile as they start their tour of the exhibits.

It’s another great, free and warm place to enjoy, right in the heart of one of our town centres, inclusive to all.

“As the name suggests, our staff are here for you and can point you in the right direction whatever your circumstances,” adds Peter.

“If you’ve been struggling for a long time or this is a new challenge you are facing, please call in and start the conversation.”

Our promise to you

.....
Whichever of our spaces you visit, you’ll receive a warm Wigan Borough welcome. Wigan Borough’s people are well known for our strong and kind community spirit, and our warm spaces are no different. We promise that staff and volunteers will treat you with kindness, warmth and a friendly smile
.....

Our warm spaces are a place for everyone, and you’ll be met with no judgement. Whoever you are and whatever your background is you are welcome. We don’t judge anyone, and you will be treated equally and with respect
.....

If you need help, just ask - we can point you in the right direction. We know times are hard and it can be tough to ask for help. But if you do choose to start the conversation, our teams can explain about the organisations, services and support that might be available to you
.....

You can trust us to listen. We are here to lend an ear if you’d like us to listen, but we won’t tell anyone else unless you give us permission to, unless it’s a safeguarding issue
.....

We’ll play our part, but we’d like kindness to be returned. We’ve explained how you can expect to be treated, but we would like the feeling to be mutual. Please treat everyone you meet at our warm, welcoming spaces - including visitors, staff and volunteers - how you would expect to be treated.





Jo is in the know!

We know many of you are feeling the pinch, but our cost-of-living expert, Jo Mitchell, is on hand to bring you the answers you need to help make things a little easier.

Jo, our interim assistant director for customer experience and support, lives at home with her family and two dogs.

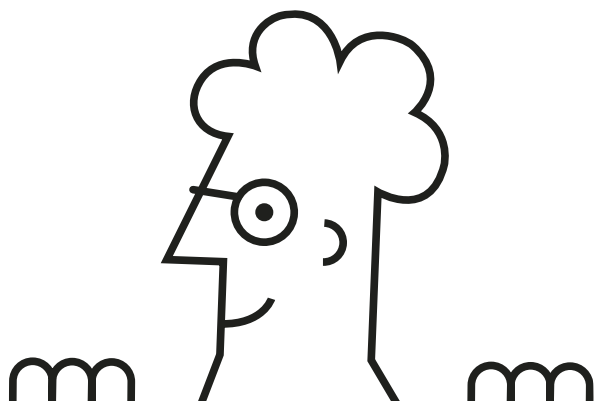
She enjoys going out for walks and going to her local gym to burn off calories from her favourite snacks. She also loves watching movies, especially horror flicks, although she watches most of the film with her hands over her eyes!

Farah asks: Hi Jo, how can I keep my house warm through the winter months when bills are now so high?

I have heard from a lot of people who are in the same situation as you. There are the usual tips like heating yourself not your home, with plenty of jumpers or even an electric blanket which are cheaper than heating to run. But if you struggle to keep warm at home and are living on a low income, with high energy costs or a health condition/circumstances affected by living in a cold damp home, support might be available through the AWARM service. Call the team on **01942 404261** to find out more.

Tom asks: I'm feeling really stressed and overwhelmed at the moment. I don't know where to turn. Do you have any advice?

Looking after your mental health is especially important at times like these. Reach out to friends and family so you aren't struggling alone, and if your worries are beginning to affect your daily life, you should speak to your GP. You can also contact Healthy Routes 1-2-1 for free local support. Visit a library to find out more.



Sonia asks: I've noticed that food prices have been rising recently and I am worried about how I will be able to feed my family, particularly at Christmas, what can I do to ease the financial pressure?

If you're worried about being able to afford your weekly food shop, one alternative to the mainstream supermarkets is to become a member of your local food pantry. Some do have membership criteria, but others are open to anyone as they're set up to prevent food waste as well as provide affordable food to those in need. They're a great way of ensuring you can still purchase fresh healthy food.

Meal planning can also be a great way to make sure nothing goes to waste, as well as buying supermarket own brand products being the cheapest option.

Michael asks: I've always gone all out at Christmas, it's my favourite time of year. But this year, I'm really worried about whether I can afford Christmas presents for my loved ones. What can I do?

Christmas is one of my favourite times of year and spending time with family is really wonderful. Now might be the time to go back to basics and enjoy spending time with each other. You could enjoy getting crafty to make presents or start a family secret Santa to lessen the burden of buying gifts for everyone.

For financial support, you might consider a credit union. A lot of people are unaware of these but they can be a great option if you need to borrow money. They are a self-help co-operative whose members pool their savings to provide each other with credit at a low interest rate. To be part of a credit union you have to share a common bond with other members, like where you live.

Find out more by visiting:
findyourcreditunion.co.uk



Have fun for free

1. Get outdoors
2. Be a tourist in your own borough
3. Look out for FREE local events
4. Check out your library
5. Get creative to have fun at home
6. Check out www.visitwigan.com

.....
Catch Jo's regular live Q+A sessions on our Facebook page  [WiganCouncilOnline](https://www.facebook.com/WiganCouncilOnline)

Welfare Support and Debt Advice

Our friendly staff are on hand to support you without judgement at this difficult time. They can offer:

- Advice and support on a range of welfare benefits
- Help with completing claim forms
- Guidance and support when making appeals
- A referral to Citizens Advice if you need debt or money advice
- Crisis support including emergency gas and electric vouchers, furniture packages and food parcels

For more information and to apply visit www.wigan.gov.uk/localwelfaresupport or phone **01942 705221**

Benefits

If you are on a low income you could qualify for help towards rent and Council Tax through Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction.

If you already receive some Housing Benefit or Universal Credit but not enough to cover all your rent, you could qualify for extra support through Discretionary Housing Payments.

You can get an estimated assessment of benefits you may be entitled to with our online calculator
www.quickcalc.co.uk/wigan

For more information and to apply visit www.wigan.gov.uk/benefits or phone **01942 489002**

Council Tax and Rent Payments

If you are finding it difficult to make your payments, please contact us and we will do everything we can to help:

Council Tax:

revenues@wigan.gov.uk or phone **01942 489001**

Wigan Council Rents:

myrent@wigan.gov.uk or phone **01942 486865**

Business Rates:

businessrates@wigan.gov.uk or phone **01942 489001**

Or visit www.wigan.gov.uk/strugglingtopay

Reducing Your Council Tax Bill

There are several Discounts and Exemptions that can reduce your Council Tax bill if you meet the qualifying criteria.

For more information and to apply visit www.wigan.gov.uk/counciltaxdiscounts or phone **01942 489001**

AWARM

If you struggle to keep warm at home or have a health condition affected by living in a cold damp home, support may be available through the AWARM service.

For more information and to apply visit www.wigan.gov.uk/warmhomes or phone **01942 404261**

Household Support Fund

This fund helps households most in need with food, energy, water bills and other essential items. You do not need to be in receipt of benefits to apply.

For more information and to apply visit www.wigan.gov.uk/householdsupportfund or phone **01942 705221**

Other Help and Support Available:

You can get free, independent, trusted advice from the below sources:

AdviceUK

www.adviceuk.org.uk

National Debtline

www.nationaldebtline.org or phone **0808 808 4000**

Money Advice Service

www.moneyhelper.org.uk/en or phone **0300 500 5000**

Citizens Advice

www.cawb.org.uk or phone **0808 2787 801**

Age UK

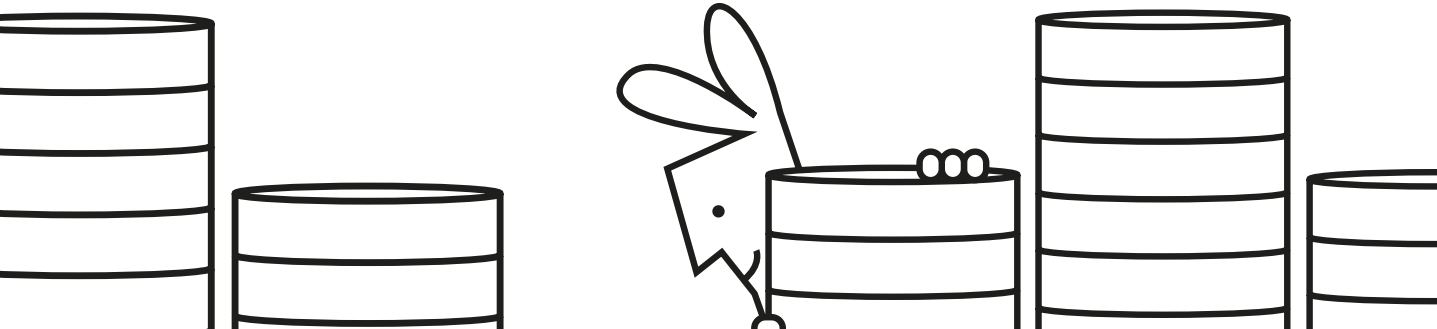
www.ageuk.org.uk/wiganborough or phone **01942 615880**

Turn2Us

www.turn2us.org.uk

Help for Households

helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk





We'd like to say a big thank you to everyone in the 230+ fostering households across the borough, for the support you give to our children and young people.

Our foster carers come from all walks of life, but all share a passion for supporting local families.

We are looking for more people who might be interested in becoming foster carers.

By joining our dedicated and supportive fostering community you could make a real difference to the lives of local children and families.



Andrea

When you become a foster carer you become part of an extended family, which is really nice.

We've kept in touch with many of the children we've looked after over the years and it's great to be able to offer support to so many local families.

We've had a young person with us for several years and he's come on hugely.

He's in mainstream high school now and doing well.

Being able to provide children with a good diet and a regular routine can make all the difference to them.

Tony



Rachel & Paul



Seeing the children's development is the best part.

When you get to see the positive changes in them, it makes the harder parts worth it.

To anyone interested in becoming a foster carer, we'd say: "Just have a go".

You can always start by caring for children on a short-term basis and see how you get on.

We've found it gets easier and you get better at it as time goes on.

Embracing culture, sport and heritage



Proud to be part of something very special

Across four matchdays during the summer, Leigh raised its game with the eyes of the world firmly fixed on the UEFA Women's Euro 2022 tournament. Now the final whistle has been blown - and with England's name engraved on the trophy - we reflect on our role as a host venue.

They could be heard long before they became visible in the distance.

The chants, music and booming drumbeat were all signs this was no ordinary Wednesday afternoon in Leigh.

From Borough Life's vantage point on the canal bridge looking back towards town, the Dutch flags flickered on the horizon just

before the sea of orange started its march towards us.

At the front of the parade, those flanking the fans' party bus bounced along as it led its followers past us, down St Helens Road, right on Schofield Street and onto Leigh Sports Village (LSV).

For onlookers - some hanging out of nearby windows, some stretching out their arms to

capture a decent selfie - the all-encompassing tide of Oranjegekte kept coming and coming....and coming.

Thousands of red, white and blue striped flags. Thousands of vivid orange hats and shirts. Thousands of smiling faces all soaking up the Leigh sunshine.



‘The day Leigh turned Oranje’ was how we summed it up on social media. It was a hard task to do those scenes justice.

Any thoughts though that we had been treated to something we would never see again were countered just a couple of days later.

Only this time it was with a sea of yellow and blue, and without a bus, as the Sweden fans put in an equally jaw-dropping performance.

“Stand up for the yellow and blue,” they chanted as they paraded along the same route, punctuated by the alternative verse of “sit down, we are yellow and blue,” which created the surreal scene of thousands sat or crouched in the middle of the streets.

“Following on from the Jubilee celebrations that were a few weeks before, it felt like we were in the middle of a summer-long party,” reflects Father Kevin Crinks (pictured), who has particularly fond memories of being invited onboard the Dutch fan bus.

St Mary’s Church was in the thick of the action as part of the Fan Zone area on Leigh Civic Square,

alongside the town hall and the Turnpike Gallery.

“It almost felt like time stood still on those days because everyone was in the moment, enjoying themselves, and what has stuck with me was how everyone came together in the spirit of the tournament,” he adds.

Although the Netherlands and Sweden supporters caught the eye with their marches to the stadium, the fan parties also hosted Portugal, Switzerland and Belgium fans who all contributed to the festival feeling, awash with colour and energy.

St Mary’s offered a natural chill-out zone during the height of the activities, with arts and crafts available for young visitors and a comfy spot to have a brew.

“It was uplifting to be able to have a chat with our visitors from across Europe and an experience I’ll never forget.” says Fr. Crinks.

“People came into the church to escape some of the hubbub. We were even treated to an impromptu mini-concert from one of the bands of Dutch fans.



‘Everyone was in the moment, enjoying themselves’



Embracing culture, sport and heritage

“They said to me: can we play our instruments in here? And I said, I don’t know, can you? Let’s see!”

England’s success on the pitch - with local hero Ella Toone playing a starring role - will ensure the tournament will be viewed as a landmark moment in the history of sport in the UK.

New coaches, players, equipment and facilities provided by the extensive legacy programme will supplement this watershed moment on a local level.

One immediate local indication of its impact can be found in the increased numbers attending Manchester United women’s fixtures at Leigh Sports Village in the wake of the Euros.

Meanwhile, the cultural schedule - with The Turnpike as a focal point - has brought to life the history of women’s football and inspired the next generation of creative talent.

‘Euro 2022: A summer like no other for the town of Leigh’ was how the BBC Sport website summarised the experience.

The tournament’s place in history for Leigh and the wider borough is something Fr. Crinks is keen to preserve.

A selection of Euros mementoes and keepsakes have been added to the church’s archives to keep the memory of this summer alive for decades and generations to come.

“Women’s football is on a whole new level of popularity now,” says Fr. Crinks.

“There will be many young people across Leigh who will have had access to live sport because, let’s face it, the cost of watching Premier League (men’s) football out-prices many.

“I was struck with how many young people visited the fan-zones - it has had an impact across the community.

“Unfortunately, we have to face the possibility that this was a once in a generation thing. That’s why we’re proud to have been part of something very special.”



Portugal fans get kitted out before kick-off



Table football was a big hit with youngsters



Fans on their way into the LSV



See more at Borough Life Plus



UEFA Women's Euros 2022: A Lasting Legacy



On the pitch An LSV goalfest



4 matches

15 goals

38 shots on target

15 yellow cards

0 red cards



Cultural and heritage programme

74 sessions held for
participation or education

3,438 Local participants

22,949 audience/visits
(inc fan parties)

18 community organisations
involved in the programme

21 schools and Wigan & Leigh College
students took part



Playing, coaching and participation

360 extra girls
playing football

13 clubs are now
taking part in womens
& girls' football

2 Female Friendly
Clubs created

24
Affiliated
Female Clubs

27 new
Female Coaches

13 new Female
Referees

Economic and social impact

£6.1m estimated
boost to the local economy

21,536 total
attendance at LSV

574,875 total
attendance across the
tournament

95 amazing volunteers



Embracing culture, sport and heritage



RUGBY LEAGUE
WORLD CUP
ENGLAND+2021

CREATED
BY RUGBY LEAGUE
WORLD CUP
ENGLAND+2021

WORLD CUP BOOST

GOES INTO EXTRA-TIME

THE RUGBY LEAGUE WORLD CUP MAY HAVE BEEN AND GONE AND THE CHAMPIONS CROWNED, BUT ITS IMPACT WILL BE FELT ACROSS WIGAN BOROUGH LONG AFTER THE FINAL WHISTLE AT OLD TRAFFORD.



That's because this tournament was never just about delivering top class action on the field but also about leaving behind a lasting legacy for future generations.

On both accounts it's been an astounding success. Crowds flocked to Leigh Sports Village and DW Stadium for a taste of the atmosphere at the 'biggest, best and most inclusive' competition in the sport's 137-year history - the first to put men's, women's and wheelchair athletes on the very same stage.

Lebanon, Jamaica, Ireland, Wales and the Cook Islands brought the colour as League-loving Leythers provided the noise for three fabulous occasions at LSV, while there were fireworks in Wigan on Bonfire Night as England's men and women both did battle as part of a mouth-watering double header.

Memories were made that will last a lifetime, but enduring just as long will be the social

impact delivered off the pitch - where the CreatedBy RLWC2021 Capital Grants programme has seen more than £22.7m invested into community rugby league across the country.

Tournament legacy grants totalling more than £8.5m have leveraged additional support to fund a whole range of requests large and small - all designed to create opportunities for more and more people of all ages, genders and abilities to participate in 'the greatest game'.

Here in Wigan Borough, some 28 different projects costing more than £2.2m have been made possible with the help of more than £900k from the CreatedBy pot.

One of the biggest beneficiaries have been Leigh Miners Rangers, one of the borough's most successful community clubs and just a short distance from LSV.

Embracing culture, sport and heritage

They've received £336k towards a new state-of-the-art training base - the cost of which is also proudly being supported by £175k from Wigan Council.

Rangers already boast more than 20 teams, nearly 400 players and over 60 volunteers, and are also the only community rugby league club competing in the Women's Super League.

Their new £810k facility will provide a single top-class training venue for all those teams and support their ambitions to further grow their membership; while sustainable revenue from hiring the new pitches out to third parties will be able to be invested back into the club for years to come.

On the other side of the borough, Shevington Sharks' new clubhouse and pitches will provide another

transformational testament to the tournament - aided by more than £234k of CreatedBy cash.

The club also secured an additional £2,615 towards kit and equipment for their girls and touch/tag rugby programmes.

Orrell St James ARLFC, meanwhile, have been given £140k towards their new clubhouse, brand new changing facilities and two new playing pitches that will accommodate the club's expanding offer.

Those three clubs are among the 31 nationwide recipients of large-scale grants totalling some £7m, but many other projects (195 to be precise) have also benefited from small-scale funding of more than £1.6m.

Locally, Wigan St Judes, Wigan St Cuthberts, Ashton Bears, Golborne Parkside, Hindley ARLFC and Wigan St Patricks have all had help upgrading their facilities, while Ince Rose Bridge Juniors, Golborne High, Wigan Bulldogs and Wigan Spring View

have received money for new kit and equipment.

So too has the Wigan Warriors Community Foundation, supporting them to expand their activity into new areas where the game is gaining a foothold.

Leigh Community Trust, the charitable arm of Super League newcomers Leigh Leopards, have similarly been supported - as has the Wigan Rugby League Referees Society.

As the dust now settles, this year's Rugby League World Cup will be remembered fondly for a whole host of reasons... from its extensive highlight reel of magic moments right from the opening match in Newcastle to the finale in Manchester, to the boundary-pushing positioning of its women and wheelchair athletes on the same footing as the more established men's teams.

But perhaps more than anything it has provided the platform for more people from a diverse range of communities to discover a love for the sport, and for a new generation of rugby league superstars to emerge.

ALL IN ALL, IT'S BEEN A REAL GAME-CHANGER.



SEE MORE AT
BOROUGH LIFE PLUS



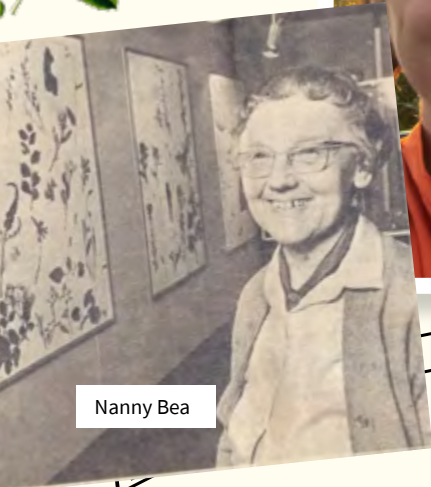
Family Footsteps

Thousands of you will have been dazzled recently by Wigan Borough's second Light Night Festival.

For one of the creative minds behind the stunning artwork, the journey has been a family affair.



Kathy and partner



Nanny Bea

It's late summer and artist Kathy Hinde has just returned from a two-week journey of discovery across the borough's canal networks.

Taking advantage of the long evenings, the narrow-boat trip is all in preparation for the few days in winter when our waterways are transformed.

The Light Night Festival - which sees breathtaking art installations

come to life in an explosion of colour - showcases an array of local, national and international talent.

For Kathy, her inspiration has come close to home. Her contribution to the festival has her late grandma, known as 'Nanny Bea', and a love of wildflowers at its heart.

A former art teacher at Leigh Girls' Grammar School, Bea, born in 1914, is remembered as having an eccentric streak.

She loved nothing more than showing her grandchildren the

beauty of the world around them. This is the energy Kathy has sought to recreate.

"If you went on walks with Bea, she would know about every single plant and wildflower," the artist explains.

Throughout her later life, Bea's love of nature grew, and she would study what most people would see as weeds with a fond eye.

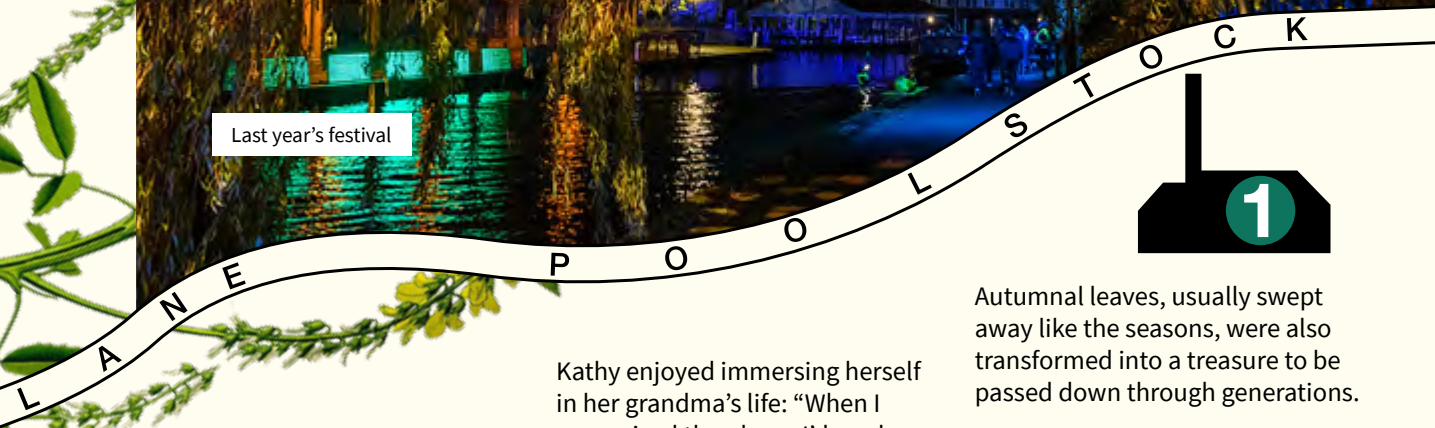
One plant, called melilot, captured her imagination.

In her retirement, Bea would undertake surveys of the plant and she developed a map of its locations around the borough.

LIGHT NIGHT

WIGAN + LEIGH

Last year's festival



Kathy became fascinated with following in Bea's footsteps - using the maps her grandma had created to find melilot decades later.

On her journey aboard the 57-foot-long narrowboat, she met dozens of residents who passed on their vast local knowledge.

From Peter, the locksmith who taught her about flowers that could only grow in the area because of a mineral linked to the steel industry, to herbalist Barbara and local boaters and walkers; they shared a connection from their love and passion for nature.

Kathy also stopped by the Archives: Wigan and Leigh to delve into the history of Wigan and District Field Club, of which Bea was a keen member.

There, she learned more about the types of walks Bea would have joined in with and where they would have met.

Kathy enjoyed immersing herself in her grandma's life: "When I recognised the places I'd read about from the archives, it was really lovely. I could think about what it would have been like for Bea."

Each day - as she journeyed past Scotman's Flash, Poolstock Lane, from Trencherfield Mill to Appley Bridge and Pennington Flash - Kathy would choose a wildflower to study.

Using 16mm film and her clockwork film camera - the kind that would've been around when Bea was studying her wildflowers - she developed photos in a makeshift darkroom on the boat.

To do this, she made developing fluid from the chemistry of the plants she found along the canals - from plantain, nettles and buddleia.

Sometimes she would use an artistic technique called phytogram to explore and develop film. It was these that were transformed into the beautiful projections that ran along the Light Night route.

Autumnal leaves, usually swept away like the seasons, were also transformed into a treasure to be passed down through generations.

The ones Bea had collected and preserved back in the 1960s had been looked after by Kathy for decades more and were used within her Light Night installation.

Kathy's adventure gave her the opportunity to soak up the world around her, using the natural world to create art that compared the borough's past and present.

But perhaps most importantly, the journey meant that Bea's spirit and passion was as alive as ever.

And at a time when sustainability is prevalent, her message to care for and enjoy the world around us has been passed on to future generations.

For more spectacular images from the Light Night Festival visit Borough Life Plus.



An environment to be proud of

KEEPING US MOVING THROUGH THE WINTER

Did you know?

We have **3,866 tonnes** in the salt barn for start of the winter season.

We grit **431km** of road on every gritting run. This is further than driving from Wigan to Glasgow.

There is more than **1,077km** of road surfaces in Wigan Borough. That is the equivalent of driving over to Dortmund, Germany. Or one quarter of the way to the North Pole.



An environment to be proud of

Primed and ready for action, often in the small hours as temperatures plummet, Wigan Council's road maintenance teams have a tough schedule at this time of year. So Borough Life tagged along to see first hand how this dedicated bunch pulls together to keep us all on track.

Like all good superheroes, Nick Lyon has a day job alongside other special duties that are called upon when required.

A drainage investigation operative, he is on-call at night as one of the council's gritter drivers throughout the winter.



It's his role to help keep our major through-routes safe and has been for almost three decades.

"It can be a challenging job," he explains. "We are on standby from October right through until March, sometimes longer if it's a cold spring.

"It can have me out and about at all hours as our forecasts show us the best time to grit so the treatment has the most effect."

So, let's get one thing straight.

It would be practically impossible to grit the entire road network. So, routes are chosen strategically to keep the most important ones open; main roads, bus routes and access to emergency service locations, among them.

"A standard run covers more than 400km of road, which can take about three hours," says Nick.

"We do our best to avoid going out in rush hour especially, as it makes it more difficult for us to spread the salt evenly across the whole road."

With pressures on time and resources - nevermind a limited amount of grit-salt available - there's a strategy behind deciding when the teams are called upon.

A network of devices spread around the borough supplement data from local weather stations and regional forecasting services

to estimate the how, when and where.

This all helps our teams of experienced officers make informed decisions.

Timing is everything. As the salt itself doesn't directly melt snow and ice, we plan to go out before it forms and over time the traffic will then work the salt into the road surface.

If snow then falls or road temperatures drop it will mix with the salt to create a salty solution which doesn't freeze as quickly as water. This helps to slow the build-up of snow and ice.

Sustained or heavy snowfall renders the salt mix less effective and is the time snow ploughs would need to be deployed.

"A lot has changed over the 27 years I've been doing it," says Nick

"But I've always taken a lot of pride in my work - keeping the roads safe and keeping people and emergency services moving, even in the worst weather."

How can you help?

Most importantly, drive with care, especially during winter weather. There can be tell-tale signs that the roads might be slippery; frost on the car or icy puddles. Accelerate and brake more gently when in wet or icy conditions and brake before reaching a bend, not on it.

If you're out for a walk, wear sturdy shoes or boots with good grip, make sure you can be seen by others and keep warm.

Look out for others. Check up on friends, relatives and neighbours who may be more vulnerable to cold weather.

The council can supply grit bins on a priority basis to help residents most affected by the icy conditions on the public highways in their area.

For more information, visit: bit.ly/3A97bxQ



In the driver's seat: Nick Lyon

An environment to be proud of

Remembering Her Majesty



Borough Life readers may recall from our last edition that Borsdane Wood in Hindley was officially recognised earlier this year as part of The Queen's Green Canopy (QGC).

The QGC was a tree planting initiative inviting people across the UK to 'Plant a Tree for the Jubilee' with Borsdane picked out as one of 70 ancient woodland plots to receive this special status.

Receiving this designation was a source of pride for Wigan Borough that has become even more poignant given Her Majesty's recent passing.

To pay tribute, this edition of Borough Life has spectacular images of Borsdane's natural beauty displayed on our front cover with a few more on this page.

In recent weeks, the Bridgers Community Group in Howe Bridge has also been unveiled as part of the QGC network.

They are one of 350 organisations from across the UK to be chosen as recipients of a 'Tree of Trees', gifted in The Queen's name and bearing Her Majesty's cypher.



It will become part of the living legacy in honour of Her Majesty, joining over a million trees already planted across the UK as part of the QGC.

The tree was planted on Colliers Corner in October as part of a nationwide presentation.

Group member Terry Daly said: "We are delighted to be selected.

These groups across the UK have been chosen because of the tremendous voluntary work they do in their communities."

United in mourning

Having come together earlier this year for the Platinum Jubilee celebrations, communities across Wigan Borough united once again in September, this time in mourning.

The news of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's passing was received with great sadness with flags at all official buildings lowered to half-mast and special services and moments of reflection observed in the days following.

Hundreds of residents attended Believe Square in Wigan to observe the official proclamation ceremony to acknowledge the accession to the throne of King Charles III.

Many more visited Wigan and Leigh town halls and libraries to sign the borough's Books of Condolence with many other organisations, schools and groups providing their own versions.

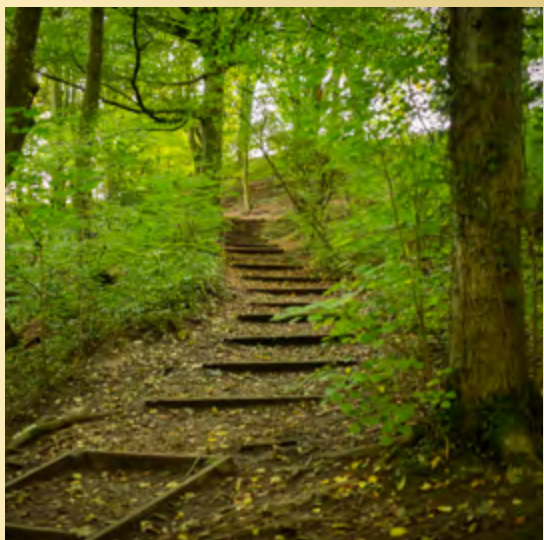
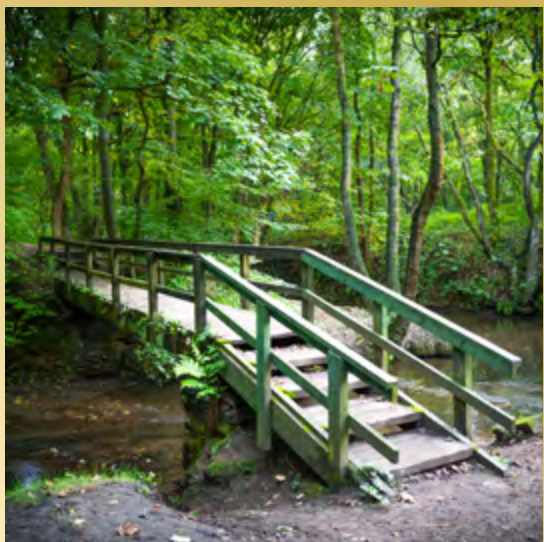
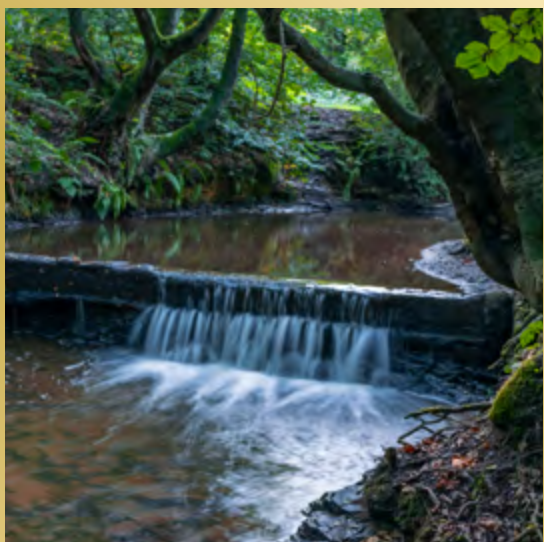
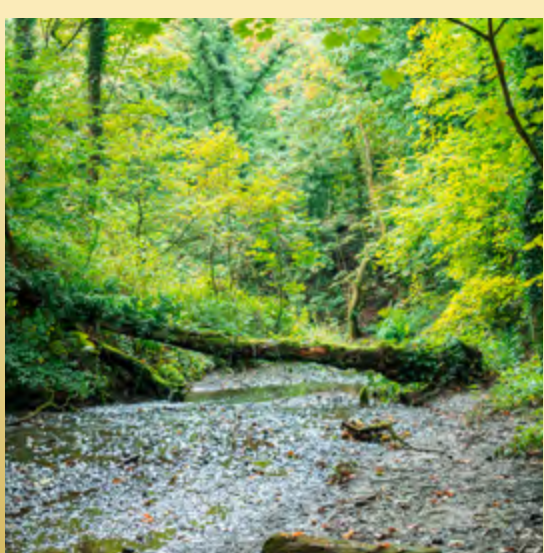
The council's Books of Condolence have now been transferred to the borough's archives for posterity.

Mayor of Wigan Borough, Councillor Marie Morgan (pictured below with Coun Clive Morgan), said: "I would like to personally thank everyone across the borough who signed the books of condolence and who paid their own tributes to Her Majesty.

"As a dedicated and inspirational figurehead for our nation and other nations across the world, her reign will be remembered as an extraordinary one.

"The Queen visited our borough on a number of occasions throughout her reign; from the Three Sisters site in Ashton-in-Makerfield and the Turnpike Gallery in Leigh, to Wigan Pier and most recently the opening of Leigh Sports Village in 2009.

"On behalf of everyone here in Wigan Borough, we expressed our deepest condolences to the Royal Family and joined everyone in the UK and across the globe in mourning her loss."



Peace of mind

in your new pad



Providing quality, affordable accommodation options that are right for you is a top priority for Wigan Council.

Here's how we're making progress, with updates including a furry friend and a call-out down under.



Home and Away

An empty home is more than just bricks and mortar; every empty property represents one fewer place for local people to live.

Our private sector housing team has embarked on a mission to seek out owners to see what options are available. One of these cases saw officers track down a family living down under in Australia.

“I don’t think any of our team expected to be talking to people on the other side of the world,” says Neil Tonge, housing standards manager.

“The owners were really surprised to find out they had the property - 10,000 miles from where they live.

“It showed just how these properties can unknowingly end up unused and not benefitting our residents at a time of unprecedented demand.”

Anyone struggling to know what to do with an empty property can reach out to the housing team.

Along with providing a new home for residents, the council is looking to provide work experience to the students of Wigan and Leigh College with plans underway that could see construction students working closely with developers to bring homes back into use.

“If you feel uncertain of where to turn over an empty property you own, come and speak to us and we will work with you to ensure your property is brought back into use,” says Neil.

www.wigan.gov.uk/EmptyHomes

Or email: EmptyHomes@wigan.gov.uk



Friends Dot and Gwen have just said hello to a regular visitor to their flats in Goose Green.

Betty the squirrel has popped over, tapping on the window, on the lookout for a snack.

Their new homes are one of several specialist housing facilities spread across the borough.

Facilities like this one enable residents to continue living independently but with a bit of a helping hand.

It’s about getting the right support, in the right place, at the right time.

“The house I shared with my husband was just too big for me to manage alone, I was starting to struggle with the stairs,” explains Gwen.

“Now I have my lovely flat and I’ve been able to keep gardening too. There’s different activities to get involved with and I’ve made some great new friends.”

Some residents move in and may need help dressing or reminders to take their medication. Others, as their needs change, may require the more complex level of care services based on site.

Dot says that making the move has helped her feel less isolated.

“It has given me the chance to keep living socially and independently,” she explains.

“I have the peace of mind for me and my kids that there is always someone here if I need them. There is the freedom to do what you want and support to help you do it.”

The extra care buildings are designed to be as comfortable for older people as possible, with level access, lifts to all floors, scooter stores and more. They are also built to high environmental standards, ensuring energy costs are lower than in an older house.

Two new extra care schemes are opening in 2023; Wharfdale in Leigh and Eldervale, Whitebeam Close in Wigan.

If you, or anyone you know, are looking to live independently but with the reassurance that support is there, extra care could be the solution.

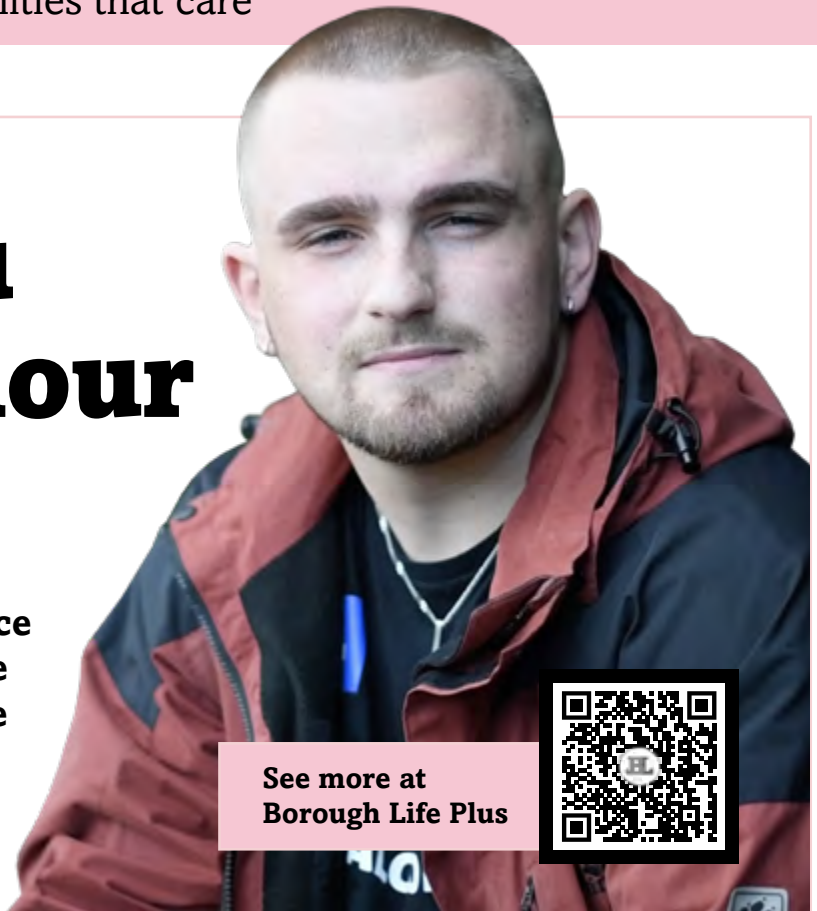
Visits from Betty the squirrel may not be included!



If you’d like to find out more email communitylivingschemes@wigan.gov.uk.

With You in your hour of need

A case worker for the service that helped save his life, we caught up with Jake, whose journey to recovery is inspirational.



See more at
Borough Life Plus



Rising pressures can make all of us feel like there's nowhere to turn. For Jake, financial issues had left him feeling like his options were running out, fast. So, he had turned to drugs.

"I couldn't afford to pay my debts and I was too ashamed to face up to the problems I had created for myself," he explains to Borough Life.

"The stress and financial state I had gotten into was too much. I considered myself hopeless and was more or less accepting of my fate as an addict."

The 6th April last year is a date that sticks in Jake's mind. It was a Tuesday. The previous day his addiction to cocaine had reached crisis point and he had attempted to take his own life.

The date, therefore, was the start of his journey supported by With You, the borough-based charity offering vital advice and guidance to those struggling with alcohol and drug use.

With the help of his With You caseworker, the first steps of recovery were made.

This tough, challenging but ultimately rewarding journey finds him where he is today; a caseworker for the service, mentoring others through the With You experience using his first-hand knowledge of what to expect.

"If this is the case, drugs and alcohol are probably the root of the financial issues, so drugs and alcohol won't be the answer," he says.

'I used to see asking for help as a weakness, but it takes a strong person to ask for help.'

"People who love you will be more than willing to help you out."

Growing concerns about mental health, exacerbated by the cost of living crisis, mean there are fresh fears that Jake's story could become more common up and down the UK.

National charity Mental Health Concern revealed earlier this year that one in three people are now accessing their crisis service due to financial factors - with a 196 per cent increase of respondents noting they have experienced having suicidal thoughts.

Several organisations across Wigan Borough, such as With You, offer important support options for residents who may find themselves in times of crisis, meaning there is always somewhere to turn for expert advice.

Caseworkers, like those who helped Jake, will be on-hand throughout the recovery journey, tailoring the experience to the individual's needs.

With You also offers advice to residents who are concerned about someone else's drinking or drug use, all they have to do is get in touch.

As part of his new role, Jake hopes to inspire others to make better choices than him well before they reach crisis-point.



“We admire Jake for sharing his story as part of this new role and would encourage anyone who might be in a similar situation to speak to us. We’re always here to chat,” explains Sharon Wain, contracts manager for the charity.

“As Jake found, issues with drugs and alcohol can leave you feeling quite lonely and impact your mental health but we’re here to provide free and confidential advice and support if you need it.

“We will work with you in a way that is best for you, whether that’s through one-to-one support or group work, or through meeting in person or over the phone - we will discuss those options with you.”

As for Jake’s key message in his new role, he’s keeping it simple: “Seek help, don’t be ashamed, and strive to become the best version of yourself.”



Sharon says: “If Jake’s story resonates with you, do get in touch. You can visit our website to find details for the With You service in Wigan and Leigh or to speak to one of our webchat advisors for free and confidential advice online.”



Feeling Overwhelmed?

The cost-of-living crisis is affecting everyone in different ways and it is particularly tough on those on lower incomes.

If you feel like you need support with your mental health and wellbeing you can contact your GP or visit: www.wigan.gov.uk/mentalhealth

If you feel you are having a mental health crisis or feeling suicidal, urgent support can be found by contacting the Samaritans on **116 123** or emailing jo@samaritans.org.uk



Shine a Light on Suicide

Whether you’re feeling suicidal, worried someone else is, or have lost someone to suicide, Shine a Light on Suicide is here to help. Whatever you’re going through, the service can provide the advice and support you need. You can also take part in online training that will give you the skills you need to help someone struggling with suicidal thoughts.

Find out more at: shiningalightonsuicide.org.uk



With You in Wigan and Leigh

If you are struggling with alcohol and drug use, With You is here to listen. This free confidential service will work with you on your goals whether that’s cutting down your drug or alcohol use, stopping completely or just getting a bit of advice. The service’s trained staff will listen and you can tell them as little or as much as you want.

Find out more at: www.wearewithyou.org.uk or call **01942 827979**

www.wigan.gov.uk/FeelingOverwhelmed



TOGETHER AT CHRISTMAS

We all know how easy it can be for costs to snowball at Christmas. With many of us trying to watch the pennies and the pounds, we've pulled together a few ideas we think 'yule' enjoy to keep an 'elfy' bank balance.

Low-cost Crimbo

There's plenty of ways to kick-start that warm and fuzzy Christmas feeling without getting too into the red.

Suggest a 'Secret Santa' with family or friends. This means putting your names in, with everyone pulling one out. They then only buy that person a present. That way everyone still gets a lovely Christmas surprise.

Why not tour around the neighbourhood to look at Christmas lights with a flask of hot chocolate; have a Christmas movie night on the couch; or follow Santa's journey on Christmas Eve online? (noradsanta.org)

Don't worry about paying to see Father Christmas at a grotto - check the rotary schedule for a magical visit close to home www.wiganrotary.co.uk



Getting crafty

Homemade Christmas crafts for the whole family over the holidays are easy and fun to make and get your home full of Christmas cheer!



A-peeling decorations

1. Slice oranges into 1-2cm thick slices.
2. Pat dry with a clean tea towel.
3. Place them on a metal cooling rack over a baking tray so that air can circulate around them easily and they don't burn or stick. Add some cinnamon to get that Christmas scent!
4. Pop them into a low oven (120°C) for about three hours, turning every half hour or so.
5. Let them cool and hang on the tree!

Communities that care



#TogetherAtChristmas

We're encouraging our residents to remember the small joys of Christmas this year. It might be a cosy hot chocolate or spending time with family and friends. Whatever brings you joy this festive season, we'd love to hear about it!

Seeing newsfeeds full of presents can leave some people feeling overwhelmed. Why not post a different picture this year which represents the true meaning of Christmas? Share your family s-elf-ie with us by tagging **@WiganCouncil** with **#TogetherAtChristmasWiganBorough**



Love Local

Our borough is brimming with amazing local businesses which are the perfect place to buy your gifts and give back to your local community.

Even when Christmas is over, why not consider loving local for Valentine's Day, Mother's Day or the occasions that need something a little special?

www.wigan.gov.uk/lovelocal



Giving back to our communities

Reverse Advent calendar

Every day in December, complete a reverse advent calendar. This is where you pick one item a day to donate to a food pantry. A reverse advent calendar is a great way to show children and grandchildren that Christmas is a time for giving and not just receiving presents or eating chocolate.

Toy collection

Compassion in Action is collecting donations at Spinning Gate shopping centre in Leigh. Toys for newborns through to children aged 16 and over can be dropped off in trolleys at Costa Coffee and Nationwide Building Society.

Wrap Up Wigan Campaign

The Brick homeless charity are asking for: gloves, scarfs, underwear, socks, slow cookers, hot water bottles and heated blankets to help local families in need this winter. These can be dropped off at Brick Works, 4 Hodson Street, WN3 4HS or St George's Food Community, Water Street, Wigan, WN1 1XD between 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.



What's on in Wigan Borough?



Every Thursday

Complete Kindness CIC

Mindful Colouring Creations

10am to 12pm ➡ Free

Knit & Natter

12pm to 2pm ➡ £4 (including brew)

Guided Meditation

6.30pm ➡ £5 / £3 concessions

✦ 249 Elliott Street, Tyldesley

[www.facebook.com/](http://www.facebook.com/comeoninandhaveachat/)

[comeoninandhaveachat/](https://www.facebook.com/comeoninandhaveachat/)



Thursday 1 December -

Saturday 17 December

Christmas Pantomime:

Humpty Dumpty

A classic panto confection with all the finest ingredients.

7.30pm start during the week and

2.15pm start at weekends.

✦ Wigan Little Theatre, Wigan,

WN1 3SL

➡ Tickets: - bit.ly/3V22tKr

Saturday 3 December -



Friday 23 December

Christmas Pantomime:

Aladdin

The Old Courts is delighted to showcase this family favourite featuring Widow Twanky and The Genie in the Lamp for you this Christmas.

✦ The Old Courts, Crawford St, Wigan, WN1 1NA

➡ Tickets: - bit.ly/3NSycv9



Saturday 3 December

Standish Christmas Market

The annual Christmas market held in Standish village, with stalls in the centre and digital stalls trading online.

✦ Standish Village Centre

➡ Free event



Haigh Christmas Brass & Artisan Market

Sunday 4 December

Performances 1pm and 2.30pm

Christmas Brass performed in the Courtyard courtesy of Astley Youth Brass Band. Sets are 40 minutes long.

Sunday 11 December

Performances 1pm and 2.30pm

Christmas Brass performed in the Courtyard courtesy of Farnworth and Walkden Brass Band. Sets are 40 minutes long.

Artisan market open 10am to 3pm

Santa's Grotto open 11am to 4pm

The market will offer its usual craft, food and drink offerings alongside the Courtyard's permanent traders.

✦ Haigh Woodland Park, School Lane, Wigan, WN2 1PE

➡ Free event (Parking charges apply)



10 December - 24 February 2023

Leigh Film Society

Leigh Film Society provides professionally delivered, quality film screenings in venues across the borough.

Saturday 10 December

The Muppets Christmas Carol

4pm ✦ Leigh Parish Church, St Mary's Way, Leigh WN7 1EB

➡ Tickets: - £3 - £5 - bit.ly/3DTD2DL

Friday 27 January 2023

Where the Crawdads Sing

7pm ✦ Leigh Film Factory, Leigh Spinners Mill, Park Lane, WN7 2LB

➡ Tickets: - £5 - bit.ly/3UsNEQU

Friday 24 February 2023

Riders of Justice

7pm ✦ Leigh Film Factory, Leigh Spinners Mill, Park Lane, WN7 2LB

➡ Tickets: - £5 - bit.ly/3WPeVyy



Thursday 15 December

Folk in the Bailiff

Join brilliant local singer-songwriter Lawrence Hoy for a relaxed evening of song and storytelling, accompanied by fantastic fellow musician Steve Higgins.

7pm ✦ The Old Courts, Crawford St, Wigan, WN1 1NA

➡ Tickets: www.theoldcourts.com

FROST FESTIVAL 2022

www.visitwigan.com/frostfest

What's On guide



Sunday 18 December
Haigh Family Christmas Cracker!

Performances by the Milltown Christmas Chorus, Lancashire Youth Brass Band plus music and entertainment.
 📍 **Haigh Woodland Park, School Lane, Wigan, WN2 1PE** ➡ Free event (Parking charges apply)



20 December - 22 December
Christmas Family Drive-Ins

Festive family drive-in showing festive favourites. Pre-event entertainment, food and drinks available.

Main car park opens: 4pm, Kitchen Courtyard shops and cafes open from 4pm. Santa's Grotto opens 4pm to 5.30pm. Pre-booking required.
 📍 **Haigh Woodland Park, School Lane, Wigan, WN2 1PE**
 ➡ Tickets: - bit.ly/3UCAupw

Tuesday 20 December
Feature: The Muppet Christmas Carol

4pm 📍 **Haigh Woodland Park**

Wednesday 21 December
Feature: Elf

4pm 📍 **Haigh Woodland Park**

Thursday 22 December
Feature: Santa Claus The Movie

4pm 📍 **Haigh Woodland Park**



Friday 13 January 2023
Detroit Live (Motown Show)

Detroit Live are here to perform the greatest hits from the sensational Motown catalogue. **7.30pm** 📍 **The Old Courts, Gerrard Winstanley House, Crawford St, Wigan, WN1 1NA**
 ➡ Tickets: - bit.ly/3tu0fYo



Friday 27 January 2023
A Foreigners Journey

Legendary rock bands Foreigner and Journey are giants of the classic rock genre. This tribute act is the next best thing to seeing the bands live.

7.30pm 📍 **The Old Courts, Gerrard Winstanley House, Crawford St, Wigan, WN1 1NA** ➡ Tickets: - bit.ly/3V252Mz



Tuesday 31 January - Saturday 4 February 2023
Educating Rita

A performance of this classic stage comedy.
 📍 **Tyldesley Little Theatre, Lemon Street, Tyldesley, M29 8HT**
 ➡ Tickets: - £8 each (no concessions) - www.tlt.org.uk



Sunday 19 March 2023
Run Wigan Festival

The wonderful Wigan running festival returns with Half Marathon, 5k and Family Mile races.
 📍 **Mesnes Park, Wigan**
 ➡ runwiganfestivals.co.uk

Sporting fixtures

Wigan Warriors
 (www.wiganwarriors.com/fixtures)



Wigan Athletic
 (www.wiganathletic.com/matches)



Leigh Leopards
 (www.leighsportsvillage.co.uk)



@VisitWigan
www.visitwigan.com

Winter services



Wigan and Leigh Life Centres (including Register Office and libraries)

Wigan and Leigh Life Centres will be closed from December 23 to January 2, inclusive.

Customers can still access welfare support services by visiting wigan.gov.uk/localwelfaresupport or alternately telephone support is available on **01942 705221** between Wednesday, December 28 and Friday, December 30, 9am to 4pm.

Registrar Appointments will be available at Wigan Life Centre by appointment only between Wednesday, December 28 to Friday, December 30, 10am to 4pm.

Cemeteries

All cemeteries will be open to visitors during daylight hours over the holiday period.

No burials will take place on Monday, December 26, Tuesday, December 27 and Monday, January 2, 2023.

Burials will take place from 12pm to 3pm on Wednesday, December 28 and Tuesday, January 3, 2023.

Normal bookings apply on Thursday, December 29, Friday, December 30 and from Wednesday, January 4, 2023.

Crematorium

No cremations will take place on Monday, December 26, Tuesday, December 27 and Monday, January 2, 2023.

Normal services will take place on Wednesday, December 28, Thursday, December 29 and Friday, December 30.

Cremations return to normal service from Tuesday, January 3, 2023.

Bereavement Services Office

The team is available to contact via 01942 489003 on Wednesday, December 28, Thursday, December 29 and Friday, December 30, between 9am and 4pm each day.

Refuse and recycling collections

There are no changes to your bin collection day over the festive period. Please put your bin out on your usual day by 6.30am.

There will be no green bin collections between Monday, December 26 and Friday, January 6, 2023 to prioritise the collection of the other bins.

Recycling centres

The recycling centres are closed Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

They are open every other day between 9am and 5.45pm.

The sites are exceptionally busy during the festive period so please try to sort your waste before attending site, minimise the number of visits or delay your visit until the new year.

For more information visit: www.wigan.gov.uk/recycling

Bad weather

Further information about Christmas arrangements and recycling, including any changes due to bad weather, will be available on Wigan Council's social media channels and website or by calling our helpline **01942 404364**.

For more information visit www.wigan.gov.uk/winter

Are you at risk of being homeless?

You may find yourself in the position of being without a home for all sorts of reasons.

For more information visit www.wigan.gov.uk/homelessness

If you are made homeless in an emergency; as a result of fire or floods, for example, please contact **01942 489005** or **01942 828777**, if outside of usual working hours.

These details are correct at the time of going to press.

NHS / Healthier Wigan

Health services are here for you this winter. Please consider accessing the following first and always leave A&E for serious injury or life-threatening emergencies only.

Pharmacy

All local pharmacies will be on a rota basis over the Christmas period. Please check with your local pharmacy, local press or at www.healthierwigan.nhs.uk.

Ensure you have enough remedies such as paracetamol in your house for coughs and colds.

Leigh urgent treatment centre

For general health advice and treatment for minor injuries or ailments including cuts or minor burns, fractures, sprains, and x-rays (of upper/lower limbs), emergency contraception and sexual health.

No appointment is necessary. Open 7am to 9pm, 365 days a year at Leigh Health Centre, The Avenue, Leigh, WN7 1HR, **01942 483453**.

GP and dental services

If your GP or dentist is closed, please contact:

NHS 111 for confidential health information and advice, 24 hours a day, seven days a week or online at www.111.nhs.uk

GP evening and weekend appointment service on **01942 482848**. Appointments 6.30pm to 8pm and on weekends and bank holidays 10am to 4pm except Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

GP out of hours service is available by calling NHS 111, open 6.30pm to 8am and all weekend (Fridays 6.30pm to 8am Monday), including all bank holidays.

Greater Manchester Urgent Dental Care Service is available on **03333 323800** (8am to 10pm every day, including weekends and bank holidays).

Mental Health Crisis Line

Contact Wigan Borough 24/7 mental health crisis line for all ages.

Freephone **0800 953 0285**.

Winter vaccinations

Flu and COVID-19 can spread more easily in winter when mixing indoors. The protection provided by COVID-19 vaccines decreases over time and flu viruses can change every year. That is why getting an annual flu vaccine and making sure you are up to date with COVID-19 boosters continues to be our best protection against these viruses which can cause serious illness.

Find out if you're eligible at nhs.uk/wintervaccinations and book now.