

BoroughLife

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A recipe for success

Harwoods Patisserie on their journey to the Bake Off final



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Mystery surrounds the appearance of wooden woodland creatures at Pennington

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Our annual celebration of our amazing community heroes is a true inspiration

The Leader's column



Welcome to the Winter 2023 edition of Borough Life.

It's hard to believe that another year has nearly come and gone and we're in the position once again to reflect on what has been a busy 12 months.

It seems like we have said this several times in recent years, but it has been another year of sporting success.

Our borough holds the three major rugby league trophies due to the exploits of Wigan Warriors and Leigh Leopards and I hope lots of memories have been made that will last for decades to come. We've

picked out some of our favourite images from the year on pages 18 and 19.

We have recently wrapped up our own awards season – including the community focused Our Town Awards – and this edition highlights some of the amazing feats that attracted well-deserved recognition.

For the Our Town Awards, each year our task as judges becomes even more difficult due to the inspiring stories behind all the nominations.

As ever in Borough Life, there's lots of activities and updates regarding our town centres, including a new development plan at an iconic Wigan building and an exciting project in Leigh, Atherton and Tyldesley.

Extended features this time around include an update on the new plans being planted at Haigh Hall, focusing on all-things horticulture.

There's also a fascinating tale of mystery and intrigue with the new facilities at Pennington Flash as its backdrop, which is well worth a read.

The end of the year also allows us the chance to look ahead to the next 12 months and this edition highlights recently launched facilities to help families and how our Here for You campaign can provide support.

To wrap up this winter edition is the ever-popular What's On guide that provides a handy overview of activities and events.

I hope you enjoy this edition as much as we have putting it all together for you and I hope you have a relaxing holiday season and Happy New Year!

Councillor David Molyneux MBE
Leader, Wigan Council

Borough Life is published by Wigan Council and distributed to all households in the borough. This edition was published on 20 November 2023. The magazine is printed on paper from renewable resources. It is written, edited and designed by Wigan Council's Public Relations Team.

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

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

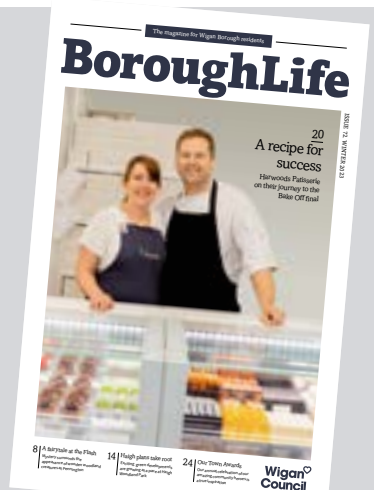


On the cover

Like many of our readers, we were rooting for Harwoods throughout this year as they reached the final of Bake Off: The Professionals. For us, they were the people's champions.

We're always on the lookout for an eye-catching image to set the tone of each edition of Borough Life and the chance to feature some of their majestic cakey treats was too good to miss.

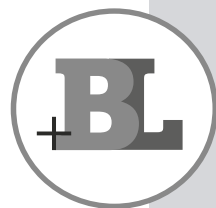
We'd like to thank the team at Harwoods for being so accommodating and we hope these shots by Heather Capture Photography make your mouths water and get in the mood for some festive food!



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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What a year it has been for the borough's rugby league clubs. It has been a tough job with thousands of images to choose from, but we've narrowed it down to some of our favourites to jog the memory.

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A small, independent business in Standish has done the borough proud this year on a national stage. We caught up with Harwoods to hear about their Bake Off: The Professionals journey.

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Market makeover

Design experts Sheila Bird Studio have been unveiled as the lead company for Wigan town centre's new market hall.

As part of The Galleries redevelopment, and working alongside developers Cityheart, they will deliver a bright and thriving market space that will anchor the town's transformation plans.

Sheila Bird co-founder Atul Bansal said: "This is an amazing opportunity to create something that not only celebrates the people of Wigan but which will act as a catalyst for the prosperity of the town and the health and wellbeing of its people now and in the future.

"The new market will be a place where the community enjoys coming together for the best local shopping, listening to music, socialising and working."



Trash to treasure at Second Chance Saloon

What do more than 2,000 bikes, 10,000 tins of paint and thousands of Lego and jigsaw pieces all have in common?

They are among the huge list of items rescued and given new homes from Wigan Borough's waste and recycling centres as part of a successful new scheme.

The Second Chance Saloon (SCS) is up-and-running at the Slag Lane site in Leigh and it's an eye-catching reminder of the importance of re-use; one of the three R's of sustainability- Reduce, Reuse, Recycle!

Tracy Roe from FCC Environment, Wigan Council's waste and recycling partner organisation, said: "They are the first of their kind and are made from materials recovered on site. We hope the drop-off sites encourage more re-use across the borough and helps people focus a little more on recycling."

Plans are already underway to bring more SCS style facilities to our recycling sites and Wigan Council and FCC continue to ensure local organisations are benefitting from the scheme.

From donations of retro technology to the North West Computer Museum, sporting equipment to ManLeigh, arts, crafts and toys to Ekhaya Emporment CIC, Lego, instruments and more to the Stroke Association, and to the thousands of tins of paint which have made their way to local charities, it all makes a huge difference.

Drop off your unwanted items at:

- Kirkless, Makerfield Way, Higher Ince, WN2 2PR,
- Slag Lane, Leigh, WA3 1BZ
- Chanters Industrial Estate, Atherton, M46 9BP

www.wigan.gov.uk/recycling

Popular town centre parking offer extended

Getting organised with your shopping for the festive season is now even easier in Wigan and Leigh town centres.

In addition to free weekend parking, a majority of council owned car parks are now free to use after 3pm each weekday.

This offer is available through until Friday, 5 January.

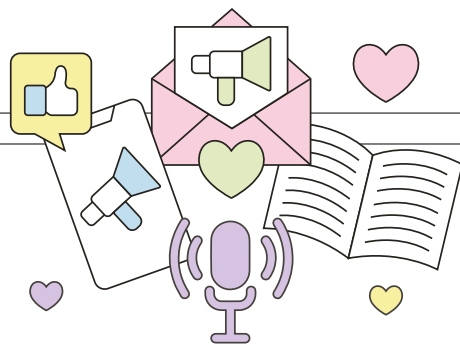
The move is designed to help us all support the borough's vast array of local and independently run businesses at this important time of year.

Please note, visitors are advised to check which car parks are included as part of the offer.

For more information and the full list of locations, visit:

www.wigan.gov.uk/carparking





Thank you for keeping us in the loop

Wigan Council and the team behind Borough Life launched its first residents' communications survey earlier this year and we'd like to thank everyone who contributed.

The survey will run each year to help monitor changes in social and printed media and help us find the best ways to keep you in the loop. In addition to the online survey, paper copies

were distributed in libraries, cultural venues and shopping centres across the borough.

We hope to soon share the results from your feedback and show how you've influenced the way we communicate with you.

In the meantime you can share your feedback with the team by emailing pr@wigan.gov.uk



Purple Flag flying high... again

Wigan town centre has been recognised once again for being a safe place to enjoy an evening out, retaining its Purple Flag status for another year.

Overseen by the Association of Town and City Management (ATCM) organisation, Purple Flag is an international accreditation programme that highlights thriving locations at night for all visitors.

The process requires local authorities to meet a set of high standards regarding the night-time economy and identify opportunities to enhance what is on offer for revellers.

The accreditation recognised the ongoing work of the Community Safety Partnership and associated campaigns such as Get Home Safe, which focuses on safe taxi rides, and Call It Out, which tackles inappropriate behaviour.



Important facilities making a difference

A new accessible toilet and changing facility has been officially opened at Leigh bus station.

Delivered in partnership with Wigan Council and Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM), 'Changing Places' provides accessible toilet facilities for people with more severe disabilities who may need equipment such as hoists, as well as space for carers.

The Changing Places toilets partnership estimates that over a quarter of a million people in the

UK need such facilities when they are out and about.

This is the first of a number of Changing Places toilets that are set to be built in Wigan Borough over the next year, including at Pennington Flash Visitor Centre, Howe Bridge Leisure Centre and Platt Bridge Community Zone.

These will join existing Changing Places toilets at Wigan Bus Station, Wigan Life Centre, Leigh Sports Village, and the new football hubs at Laithwaite Park and William Fosters.




Listen to the latest BoroughLife podcast



linktr.ee/wigancouncil

Education partnership is top of the class

An historic partnership has been agreed between lead organisations in Wigan Borough and Edge Hill University to provide education and training opportunities.

Leaders from Wigan Council, Wigan and Leigh College and Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh (WWL) NHS Foundation Trust, signed the civic agreement alongside their Edge Hill counterparts in October.

The agreement places Edge Hill,

based in Ormskirk, as the flagship university for the Wigan Borough.

Alongside the Wigan Education and Skills Partnership, which already saw the four organisations working together, it identifies four key areas: education, health and social care, digital industries and business engagement.

To read the agreement in full, visit: www.edgehill.ac.uk/document/civic-university-agreement/



Council of the year

The amazing dedication of frontline local authority staff has attracted praise on a national stage.

Wigan Council was named Council of the Year in September by the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE).

In addition to the overall prize, the team at Howe Bridge Leisure Centre claimed the Best Community and Neighbourhood initiative award.

The APSE Awards recognise the very best in public services and this year's awards received more than 300 nominations.



Leigh architect recognised with Blue Plaque

An architect known for designing many of Leigh's historic buildings has been recognised with a Blue Plaque.

James Caldwell Prestwich, who was born in Atherton and educated at Leigh Grammar School, travelled to work in London before returning to Leigh in 1875.

Following his return to his hometown, Prestwich went on to set up his architectural practice where he worked until he was 77 years old.

The buildings designed by Prestwich include Leigh Technical School and Library on Railway Road, Leigh Infirmary and Leigh Town Hall, which was completed in Edwardian Baroque Revival style in 1907.

Since its reopening in 2021, Leigh Town Hall has been home to Archives: Wigan and Leigh, with facilities made possible with support from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, to preserve the history of the borough's schools, churches, hospitals, businesses, families and estates.

www.wigan.gov.uk/blueplaquescheme



Atherton's Tom is top of the world

In the days leading up to Borough Life going to press we were delighted to see some breaking news about yet another local sporting hero.

Tom Aspinall became only the Britain's third ever UFC world champion when he claimed the interim heavyweight title at Madison Square Garden, New York, in November.

What an amazing achievement by Tom from Atherton, congratulations and we can't wait to see what comes next!

New board to drive Ashton-in-Makerfield regeneration plans

A partnership of public and private organisations is set to spearhead the regeneration of Ashton-in-Makerfield.

The new Innovation Board has been established with works on a £6.6m masterplan set to start.



The #OurFutureAshton project includes improved shop fronts, upgraded streets and public spaces, new walking and cycling routes and a refresh for the town's market square following a successful Levelling Up Fund bid.

The board brings together local businesses, community groups and organisations - including Wigan Council - to help engage with the community and ensure this funding delivers the best results for Ashton.

www.wigan.gov.uk/OurFutureAshton

Childcare hours available for parents

Families across Wigan Borough are being encouraged to check if they are eligible for support with childcare.

Working parents with children aged two-years-old or due to turn two before 31 March 2024, can apply for up to 15 hours of childcare.

Applications are open from 2 January 2024.

To find out more about eligibility criteria and how to apply visit www.childcarechoices.gov.uk



Embracing equality as new project launches

Organisations across Wigan Borough are teaming up to tackle inequality and promote the diverse nature of our communities.

The All Different, All Equal project – which is overseen by Happy Smiles Training CIC and Rights Community – will work towards agreeing a set of priorities, helping toward the goal of building a fairer

and more inclusive borough.

Almost 100 residents met in Hindley in November to launch the initial engagement stage of the project and were entertained by local musicians and dancers.

To find out more about this work and share your experiences, go to www.wigan.gov.uk/FairAndInclusive

recycle
for Wigan Borough

Between December 26th and 30th your bin collection will be **one day later than usual.**

Green bin collections will be suspended between 26th December and 5th January to help prioritise the collection of other bins.

Check your calendar or visit wigan.gov.uk/recycling for collection dates.

Wigan Council



The curious case of the bear, the owl and the 'Pennington Banksy'

It sounds more like the start of a fairytale; woodland creatures gathering in secret around a tranquil beauty spot.

But the staff at Pennington Flash have had the real-life experience of going down to the woods and finding a big surprise.

So, let's pick up the story with them on a bright June morning....

Park assistant manager Joe Greenhalgh and his team have spotted something new. Standing by the Tom Edmondson Hide is... a bear. It's two-and-a-half feet tall, to be precise, with brown fur and a cheerful expression.

He's quite still – he is made of wood, after all – with friendly eyes that are sparkling in the mid-summer sun.

Further along the path from the canal to the new café is a companion for the bear, an owl, with equally intricate detail in its feathers.

"We didn't know where they'd come from, or who had dropped them off. We just turned up to work one day and there they were," explains Joe.

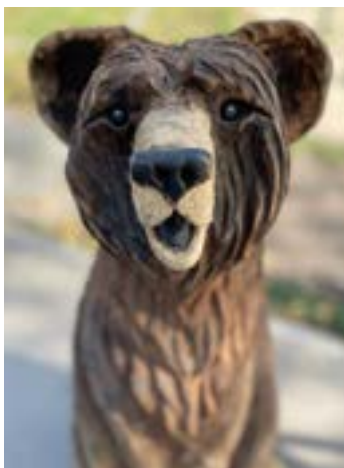
"We asked questions, we were so curious! 'Who is this? What do they look like?' We needed to know! More than anything we wanted to be able to spot them and thank them.

"Whoever it was, one thing was clear; hours and hours of craftsmanship had gone into them. You can really see all the creases in the bear's fur and the owl's wings.

"We called him the Pennington Banksy for a good two or three months... because that's how long it took for us to find out who he was, before he actually surfaced."

Before that day arrived, there was one last surprise; the biggest of the lot.

One August night, under the cover of darkness, a remarkable wooden bench with the head of a bear at one end and an owl at the other,



had been carried here in three separate pieces before being carefully reassembled and left to be discovered when the sun came up.

“It’s absolutely incredible,” says Joe. “We’re going to put it near the new adventure playground so families can sit on it and take pictures.”

Curiosity naturally intensified, but still no luck... until, in the end, our mystery man reluctantly revealed himself - compelled to do so by his dedication to the work he’d so kindly and anonymously gifted.

“He just came into the visitor centre one day, introduced himself and explained there was a crack in the back of the owl sculpture, and it was only a matter of time before it split and was ruined. He said he’d take it away again and bring us a replacement,” says Joe, who just happened to be on leave that particular day.

For him, the anonymous artist would not be unmasked for another few weeks when, incredibly, the key to unlocking the mystery came from an old school friend.

“My friend comes here pretty much every other day, he’ll ride through on his bike and stop off and say hello,” Joe explains.

“One day he had a massive grin on his face. He’d seen the sculptures and he told me ‘I know exactly who’s carved them!’

“It turns out my friend works alongside him doing bits of arts and crafts! He got out his phone and had photos of his workshop; a full set-up with professional wood-crafting equipment. He showed me an old picture of the owl sculpture before it was brought here... so that confirmed it was the guy.

“Then one day he came along with the fella himself and that’s when I first saw him. They came on their bikes and went to sit on a bench near the shoreline, and I was introduced - so I was finally

able to thank him. We didn’t speak long enough for me to ask him many questions. You could tell he was a very shy character so I didn’t want to make him feel awkward or uncomfortable. He doesn’t really want any recognition or credit, he doesn’t seem like that sort of person.

“He also made good on his promise with a brand-new carving of an owl in flight above the words ‘The Hide’, and a mole below ground.

“So out of respect for him I’m not giving anything away. I’ll let him remain anonymous!”

And so the mystery of the Pennington Banksy continues... for the rest of us, at least.



See more at Borough Life Plus
wigan.gov.uk/boroughlifeplus



Joe Greenhalgh and colleague Kieran James outside The Hide Coffee House at Pennington Flash



Adam and Tim

New lease of life for town centre icon

Regeneration work on the Civic Centre in Wigan town centre is underway.

It's all happening in partnership with social mission developers Capital&Centric, who you might recognise from the TV.

We asked their co-founder, Tim Heatley, for the lowdown on the project that could provide a big boost for local businesses.

Its brutalist architecture makes it instantly recognisable, and it's been at the heart of the town since the 1970s.

Once the restoration is complete, the Civic Centre will stand out even more, with open office spaces, providing businesses with a cost-effective alternative to city centre working.

This is Capital&Centric's first venture into Wigan with the works scheduled in two phases.

Totalling 32,000 sq ft, the location will also house a coffee shop, outdoor decked hangouts and a roof garden.

Borough Life readers might recognise Tim (pictured with co-founder Adam Higgins) as they appeared in Channel 4's *The Big Interiors Battle* in 2023. They're behind some of most creative regeneration projects in Greater Manchester and beyond.

Tell us a bit about yourself...

"I'm co-founder of Capital&Centric. We transform old buildings and derelict sites into places that are full of life, be it homes, workspaces, hotels or places to hang out. Over the years we've developed a really strong design style, so that you can instantly tell when you step foot into one of our spaces.

"I grew up in Salford and studied law at Manchester Met. But I was more interested in creating things and loved art as well as reworking old cars. That then turned into restoring unloved properties. That was the stepping-stone to a career in regeneration."

Why Wigan?

"We're super excited to be working in Wigan, it's a town with



An aerial view of the Civic Centre

real character and a council that has a driving ambition to deliver positive change.

"There's a massive opportunity with the former civic centre to do something special. As more and more people are drawn to Manchester and the city grows, the surrounding Greater Manchester towns like Wigan can ride the wave – whether that's creating new work-spaces that tempt start-ups and other businesses to locate here, or projects that create more liveable town centres as an alternative to the traditional high street."

What do you like about the Civic Centre?

"What's not to love? It's an imposing, brutalist concrete building that is unashamedly 70s. In so many places these types of buildings are being demolished in favour of new builds, but we think they we need to preserve that era of architecture as much as any other.

"We're no stranger to an unloved concrete building. We restored the former Manchester Met campus in the city centre into the Kampus garden neighbourhood, keeping all the concrete frames and details which made for an incredible end result."

What inspired the designs for Civic?

"The building has sat at the heart of the town centre for so long, we ultimately want it to become a hive of activity with a real buzz when you step through the doors.

Not only have we designed the spaces to retain and celebrate as many of the original features as possible, but we've also included flexible spaces that will act as incubator hubs for start-ups, co-working and small businesses, and workspaces for larger businesses.

"But it's not all about work, we've also included collaboration spaces where people can get together and meet, as well as loads of greenery to offset the grey of the concrete.

"We want businesses based in Wigan or further afield to be considering moving into Civic, so we have to make it a standout destination unlike anything currently on offer in the town."

Did you enjoy filming *The Big Interiors Battle*?

"Yeah it was a really fun experience. It was all based at our Eyewitness Works building in Sheffield – a former cutlery works that we've been restoring into apartments. There were some weird and wonderful designs and it was brilliant to watch designers put their own slant on the spaces week by week."

Any backstage gossip?

"No major dramas or gossip. All the team, from the contestants to the judges and crew were awesome to work with and we had a lot of fun. AJ Odudu (now presenting *Big Brother*) was such a laugh, she's exactly the same onscreen and offscreen and we've remained mates since."



Emily Mercer performing in Tyldesley - Photo credit: David Hunter

Hitting all the right notes for The Early Doors Club

You've got that Friday feeling and the weekend has finally arrived.

What could be better than relaxing in a friendly local venue and being treated to some amazing live music?

Oh, and it's free entry. Sounds good, doesn't it?

That's the idea behind The Early Doors Club.

Hosted at four sites across the borough, it's part of a scheme backed by Wigan Council that aims to support independent businesses and venues, making the most of our thriving music scene.

Hundreds of gig-goers are now enthusiastic members of The Early Doors fraternity and it's a

concept that organisers hope will have many more encores.

"It has been so popular from the outset. It was big news for us when we started and we had a lot of support from our regulars," explains Ben Morgan, events manager at The Snug in Atherton.

"The encouraging thing we're seeing now is that it is appealing to different audiences; the venues, and the bands are being introduced to new people."

The Early Doors Club aims to be a 'warm-up act', bridging the gap between after-work spending and the regular night-time economy. People can enjoy a free gig and then go on to support other local venues, such as bars and

restaurants that have been offering exclusive incentives for gig-goers. The Snug is joined by Leigh's The Coffee Stop, St George's Church in Tyldesley and the Hideout Café in Wigan on the rotation list.

They take it in turns as host each Friday with local acts such as Emily Mercer, Shrouded, Ship Canal Surfers and The Facades among those to feature.

"It's a pretty groundbreaking project that has come just at the right time and we're enjoying being a part of it," Ben adds.

"Each venue offers something different. The church is so grand and has an amazing atmosphere, then you have



Alannah and Lily Webb at The Hideout

The Hideout and The Coffee Stop offering something unique and The Snug is a great live venue. I was speaking to one of the bands recently who had played at The Coffee Stop in front of a completely different audience, age-wise, than they normally would expect. It's creating new opportunities for us and the acts.

"I also think that an important aspect of the project is that because of the support, the four venues have been able

to invest in the high-quality equipment to deliver events like this for years to come.

"That is a big thing for the scene across the borough and shouldn't be overlooked."

If you haven't been able to sample The Early Doors Club yet, the good news is it's a project that will be around for at least another 18 months.

To keep up to date with all the latest news about upcoming events, visit: [thesnug.live/the-early-doors-club/](https://www.thesnug.live/the-early-doors-club/)

Sharing is caring for UKSPF

The Early Doors Club is just one of the Wigan Borough based projects supported by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, following a successful bid by Wigan Council.

Different initiatives will benefit from £3m of investment over three years as part of the 'Communities and Place' priority area, delivering local projects that generate pride in local areas and enrich greenspaces.

To find out more: www.wigan.gov.uk/UKSharedProsperityFund



Ben with the team at The Snug

Projects to be proud of across our borough

Keep an eye out on the following projects that are also supported by UKSPF.

Our Town 3 is visiting every ward in the borough with officers deep cleaning, jet washing and weeding and bringing a real boost to civic pride. A Saturday morning waste amnesty will help local residents keep their area clean.

Leigh Town Centre has a £1.5m pot for several projects, including a scheme working

with local business owners to improve shopfronts. Plus a series of pop-up events to support our local pubs and restaurants, improvements to Civic Square and a feasibility study to help with improvements for Leigh Market.



Tyldesley High Street Heritage Scheme has also been given a boost, building on the fantastic work by community group For Tyldesley. Funding is available for improved

shopfronts, a 'pocket park' project, and lots of events and cultural activities.

Two Covid Remembrance sites will open to the public next year. The Places of Reflection will be in Leigh's Lilford Park and Wigan's Mesnes Playing Field. Announced in 2021, the local authority held a consultation on proposals to ensure residents have dedicated places to acknowledge the sacrifices and contributions made during the pandemic and remember those who are no longer with us.



Dr Sylvia Travers working in the walled gardens.

From field to fork, Haigh's horticultural revolution

Back in 1848, the walled kitchen garden in the grounds of the Haigh estate is thriving.

Busy teams of gardeners hone their craft, working to produce an abundant harvest with enough food to sustain the extended household.

Fruits, vegetables and herbs flourish in carefully chosen plots and precise details, such as the exact height of the walls and the orientation of the gardens, have all been considered.

Fast forward to 2023 and it's the beginning of an exciting new era, based on this same concept.

At the helm is Dr Sylvia Travers, the expert horticulturalist who is here to guide the estate's approach to food and growing.

Building on the work of the Friends of Haigh walled kitchen garden, Sylvia will transform the working kitchen garden, which in time will go on to feed local people once again as a new restaurant and café open at the hall, a perfect blend of tradition and modern technology.

"The Victorians would never stay still, and I'm keen to continue that", Sylvia explains.

"While the walled garden will look traditional, it'll have all the latest approaches behind it.

"We'll bring together different traditions and new ideas about growing to create something that's productive and self-sustaining.

"The Victorians' skill and attention to their craft, and the their attention to detail – plus

an appreciation of good food – inspires me completely."

With 20 years of food-growing behind her, Sylvia's journey to horticulture has been a fascinating one.

As a youngster, she remembers the smell of her uncle's carpentry shed, with sweat, sawdust and oil hanging heavy in the air – but she didn't quite know where this love of physical craft would lead her.

Sylvia didn't grow up with a garden, and two decades ago as a woman it was difficult to get an apprenticeship in what was considered such a manual profession .

So instead, she focused on learning about how things could grow and understanding the environment needed for plants to thrive – both literally

and sociologically. Through hard work, determination and a touch of fate, she landed a placement working at the Lost Gardens of Heligan in Cornwall.

“They were just beginning to become well known and of significance, and this was where my passion for food growing was ignited.”

Since then, she’s built a strong reputation transforming kitchen gardens at RHS Bridgewater and Moor Hall in Aughton, Lancashire.

It was this break into the industry that inspired Sylvia’s passion for supporting young people into horticulture, and feeds into why a specialist horticulturalist apprenticeship is being developed in partnership with Wigan and Leigh College, here at Haigh.

Dozens of young people have already expressed their interest, which Sylvia can hardly contain her excitement about: “The apprenticeship will focus on permaculture, agroforestry, soil and biodiversity – teaching young people and adults that



growing your own food is something that’s powerful and empowering.

“Growing your own is a protest, it’s a rebellion against mass produced and processed food that’s so easily accessible now and has completely disconnected us from the mental and physical wellbeing food gives us.

“I hope the apprenticeship will have the feeling of craft and tradition but it will be forward looking, to being resilient to climate change and increasing our understanding of plants,

soil and environment around us. It’s a massive opportunity to lift horticulture up and set local young people off on a fantastic career and vocation.”

The work at Haigh Hall is the perfect union of cultural life, with humanities, hospitality, arts and environment all woven neatly together.

“I’m excited to shine a light on the cultural aspects of horticulture to give it more dimension – it has so much to offer culturally, artistically and socially. It’s such an exciting fusion of all these things.”



The kitchen gardens at Moor Hall in Lancashire, where Dr Sylvia previously worked



Garden plans are taking root

Exciting things are happening both inside and outside of the walls of the kitchen garden.

Plans for the opening of the first new formal garden cultivated at Haigh Hall in almost a century are in full swing.

It's all under the exciting direction of creative directors, Al and Al, who were inspired by an 18th century painting.

The painting was of Sir Roger and Lady Bradshaigh at Haigh Hall, which illustrated beautiful formal gardens with landscaped lawns and amazing views. That's where the idea for Amphitheatre for a Tree (pictured above) was born.

Due to open in spring 2024, this landscape garden will overlook the hall with layered seating surrounding

a symbolic rowan tree amplifying breathtaking views across the town.

The focal point of the garden is a Crown sculpture protecting a newly planted rowan tree which features on Wigan's coat of arms.

The garden is a collaboration between local people – with Al and Al and multi-award-winning garden designer and ecologist, Michael John McGarr leading the project.

It's hoped the garden will become a place for the whole community to come together whether as time out from a walk, an outdoor wedding ceremony location or a cultural performance space for poetry readings, local bands and theatre performances.

We can't wait to see it grow.



Michael John McGarr (pictured) is a British landscape designer specialising in gardens and outdoor living spaces with an ecological focus.

With a passion for utilising natural materials and sustainable practices, Michael creates unique and timeless designs that perfectly complement the architecture and surrounding environment.

Michael's design philosophy seamlessly blends nature and design, and as an ecologist he is committed to creating landscapes that are both beautiful and environmentally responsible.



Painting of Sir Roger and Lady Bradshaigh at Haigh Hall.

Haigh masterplan takes a Major step forward

If you've visited Haigh Hall of late, you might not recognise it. Scaffolding now surrounds every external facet of the hall, including the roof, as part of transformative external works.

In October, a magnificent crane towered over the hall as it lifted sections of temporary scaffolding up to the roof. Onlookers were mesmerised by the skill and scale of the work as the next phase of the work began.

Funded by a successful £20m Levelling Up bid, work is progressing quickly at the hall.

Through our community wealth building approach, we're giving local young people like digger driver, Lauren, and trainee site engineer, Alex (both pictured right), the opportunity to play a crucial role in this once in a lifetime transformation.

Aspull lad Alex has been visiting Haigh Hall for as long as he can remember: "It's really important I'm a part of the Haigh Hall journey and this has really kickstarted my career."

And we're really excited that, thanks to a kind loan from his daughter Mary (pictured below), a large collection of Wigan artist

Theodore Major's artworks will be displayed at the hall in years to come – making Haigh Hall an arts destination of national and cultural significance.

Read the Haigh Hall masterplan online: wigan.gov.uk/HaighHallMasterplan



Keep up to date with all the developments at Haigh Hall by following the X and Instagram accounts. To sign up to an email newsletter contact pr@wigan.gov.uk quoting 'Haigh Hall' in the subject box, along with your name and email address.



HallHaigh



Haigh.hall



See more at Borough Life Plus
wigan.gov.uk/boroughlifeplus





Unbe-Leigh-vable scenes at the Challenge Cup homecoming

Tom Amone and John Asiata



Adrian Lam

A year to remember

Warriors and Leopards do us proud in 2023, both on and off the pitch



Thumbs up from the fans



Derek Beaumont with The Mayor of Wigan Borough, Councillor Anderson and Mayoress, Samantha Lloyd



Wigan Warriors celebrate their Super League Grand Final win. Photo credit Bernard Platt.



A blue plaque is unveiled at Folly Field, the birthplace of Wigan Warriors



Patrick Mago and Harvie Hill deliver a Be Well junior boxing session



Mike Cooper and Ryan Hampshire show support for Wigan BEST swimmers



Wigan Warriors celebrate their Wheelchair Super League Grand Final win

A recipe for success

Harwoods in Standish has all
the ingredients for a sweet
community partnership



See more at Borough Life Plus
wigan.gov.uk/boroughlifeplus



We were with them through every challenge and they did us proud on Bake Off: The Professionals. So we caught up with the team from Harwoods as they reflect on an incredible year.

Nestled in the heart of Standish village, there's a husband-wife duo causing quite the stir.

Since 2020, Andrew and Sarah Harwood have been whipping up delicious delicacies in their small, homely kitchen.

But it's not just the cakes and sweet treats that makes Harwoods Patisserie so special, given their connection with their customers and willingness to give something back to their community.

"The way everyone has supported us since we opened has been amazing," Andrew reflects.

"Whether people are popping in for a chat in the morning on their way to the shops, or coming in to buy their weekly treat, it's wonderful to see and know our local community."

You'll probably recognise Andrew and his friend Raf Perussi, as they recently appeared on Channel 4's Bake Off: The Professionals.

Week after week, they delivered meticulously baked and tasty masterpieces to impress professional judges Benoit Blin and Cherish Finden.

Their second-place finish was the cherry on top of a fantastic experience that strengthened their friendship and made a whole borough proud.

So, what was it like in the heat of the Bake Off kitchen with camera crews, presenters, new equipment and unseen challenges all in the mix?

"When I'm in a kitchen I level out a bit. It's what I've done for decades, and my mind goes into a place of not really taking in what's going on around you," says Andrew.



Andrew and Sarah outside the shop in Standish



“Throughout the first episode, you’re nervous and have a gut-wrenching feeling but most of it is to do with the fact you’re going into an unfamiliar situation.

“You’ve never seen the kitchen or used the ovens before so that adds another layer of nerves.”

Raf recalls: “Like Andrew, I’ve worked in kitchens for years and it is somewhere I’m comfortable.

“But I’d never been on the television before, and I didn’t know what to expect. Andrew wasn’t fazed by it, but I was quite nervous with the number of people and cameras around us!”

Their favourite part of the competition was the secret challenges, where chefs are provided with a plate of

ingredients and told what the end product needs to be.

“In that process, to be honest, what I see is what you see!” Andrew explains.

“You lift the cloth and you’ve got all those ingredients in front of you, and you’ve got to work out how you’re going to make it.

“We would have a basic recipe and methods, but those would be like; make sponge. Or mix blackcurrant mousse. And if you didn’t know or weren’t confident with those ingredients, you wouldn’t have a clue...that’s the challenge!

“I was opening drawers to see if there was a recipe anywhere!”

Working together as a team was key, though. We would always just bounce off each

other,” Andrew adds. “Either I would look at Raf or Raf looked at me, and if one of us was struggling with something one would say, it’s fine, I know what we’re doing.

“We were really proud with what we produced. It really took us back to basics and provided a level playing field between the chefs.”

Throughout the process, Sarah acted as chief cheerleader and kept the shop going.

Before she realised the heights they would reach, she set Andrew and Raf one goal; to make it through week one!

Back in the shop, she was able to see firsthand the impact the show was having on their growing list of customers.

“People were genuinely thrilled, the support we had



was incredible and blew our minds,” Sarah explains. “Everyone was watching along and thinking they’re good, but when they started winning through the weeks there was a moment of recognition as people thought; wait, they’re actually really good!

“Now, people come from far and wide into the shop. It’s amazing to think we’re a little village and very small business but one person even came from Devon as she’d seen us on TV!”

Andrew adds: “Without (the community), we wouldn’t be here. We didn’t go into it thinking we would win or do as well as we did. “The nervous part was knowing we were a small, community business and worrying whether people would get behind you. So,

when the ball started rolling, we were a bit shocked by it and were like ‘wow’, it’s really nice to see.”

With such wonderful people behind it, the future is bright for Harwoods.

Andrew and Raf continue to be stopped by people in the street and have been struck by the escapism the show provided for viewers.

Now the team is back down to reality, but that reality is a pretty good one with their positive outlook on life.

“I don’t mind coming second on Bake Off,” Andrew explains.

“I have a beautiful wife, an amazing business and a fantastic community that’s always behind us.

“You can’t ask for more than that.”

And so, the day job of delivering baking lessons for local people, supporting youngsters through their apprenticeship schemes and, of course, serving up delicious cakes and keeping community spirit alive continues.

You can find Harwoods Patisserie at 40 High Street, Standish.



Listen to the full interview with the Harwoods team



linktr.ee/wigancouncil



Presenter Dave Guest

Bursting with pride



Kiera with Tracey Barker



Councillor Nazia Rehman and Keisha Lynch

Hundreds of community champions celebrated the third Our Town Awards in October, bringing glitz, glamour and a generous portion of civic pride to the Edge conference centre.

After an intense period of judging, incredible groups, super schools and inspirational individuals were all recognised at the ceremony for their amazing efforts to improve the lives of those around them.

Such as Tracey and Neil Barker, who scooped the neighbour of the year award.

“Tracey and Neil have completely changed my life. I couldn’t wish for better neighbours,” 26-year-old Kiera, who collected the award with Tracey, reflects.

Kiera’s a care leaver and found the prospect of moving into her own property scary. That was, until she moved next door to Tracey and Neil.

“They helped me to transform my house, they bring hot meals around one night a week and grew my confidence in my parenting.

“They’re not just good neighbours, they’re my community. I couldn’t imagine living here without them being next door.

“I’m so glad that they got the recognition they deserve for the utterly amazing, selfless people that they are.”

www.wigan.gov.uk/OurTown

Winners:

Leader's Award: Lisa, Dianne Whittle, Janet and Noel from Wigan Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide (SOBs).

Environment champion: Eco club at Christ Church CE Primary School, and highly commended: Irene Thomson and Grow for Giving.

Community Initiative: Brighter Better Orrell, and highly commended the Baby Room at Spinners Mill, One House Aspall and Merly's Kitchen.

Neighbour of the year: Tracey and Neil Barker, and highly commended: Alan and Sandra Waters and David Smith.

Unsung hero: Keisha Lynch, and highly commended: Eddie Molloy and Sharon Mattin.

Volunteer of the year: Susan Gaskell and Diane Bolton, Annie's Pantry, and highly commended: Elizabeth Costello and Barbara Lambert.

Business of the year: Greenmount Projects, and highly commended: JJH Builders, Colette Alexander from Alexanders Coffee/Luisco Chocolate.

Health and social care hero: Dionne Doherty, Complete Kindness CIC, and highly commended: Veronika Stevens.

School of the year: Britannia Bridge, and highly commended: Rowan Tree, Nicol Mere, St John Fisher Catholic High School.

Helping Hands Carers award: Peter Elliot, and highly commended: Graham White and Jutta Payton.

Young Person of the year: Nathan Kellett, with Erica Parkinson and Lizzie Sammut highly commended.



Susan Gaskell



Peter Elliot



Dionne Doherty with presenter Dave Guest

See more at Borough Life Plus
wigan.gov.uk/boroughlifeplus





Councillor David Molyneux MBE, Virginia Higham, Deputy Lieutenant Melanie Bryan OBE and Councillor Martyn Smethurst

An amazing tale of bravery and generosity

Earlier this year a memorial bench marking the remarkable military service of a Wigan Borough family was unveiled in their hometown.

If you take a stroll through Mesnes Park it won't take you long to spot this tribute to the Higham Brothers and be introduced to their story.

It's one of bravery, generosity and brotherhood. And with crash-landings, rescue missions and behind-enemy-lines operations, it could be the inspiration for a Hollywood blockbuster.

"It truly is remarkable," says Gill Burchall, keyworker for Armed Forces at Wigan Council. "I have heard many stories of courage and bravery in

WWII, but few compare to the Higham Brothers."

Following in the footsteps of their father, James Henry Higham, who fought in WWI, siblings Dougie, Joe, Harry, Jimmy, Gerry and William all served their country during WWII.

All born in Darlington Street, each one survived the war and between them saw active service during their careers in Northern Ireland, France, Belgium, North Africa, Japan, India, Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and locations across the Middle East.

This band of brothers were involved in some of the most dangerous operations, creating a unique legacy of bravery and heroism.

Back home they worked alongside their two sisters in the fruit, vegetable and flowers wholesale business.

The Highams were all quiet individuals who enjoyed a pint and horseracing, but otherwise did not mention the war much.

Through a desire to show his fondness for the town, William Higham bequeathed a significant sum of money so that military bands would perform every summer in Mesnes Park.

This led to the formation of the Higham Foundation, with the concerts continuing to the present day.

William's request was for the concerts to be free and provide an opportunity for local ex-servicemen's associations and service charities to collect for their respective funds.

"My father and his brothers showed amazing bravery in the war," says Virginia Higham, daughter of Gerry Higham.

"Between them, they took part in some of the most dangerous missions of WWII and made such a big contribution to the war effort all around the world.

"It was miraculous they each survived and were able to return to the town they loved so much.

"Their story deserves to be told, it is one of hope and optimism against insurmountable odds."

The memorial bench will therefore serve as a permanent reminder of the Higham's bravery and generosity.

"I couldn't have been prouder to see the bench installed," says Gill.

"We want to make sure this remarkable family is forever remembered."



William (Billy) Higham

"It means so much that we now have a bench installed in Mesnes Park which not only tells their story but also pays tribute to the lasting legacy my father and uncles left behind."

Virginia Higham



A family photo of the brothers together in 1943 with Joe (inset)



The team behind Wigan's first family hub at the launch event

Families front and centre

Wigan Borough's first family hub launched in October, with plans for six more to open over the coming year.

So, what are they all about? We popped in to see what's on offer and how they can support you with your day-to-day family life.

"Having a baby can be a lonely place if you don't have family around you," says Nicola Brightcliffe, a mum of three from Winstanley.

She's just one of the friendly staff you will meet if you call into the first of the new family hubs, in Worsley Hall.

"Not many of my friends had their children at the same time as me. So, I think the social aspect of family hubs will be very important, but that could lead to families getting help with other things they might need too, such as mental health support. It's a great idea."

Family Hubs are a way of bringing together all the support a family may need, from pregnancy through to young people turning 19 (or 25 if they have a Special Educational Need or Disability).

Jonathan Nicholson, a dad of three, agrees that being able to get access to the support a

family might need, all in one place, will be invaluable.

"Our four-year-old has some speech and language issues, and we're currently going down the autism pathway," Jonathan says.

"We've had to go to so many different places across the borough to get him the support he needs.



Jonathan Nicholson

“And sometimes just thinking about having to ring yet another service makes me feel defeated.

“But knowing I just have a short drive to the family hub, makes it seem a lot easier. I think a lot of people will be more likely to get things sorted out.”

Chrystal Cooke, who has three children aged one, two, and seven, believes the fact the hubs will offer support and activities for families with older children, as well as younger children, will make a huge difference for her.

“Sometimes in the school holidays, I can’t go to the groups I’d usually go to with my little ones as I wouldn’t be able to bring my older daughter along,” she says.

“But here there’ll be something for everyone, it’s fantastic.”

Chrystal, who lives in Worsley Hall, also feels that having facilities for families in their own local neighbourhoods is important.

“My health visitor told me that it would be good for me to get out and about and meet other families, and I was nervous at first.

“But I live just round the corner so I didn’t have to worry about getting on the right bus or the cost of transport.

“Everyone here is so lovely, they always make me feel welcome and I’ve made some new friends, learned some new skills, and gradually built my confidence.”

Cost is another important difference between the family hubs and some other local activities for children.

“It’s all free here, which is very important at the moment, with the cost of living, as you have to watch what you spend,” Chrystal says.

“With three children, even very small costs can add up.”



Meagan Glynn (pictured above), from Marsh Green, has two little boys aged seven and two.

“I think families are sometimes scared of asking for help from professionals in case there’s any judgement about you as a parent,” Meagan says.

“What’s good about a family hub is that you could come here and join a baby massage class, for example, and after a bit, when you’ve got to know the staff and

built some trust, you might feel better about asking for some other support if you needed it.”

Family hubs are being developed with the involvement of local families. Chrystal has already had her say about what should happen next at this Wigan Central hub.

“I think it’s brilliant that they involve families in everything,” she says, “If you give your ideas and you’re listened to it makes you really feel part of it. You want to get involved and help and make it even better.

“They asked us what we’d like to do with the garden area, and we said we’d like to make a fruit and vegetable patch.

“Imagine how amazing it will be in the future, when we can pick the fruit and veg and think, ‘we did that’”

How can family hubs help me?

- Health visiting, midwives and antenatal appointments and classes
- Activities for babies and children aged 0-5
- Support to improve whole family health and wellbeing
- Activities and opportunities for young people
- Activities for children with special educational needs and disabilities
- Support with housing situations including guidance on homelessness, help with affordability and tenancy arrangements
- Help with debt and money worries including access to food parcels/pantries
- Support to improve parenting and family relationships including learning opportunities

Where will the next ones be?

There will eventually be seven family hubs in the borough. The next one to open will be in the centre of the borough covering the Scholes, Ince, Platt Bridge, Hindley and Abram neighbourhood.

Where is the first family hub?



The Meadows,
110 Ridyard Street,
Worsley Hall,
WN5 9RQ.



Family hubs are generally open from 9am-5pm with some evening activities too.

Find out more and get involved
www.wigan.gov.uk/FamilyHubs



Raising the bar for our caring community

They are often referred to as the unsung heroes of Wigan Borough.

Everyday thousands of care professionals head to work to help some of the most vulnerable in our communities.

That's why earlier this year Wigan Council adopted a landmark stance, committing to paying all carers the Real Living Wage.

But town hall leaders didn't think this was quite enough.

In addition to making the commitment for direct and commissioned services, the council also urged all private providers to do the same.

The town hall pledged to work with local private providers, providing additional funding if required.

Now, six months on, we're delighted to reveal that around 80 per cent of all care homes in Wigan Borough are now being delivered by a Real Living Wage provider and it's making a real impact.

Among the borough's commissioned providers is Elite Care, part of the borough's ethical homecare partnership.

Managing director Emma-Jayne Johnson explains: "It's a very important scheme and a major part of the support we have had from Wigan Council.

"We have always been proud to be a provider who pays above the national minimum wage, but this has enabled us to be officially recognised as an accredited Living Wage employer. It is helping to build a highly skilled and well-rewarded health and social care workforce."

The approach was announced in March as part of the council's 2023/24 budget, aimed at retaining and attracting new people into careers in adult social care and contributing to ongoing efforts to improve standards.

At the time, deputy leader of Wigan Council, Councillor Keith Cunliffe, said: "With more than 165,000 vacancies nationally in social care and as the cost-

of-living crisis continues to impact on household bills, we recognise the importance of investing in the pay of our workforce.

"This investment has been made possible through the different approach we take here in Wigan Borough, which includes us establishing a social care academy through our partnership working with Edge Hill University, Wigan and Leigh College and our local NHS services."

Wigan Council wanted to lead the way and it's an approach that is here to stay.

"It sends the message that we all recognise what a vitally important role carers have in promoting and maintaining the wellbeing of residents within our borough," adds Emma-Jayne.

"We want to support them in their careers and it shows that we as a partnership really care and are committed to improving their financial wellbeing and personal development."

Young care leavers’ time to shine

From being a peer role model, excelling academically or contributing to their community the many different achievements of young care leavers were celebrated in October.

Wigan Council’s annual care leaver awards ceremony recognises those who have overcome often adverse circumstances to achieve stability and success.

Declan Aziz (pictured), 19, from Garswood, was awarded the coveted Young Care Leaver of the Year Award for commitment to his apprenticeship and to his own self development.

Declan said: “It feels amazing to win. I didn’t expect it at all.

“I’ve worked really hard this year and I’ve gone from square one to where I am today, so winning this award makes me feel like I’ve accomplished something.”



Awards were given out for several categories including Peer Role Model, Academic Achiever and the Trish Hurlock Special Award, which recognises young people who have overcome adversity and is awarded in memory of a former member of the council’s leaving care team, who died in 2016. Andrew Page, from Leigh,

was the winner of this year’s Academic Achiever Award.

The 22-year-old said: “I never win anything so I was very surprised.

“I’m dedicating my award to my personal advisor in the council, Lesley Malone, as I know I sometimes give her a hard time, but I am really grateful for her support.”

#CareToJoinUs



There’s a

CARE role for

everyone



www.wigan.gov.uk/caretojoinus





See more at Borough Life Plus
wigan.gov.uk/boroughlifeplus

Making a difference

From assisted bin collections to early years support, the lollipop ladies bringing high-fives to the school commutes or street scene colleagues keeping our communities tidy, councils provide a wide variety of services.

We're here from soon after you're born as your birth is registered, right through to the end of your life where

you might need extra care or support through our adult social care services.

But our services are nothing without our people. And at #TeamWigan, we're lucky to have hundreds of dedicated people who work around the clock, whatever the weather and often behind the scenes.

Here, you can meet a few and learn more about what they do...





Andrew

Looks after: The council's emergency response, including the Covid pandemic and issues like flooding

What do you love about your job?

No day is the same when working in emergencies. The people I work with are brilliant, whether they're in my team, across the council or a blue light service responding to a crisis. We all want to do the best to support people at a time of crisis.

Why's it important for you to make a difference?

I not only work in Wigan Borough, I live here too.

It's important to me that Wigan Borough is one of the most resilient places in the country and it's so important to deliver excellent services and have confident staff on board to support residents in times of need.

Standout memory?

During the pandemic, I established and set up our Covid19 test centres which were highlighted as best practice by Counter Terrorism Police North West. Plus, I recently received the Diamond of the Decade award at our staff awards in recognition of the things I've been able to achieve - with the support of the great people I get to work with.



Tom

Looks after: 800 years' worth of the borough's heritage at Archives: Wigan & Leigh

What do you love about your job?

I love that I get to work with so many historical documents every day. You never know what sort of enquiries our customers are going to come through the door with, what they will want to look at or what stories they have to tell.

Why's it important for you to make a difference?

The thousands and thousands of documents we hold, from letters and diaries, to photographs and maps tell the story of all the people who once lived in the area which is now the borough. It is important to make this history as accessible as possible so everyone can share in it.

Standout memory?

There's too many to choose from! A standout memory will always be when we take primary school children on a tour of the archives strongrooms. Their faces light up when they see our huge racking shelves move on their own!



Gill

Looks after: Helping to get the most out of our borough's 15 amazing libraries

What do you love about your job?

It is never boring! I love seeing the work the teams in our libraries deliver each day - from supporting vulnerable customers who don't have anyone else to turn to for digital support then find their local library can help, to hosting a class of dozens of children on a class visit! Libraries really make a difference in people's lives.

Why's it important for you to make a difference?

Everyone needs support at sometime in their life, and libraries are a friendly face in a safe space which can really make a difference. The borough has so much to offer, I would encourage everyone to visit their local library and find out more - there will be something we offer or can tell you about an activity elsewhere that will improve your wellbeing!

Standout memory?

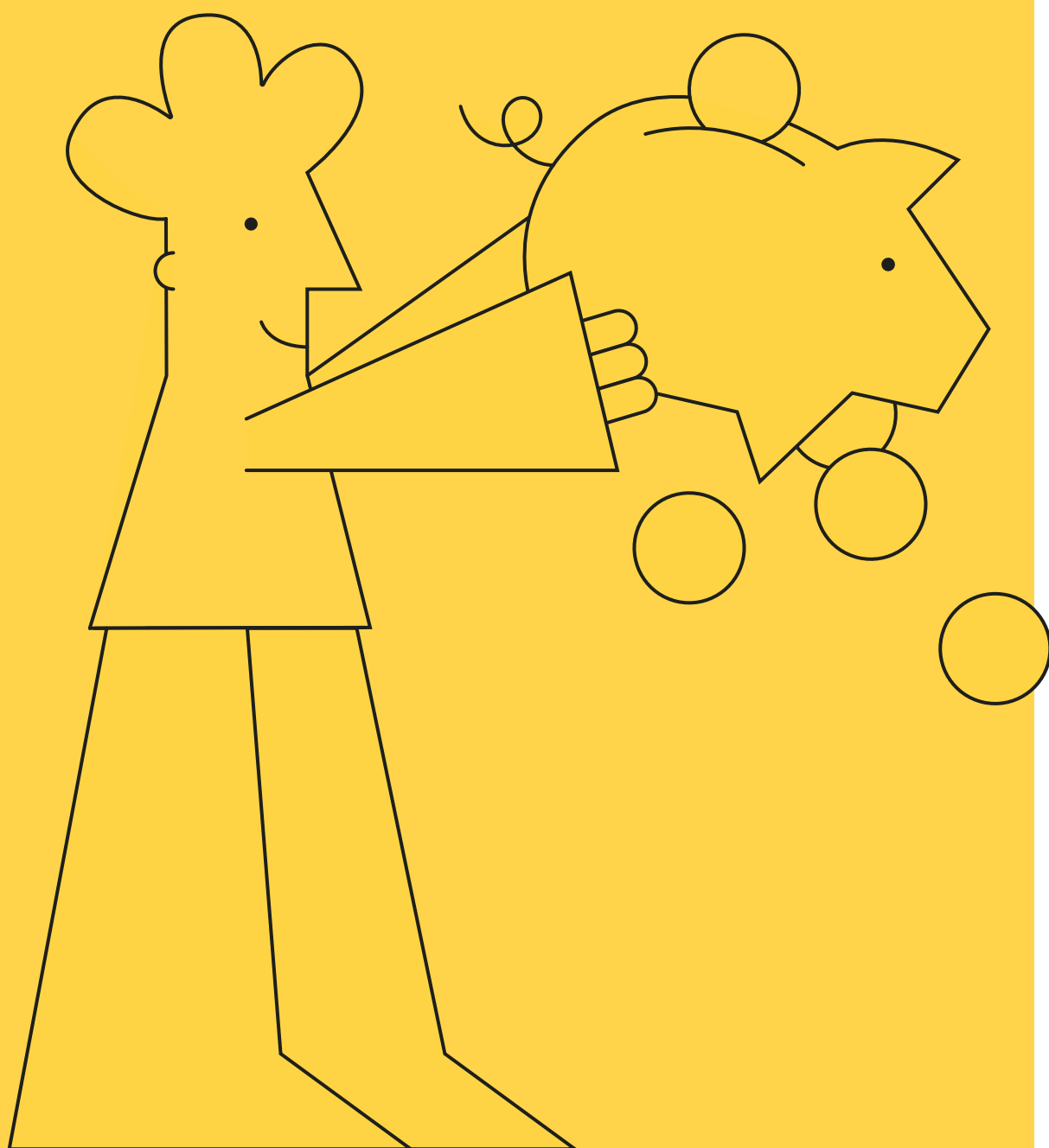
After 18 years of service at the council there are so many to choose from! I think it would have to be around the impact we have on residents' lives, thanks to the kind, caring commitment of our staff. There are many examples every week but the standout moments are when we receive feedback from customers saying how library staff have helped them and what a difference they make.

Find out what it's like to work for #TeamWigan.

www.wigan.gov.uk/Resident/Jobs-Careers/Working-for-us.aspx

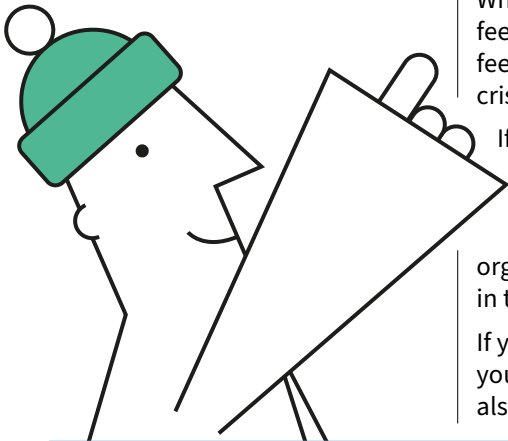


Help is at hand



www.wigan.gov.uk/HereForYou

Staying warm this winter



Whether it's heating your home, feeling isolated or struggling to feed your family, the cost-of-living crisis comes with many challenges.

If you're feeling the pressure of rising costs and finding it hard to know where to turn, you aren't alone. There are lots of organisations on hand to point you in the right direction.

If you're struggling to stay warm or you're feeling a bit lonely, you can also access our network of warm,

welcoming spaces run by our local community sector.

We know times are hard and it can be tough to ask for help, but it's okay to do so and better to seek support before things get more difficult to manage.

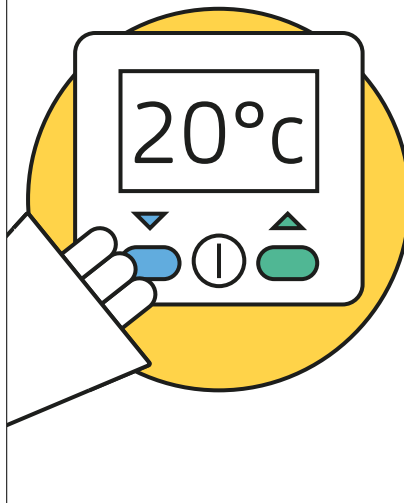
Whoever you are and whatever your background, don't be afraid to seek help. We might not be able to solve all of your problems, but what we can promise is that you won't have to face them alone.

A pro-active approach

Hundreds of Wigan Borough residents have benefited from the first phase of a project that has seen almost half a million pounds of cost-of-living support taken up by residents.

Thanks to our targeted campaign to ensure households receive the full amount of support they are entitled to, 512 residents and families received £497,494.

The work – as part of Here for You – saw council officers focusing on residents that data showed were not accessing the correct level of support.



The support offered was through the government funded Household Support Fund, as well as council discounts and exemptions including single person discount and council tax reduction.

The second phase of the project which continues the targeted approach began at the end of September, with over 800 residents having conversations with the council about ways to maximise their income and how to reduce their energy costs.

Did you know?

If you're in crisis and need support to afford food, energy or other essential costs, you might be eligible to receive money through the Department for Work and Pensions funded Household Support Fund.

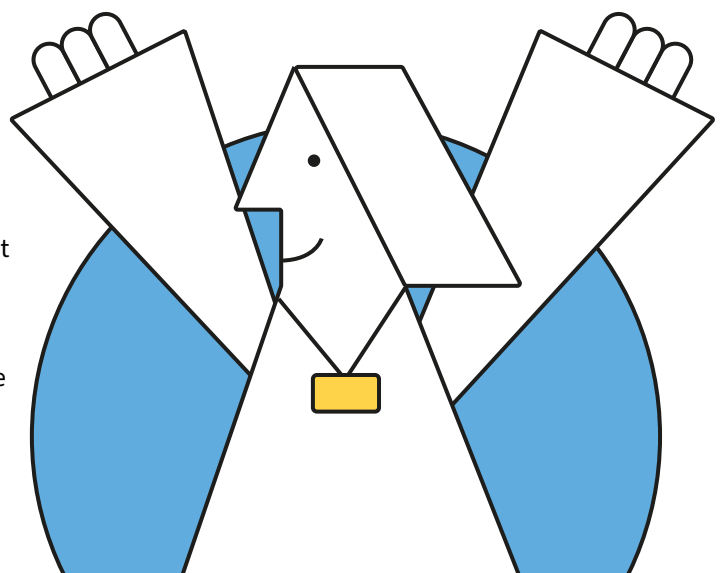
Find out more:

wigan.gov.uk/HouseholdSupportFund

If you're feeling overwhelmed with the rising cost of living, there is help available. Whether you speak to your GP or get free 1-2-1 local support via our Healthy Routes advisers, we can make sure you don't have to go through this scary time alone.

Find out more:

wigan.gov.uk/FeelingOverwhelmed



What's on in Wigan Borough?

Haigh Woodland Park

www.facebook.com/haighwoodlandpark



Haigh Christmas Brass

Featuring some of the best brass bands in the region, these concerts are always popular and a great festive treat for the family.

Astley Youth Brass Band

Sunday 17 December
11am – 4pm

🎫 *Tickets: Free event – Parking charges apply*

St Helens Concert Band

Saturday 23 December
11am – 4pm

🎫 *Tickets: Free event – Parking charges apply*



Santas Grotto

Saturday 23 December
11am – 4pm

Families can book in for a visit to Santa's Grotto and children will receive a gift from the main man. Please note, to help with Santa's busy schedule booking will include a one hour timeslot within which the visit will take place.

🎫 *Tickets: - £7.50 per child - All Santa Sittings must be booked. Tel: 01942 828280. (10am - 4pm)*



Bump and Buggy

Every Friday from January 5
10.30am – 11.30am

Join us for our FREE weekly Bump and Buggy Walk. A great way to meet other parents, guardians, or grandparents in beautiful surroundings. Everyone is made to feel welcome, and why not stop for a brew afterwards?

📍 *Meet outside the visitors' centre*

🎫 *Tickets: Free event – Parking charges apply*



Artisan Markets

Sunday, April 21
10am – 4pm

Dozens of market stalls trading in a variety of unique goods, food, and drink. Including baked goods, locally grown produce, handmade gifts, artwork and more.

🎫 *Tickets: Free event – Parking charges apply*



Playful Saturdays

First Saturday of the month
10am - 12pm

Bring your little explorers along to Playful Saturdays and discover some of the secrets of the archives! Build your own wacky Lego invention inspired by the amazing inventors of Leigh or experience the magic of creativity with our fun arts and craft activities.

📍 *Archives Wigan and Leigh, Leigh Town Hall, Market Street, Leigh, WN7 1DY*

🎫 *Tickets: Free event – No need to book*



Museum Minis

Every Wednesday
10.30am - 11.45am

Calling all parents and carers with little ones. Looking for somewhere to go with your museum minis? Then look no further! Join us at the museum for a fun and relaxed session full of engaging storytelling, songs, and craft activities. Suitable for age 0-5 years.

📍 *Museum of Wigan Life, Library Street, Wigan, WN1 1NU*

🎫 *Tickets: £1.50 per child. Includes drinks for parents / carers and children – No need to book.*

The new directory for our borough's services, helping you to stay connected with your local community.

wigan.gov.uk/ourtowndirectory



OUR TOWN

DIRECTORY





Turnpike Tots

**Every Thursday (term time only)
10.30am – 11.30am**

Turnpike Tots is a creative play session for little artists aged 0-5 years and their grownups.

✦ *The Turnpike Gallery, 1st Floor Leigh Library, Civic Square, Leigh, WN7 1EB*

🎟️ *Tickets: Free event – Booking essential - trybooking.co.uk/BOMV*



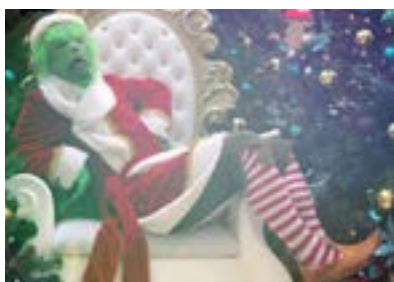
Spinning Gate Santa

**Every Thursday to Sunday
until Christmas**

Santa is back at the shopping centre for FREE visits

✦ *Spinning Gate Shopping Centre, Ellesmere St, Leigh WN7 4PG*

🎟️ *Tickets: Free event – No need to book*



Spinning Gate Grinch

Saturday 23 December

The Grinch arrives at the shopping centre.

✦ *Spinning Gate Shopping Centre, Ellesmere St, Leigh WN7 4PG*

🎟️ *Tickets: Free event – No need to book*



Leigh Film Factory

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

✦ *Floor 4, Leigh Film Factory, Leigh Spinners Mill, Park Lane, Leigh, WN7 2LB*

The Rocky Horror Picture Show

**Friday 29 December
7pm – 10pm**

🎟️ *Tickets: £5-£8
www.ticketsource.co.uk/leigh-film-factory/t-ojvnyjl*

Dear England

**Thursday 25 January
7pm - 10pm**

🎟️ *Tickets: £10
www.ticketsource.co.uk/leigh-film-factory/t-xmrynj*



Saturday Family Workshops

**Saturday 20 January, 3 & 17
February, 2, 16 & 30 March
11am – 1pm**

Join us every other Saturday for free family fun in the gallery inspired by our Creating Place II exhibition. Suitable for children aged 5+ and their families.

✦ *The Turnpike Gallery, 1st Floor Leigh Library, Civic Square, Leigh, WN7 1EB*

🎟️ *Tickets: Free event – No need to book*



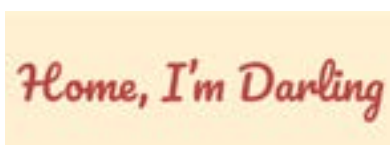
Archives: Wigan & Leigh Town Hall Tour

**Wednesdays 31 January, 28
February & 27 March
11am**

Join us for this exciting tour of Leigh Town Hall and go behind-the-scenes of the new Archives strongrooms, where the borough's history is stored.

✦ *Archives Wigan and Leigh, Leigh Town Hall, Market Street, Leigh, WN7 1DY*

🎟️ *Tickets: Free event – bit.ly/3R6HU09*



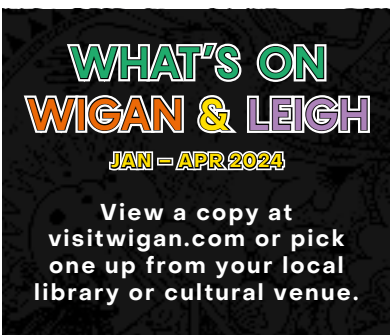
Home, I'm Darling at Wigan Little Theatre

**Thursday 25 January –
Saturday 3 February
7.30pm**

A cutting, satirical comedy about a couple whose fondness for the 1950s goes so far that they not only embrace jive dancing and swing skirts but also outdated gender roles. But is the lifestyle all it's cracked up to be?

✦ *Wigan Little Theatre, Crompton Street, Wigan, WN1 3SL*

🎟️ *Tickets: £11 - £13
wiganlittletheatre.co.uk/whats-on/*



What's on



Tales from The Lux with
Dylan Harris & Guests

Saturday 10 February
12pm – 1pm

Hear stories from the Wigan music scene of the early 2000s, the Lux Club, and the background to bringing acts such as Arctic Monkeys, Pete Doherty, and The Fall to Wigan.

✦ *Museum of Wigan Life, Library Street, Wigan, WN1 1NU*

👉 *Tickets: - £2.50 per person – Booking essential - 01942 828128 or wiganmuseum@wigan.gov.uk*



Chinese New Year Celebrations
with St Mary's Confucius Classroom

Saturday 17 February
10am – 2pm

✦ *Museum of Wigan Life, Library Street, Wigan, WN1 1NU*

👉 *Tickets: Free event – No need to book*



February half term at
The Turnpike

**Tuesday 20, Wednesday 21 &
Thursday 22 February**
11am – 1pm

Meet the artists behind Creating Place II and create your own artwork inspired by the show! Suitable for families with children aged 5+

✦ *The Turnpike Gallery, 1st Floor Leigh Library, Civic Square, Leigh, WN7 1EB*

👉 *Tickets: Free event – No need to book*



When We are Married
at Wigan Little Theatre

**Thursday 7 March –
Saturday 16 March**
7.30pm

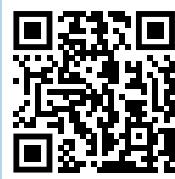
A group of old friends, all married on the same day in the same chapel, gather to celebrate their silver anniversary.

✦ *Wigan Little Theatre, Crompton Street, Wigan, WN1 3SL*

👉 *Tickets: £11 - £13 wiganlittletheatre.co.uk/whats-on*

Sporting fixtures

Wigan Warriors
wiganwarriors.com/fixtures



Wigan Athletic
wiganathletic.com/matches



Leigh Leopards
leighsportsvillage.co.uk



Run Wigan Festival

Sunday 17 March 2024

The wonderful Wigan running festival returns with Half Marathon, 5k and Family Mile races.

✦ *Mesnes Park, Wigan*
👉 runwiganfestivals.co.uk

built on heritage

visitwigan

@VisitWigan www.visitwigan.com

Winter services

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

Wigan and Leigh Life Centres will be closed from 4pm on Friday, December 22, and will re-open at 10am on Tuesday, January 2, 2024.

Customers can still access welfare support services by visiting www.wigan.gov.uk/localwelfaresupport or call **01942 705221** between 9am and 5pm on December 27, 28 and 29.

Registrar appointments will be available by appointment in Wigan Life Centre, 10am to 4pm on December 27, 28 and 29.

Libraries will close at 2pm on Saturday, December 23. Wigan and Leigh central libraries will reopen at 10am on Tuesday, January 2, 2024. Community libraries will reopen at 9am on Tuesday, January 2, 2024.

Cemeteries

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

No burials will take place on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

Burials will take place from midday to 2.30pm on Wednesday, December 27 and Tuesday, January 2, 2024.

Normal bookings apply on December 28 and 29 and from Wednesday, January 3, 2024.

Crematorium

The chapel and office are closed from Saturday, December 23 until Tuesday, December 26 (inclusive) and on New Year's Day.

Normal services will take place on December 27, 28 and 29. Cremations return to normal service from Tuesday, January 2, 2024.

Refuse and Recycling Collections

Your bin collection will be one day later, between 26 and 30 December.

Green bin collections will be suspended from Boxing Day until Friday January 5.

They will resume week commencing Monday, January 8.

Please put your bin out by 6.30am on your collection day. Collection times may vary due to traffic conditions and the extra waste collected over the festive period.

Any changes due to severe weather will be available on Wigan Council's social media and website or by calling our telephone helpline **01942 404364**. For more information visit www.wigan.gov.uk/winter

Recycling Centres

Closed Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

Open every other day 9am to 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

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, because of fire or floods, for example, please contact **01942 489005** or **01942 828777** if outside of usual working hours.

NHS / Health services

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 at www.healthierwigan.nhs.uk

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

Leigh Urgent Treatment Centre

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

Greater Manchester Urgent Dental Care Service on **0333 3323800** (8am to 10pm every day, including weekends and bank holidays).

While You Wait

If you (or someone you care for) are waiting on delayed medical care, you are likely to have concerns and questions.

The NHS in Greater Manchester is offering further information and advice, along with handy resources to help you manage your physical and mental wellbeing on the Greater Manchester While you Wait website. <https://whileyouwait.org.uk/>

Mental Health Crisis Line

Contact Wigan Borough 24/7 mental health crisis line for all ages. Freephone **0800 953 0285**

Drug and Alcohol Support

If you are concerned about your own, or someone else's, alcohol or drug use this Christmas, you can reach We Are With You in Wigan and Leigh on **01942 487578** or you can talk anonymously to a trained advisor via the online web chat service - just go to www.wearewithyou.org.uk

We are With You are open throughout the Christmas period with the exception of bank holidays.

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



When you shop from a small business, you support a big dream

Support our independent traders in Wigan Borough



Visit wigan.gov.uk/lovelocal

