Welcome to the winter edition of Borough Life magazine. There’s a special focus in this magazine on what we can all do to make where we live cleaner and greener. We certainly can’t do it alone. If everyone did their bit to look after the environment there would be no littering, no dog fouling, a reduction in harmful air pollution and less waste going to landfill. They are small changes but there’s more than 323,000 residents living across the borough so together we can make a difference.

These small things are your contribution to The Deal.

And by recycling more, and not littering we can spend our money on essential services for our most vulnerable residents and keep your council tax low. There are some fantastic volunteers and community champions already helping us to look after our parks and green spaces. They are stars and we couldn’t do it without them. And to everyone else who is already doing what they can to protect our planet for future generations, thank you.

Also in this edition we have brand new sections including food and drink, shopping, money and family. We hope you enjoy the new layout and find something which is of interest to you.

Cllr David Molyneux
Leader, Wigan Council

On the cover

We’re so pleased to have boxer pup Indie on the front cover. In the summer Borough Life we ran a competition and asked you to send in photos of your dog to be on the next cover. We had 230 brilliant entries – thank you. It was such a difficult (but enjoyable!) task for the panel to shortlist their five favourite photos. We put the top five to a public vote on the council’s Facebook page. Indie was a clear winner with more than five hundred votes and loved her photoshoot in Mesnes Park.
4&5 NEWS IN BRIEF
Your latest news round-up.

6&7 REMEMBER, REMEMBER THE WISE WORDS OF EMBER
This five-year-old wants you to look after the planet.

8&9 LOVE GREENHEART
Explore the beautiful green spaces on your doorstep.

10&11 SOMETHING IN THE AIR
But why should you care?

12&13 A PAWSOME DAY OUT
Cover star Indie enjoys her prize.

14 GET MOVING
Winter activities for the family.

15 DRIVE ELECTRIC
The future is here!

16,17&18 PEOPLE OF THE PARKS
Behind the scenes with the people looking after your local park.

19,20&21 FOOD AND DRINK
A look at why homegrown food is so popular.

22&23 SHOP LOCAL
Stuck for Christmas gifts? We’ve got you covered.

24&25 MONEY
We answer your money worries.

26&27 BE ACTIVE
The global phenomenon taking over our parks.

28&29 HISTORY
Celebrating the life of Hag Fold community champion Susan Marsh.

30&31 FAMILY
Meet the couple who have fostered 36 children.

32&33 YOUNG PEOPLE
Patricia, Giulia, Viera and Kristina make a new life in Leigh.

34&35 OUR TOWNS
Spotlight on Atherton

36 COMPETITION
Tea for two is up for grabs at Haigh.

37 HOMES
Stephen is settled in his new home for Christmas.

38&39 WHAT’S ON GUIDE
From Christmas light switch-ons to festive family events.

To keep up to date with news and events, follow Wigan Council at:
Looking to the future

What do you think Wigan Borough should look like in 2030? We want you to tell us. As part of planning for the future we’re asking residents what they want for our borough. You can get involved in the Big Listening Project by visiting the green sofa when it’s in your area or filling in an online survey at www.wigan.gov.uk/BigListeningProjectSurvey

Visit the big green sofa:
- 20th Nov - Platt Bridge Iceland
- 21st Nov - Ashton-in-Makerfield outside Peacocks
- 26th Nov - Shevington shops
- 27th Nov - Pemberton High Street
- 28th Nov - Winstanley shops
- 29th Nov - Atherton Startwell Centre
- 30th Nov - Wigan and Leigh College
- 3rd Dec - Carers Centre, Hindley
- 4th Dec - Higher Fold shops
- 5th Dec - Slag Lane, Lowton
- 7th Dec - SKILS CIC, Hindley

Chief executive to retire

The chief executive of Wigan Council, Donna Hall CBE, has announced that she will be retiring next year. In her eight years at the council Donna has won national acclaim for creating The Deal - the way the council works in partnership with residents to improve services while investing £10m in communities. The Deal was created in response to cuts of £160m to the council’s budget. Donna has also been a fearless champion for equality and LGBT rights in her time at Wigan. She was a major supporter of the creation of the annual Wigan Pride festival and created the #BelieveInHer campaign to encourage and inspire women and girls from across the borough to pursue their ambitions.

Councillor David Molyneux, leader of the council, said: “Donna has given incredible service to Wigan over the past eight years and we certainly wouldn’t be the council we are today without Donna serving as chief executive. I wish her well in her retirement. On behalf of the council, all councillors, staff and the people of the borough I would like to place on record our gratitude to Donna for what has been a remarkable eight years in Wigan.”

Helen’s law

Marie McCourt marked her daughter’s 52nd birthday earlier this year by continuing her campaign to keep her killer behind bars.

Helen McCourt was killed 30 years ago but her body was never found.

Wigan Council leader, Councillor David Molyneux, is supporting Marie’s campaign to get ‘Helen’s Law’ passed by parliament, which would mean hiding a body, preventing a burial and obstructing a coroner would become criminal offences with whole life tariffs.

To spread the word Marie has been tying yellow ribbons and rosettes to trees and lampposts and is encouraging people across the country to do the same.

To find out more about the proposed law or to sign the petition visit: change.org/HelensLaw

Christmas bin collections

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If you need a new or replacement bin, you can order these online at www.wigan.gov.uk/recycling
Family visit in honour of pilot

In the last edition of Borough Life we told the story of Czech pilot, Sergeant Rudolf Ptacek, who flew the Wigan spitfire in the Second World War. In August we were delighted to welcome his family, Mr Vladimir Ptacek and Ms Jana Ehlova, from the Czech Republic to Wigan to commemorate the bravery of Mr Ptacek. They spent the weekend visiting the sights and enjoyed an official reception in the Mayor’s parlour.

Calling all council tenants

Would you like to help monitor and improve the services council tenants receive? Sign up to become a mystery shoppers/customer inspector who will support our Tenant Panel members to review housing. Also anyone living in Platt Bridge, Spring View, Hindley, Hindley Green, Abram, Bamfurlong, Bickershaw, Ashton or Bryn areas can join the Platt Bridge Area Housing Forum. To find out more on these two roles email thedealforcommunities@wigan.gov.uk

Photography winner

Congratulations to Jonathan Coombes, from Atherton, who is the winner of our photography competition. His beautiful photo shows the skyline of Leigh from Bedford set against a dramatic sunset. It will be printed on new library cards and will be on display in Wigan Library.
Remember, remember the wise words of Ember

Ember is not your average five-year-old. She’s an environmental superstar who has become an internet sensation in her campaign to encourage everyone to do their bit by recycling.

Ember wants to let everyone know that they can make a difference to the planet by recycling and looking after their waste.

It’s her planet too.

She has been finding out what happens to the things you recycle at our household recycling centres. Ember even got her hands dirty helping to put waste back to use by recycling with residents.

Watch Ember’s message on Youtube. Search #JoinEmber
And if you haven’t already seen Ember on the side of a bin wagon where have you been? Her school friends at Abram Bryn Gates Primary School are also doing their bit to #Join Ember.

And what do we think of those unrecyclables Ember?

Recycling is child’s play, everyone knows that.

You can recycle your paper and cardboard in your blue bin

Plastics, cans and glass bottles can be recycled in your brown bin

Food and garden waste can be recycled in your green bin

Don’t forget you can pledge your support online by using the hashtag #Join Ember and to find out more about how to recycle go to www.wigan.gov.uk/recycling

It costs us money to send waste to landfill. If you can recycle more and recycle right, we can keep your council tax low and invest our money in essential frontline services.

Did you know that our recycling rate is now at 54%
With more than 70 per cent of our beautiful borough consisting of green space, we’re extremely privileged to have such tranquil Greenheart sites on our doorstep.

It’s no surprise then that a variety of wildlife can be seen at many of the sites. Birds are the most common, but when the weather warms up different types of animals can be seen coming out to feed or generally potter around. If you want to explore our green spaces or go for a winter walk, here are some easy walking routes. See what you can discover.

- Appley Bridge to Crooke 2.5 miles
- Wigan Flashes to Dover Lock 2.5 miles
- Marsland Green to Astley Green 1.2 miles
- Crooke to Wigan Pier 2.3 miles
- Pennington Wharf Marina to Leigh Town Centre 1.7 miles
- Dover Lock to Pennington Wharf Marina 1.7 miles
- Wigan Pier to Wigan Flashes 1.7 miles
- Leigh Town Centre to Marsland Green 1.8 miles
- Wigan Pier to Top Lock 2.5 miles
- Top Lock to Haigh Woodland Park 1.2 miles
Explore our canal paths

**A Appley Bridge.**
Canal access at the former Boathouse Grill & Kitchen on Mill Lane or the canal bridge on Appley Lane North. Short walk to Appley Bridge railway station. Beauty spot at Dean Lock where the M6 and railway line cross the canal.

**B Crooke Village.**
Canal access at the rear of The Crooke Hall Inn on Crooke Road. Local heritage with the old coal tippler and tub.

**C Wigan Pier.**
Canal access on Pottery Road. Wigan Pier Quarter, Trencherfield Mill. Short walk to Wigan Town Centre.

**D Wigan Flashes.**
Access off Welham Road next to Hawkley Hall High School. Short walk to Moss Bridge on the canal. Towpath on the north side from here towards Dover Lock.

**E Dover Lock.**
Access via canal bridge at The Dover Lock Inn. Lightshaw Meadows viewable from the canal.

**F Pennington Wharf Marina.**
Access at the lift bridge junction of Plank Lane and Slag Lane.

**G Leigh Town Centre.**
Canal access at the canal bridge on St Helens Rd/King Street. Bridgewater Canal starts here. Leigh Spinning Mill viewable from the canal just after Butts Bridge.

**H Marsland Green.**
Canal access at Marsland Green Bridge on Marsland Green Lane.

**I Astley Green.**
Access at the canal bridge on Higher Green Lane opposite The Old Boat House. Lancashire Mining Museum at Astley Colliery a short walk away. (Not open every day)

**J Top Lock.**
Access at the canal bridge on Withington Lane. Walk up the 21 locks of The Wigan Flight from Wigan Pier past “Rabbit Rocks” and Kirkless Local Nature Reserve.

**K Haigh Woodland Park.**
Canal access from Hall Lane and entrance to Haigh Woodland Park. Famous canal basin and bridge with views across the golf course to Haigh Hall.
Something in the air

You’ve probably heard it being talked about, maybe on the news, at your child’s school or in the office at work.

But what is air quality and why should we take notice of it?

Air quality tells us how good the air is to breathe and is deemed either ‘good’ or ‘bad’ by the number of harmful pollutants in it.

Air pollution contributes to the equivalent of 1,200 deaths a year in Greater Manchester.

Road transport is largely responsible for some of the most dangerous pollutants in the air.

Vehicle exhausts can produce harmful gases and tiny particles of soot, which can cause health problems for us and be harmful to our environment.

The good news is across the borough we generally have a good level of clean air and we want to keep it this way.

Unless we all play a part and do what we can to minimise pollution, transport emissions will continue to harm us and future generations.

Can you start your day by walking? Even if it’s just to do the school run, walking is one of the most environmentally friendly ways to get around and is great for your health.

Alternatively why not cycle to work? Transport for Greater Manchester found that a third of all journeys under 1km are made by car, so we’re working with them to encourage people to think of different modes of transport.

As part of this collaborative working, we’re supporting their ‘Cycle Cities’ programme, which is committed to improving transport networks for cyclists.
1. **Don’t forget your lights**
There are legal minimum requirements for cycling after dark; one front white light, one rear red light, plus the reflectors that you should already have in place on your bike. Your lights must be working and your reflectors must be clean and visible. You could keep a back-up set of lights and batteries at work.

2. **Be bright**
Wearing brightly coloured reflective clothing or accessories is a good way to stand out on those darker evenings.

3. **Plan and know your route**
As the seasons change, consider changing your regular routes to a better lit path or road. Test your route in the daytime to build up your confidence and familiarity with it.

4. **Buddy up**
Having a partner or group to cycle with can provide that little extra motivation you may need to get out on your bike. And if you’re well-lit and bright you are more visible to other road users.

5. **Be alert**
Go slower than you would in daylight and keep your eyes open for unexpected obstacles, bumps in the road and movement by others on the road or path.

Worried about cycling in the dark?

Now the darker mornings and evenings have drawn in and the weather is colder and wetter, it’s important to think ahead and make sure you’re fully prepared to remain safe when cycling.
A pawsome day out
After a hotly-contested public vote on the council’s Facebook page Indie was crowned winner of our cover star competition. Indie, who lives with her owners Guy and Hollie in Hindley, is now helping us to promote responsible dog ownership. We can all do our bit to make sure we have a clean and tidy borough. We know the majority of our residents are responsible dog owners and clean up properly after their pets. Yet sadly there are some owners who fail to clean up after their pooch and are a neighbourhood nuisance. Did you know that if you don’t clean up after your dog you could be fined for dog fouling? Or if you do bag it but don’t bin it, you could be fined for littering? Dog poo should be cleaned up and the bag put in a bin – the normal bins in the parks are fine. We want our parks and green spaces to be accessible and enjoyed by everyone who lives or visits the borough. Our environmental enforcement officers are in action 24/7 tackling all types of environmental crime and can catch dog fouling offenders. Our officers also regularly patrol local areas and can fine someone on the spot if they’re caught in the act.

If you see dog fouling in your community you can report it to the council, using either the Report It app which can be downloaded on your smartphone, or via the council’s website www.wigan.gov.uk/reportit

Five-month-old boxer pup Indie captured your hearts and won her spot on Borough Life’s front cover.

Along with bagging the cover shoot, Indie also had a grooming session with Bancroft Kennels and Cattery to make sure she was ready for the camera. It’s safe to say she loved her pamper session! The kennels, in Lowton, are now working in partnership with the council to house stray or lost dogs. The family-run kennels is set in six acres of open countryside and is fully licensed.
Get moving

Stuck for something to do with the family this weekend? We’ve got you covered with these fun winter activities.

Standish Line

Earlier this year Standish Mineral Line received a full upgrade from a muddy track to a fully lit and resurfaced bridleway. The upgrade provides a safer and alternative route into Standish village centre. There’s also a fun letter-hunt along the way. Eight letters have been installed along the mile route and families are tasked to collect them all and figure out the two-word phrase. When you think you’ve cracked it, take a selfie and send the photograph along with the phrase to us on Twitter by tweeting to #StandishLine and @WiganCouncil.

Sharon Darby-Purcell, aged 47, from Standish, is extremely happy with the upgrade. Her daughter, Rebecca, aged 14, has learning difficulties in addition to mild cerebral palsy and epilepsy, so she uses her trike to help with her movement. Sharon said: “Using the trike on the road and footpaths can be a bit dangerous but the refurbished Line allows Rebecca to ride her trike safely and at the speed she wants to – usually quite fast!”

Heart of Wigan

Hearts, which have been designed by local school children, have been installed in seven parks across the borough. On the back of each heart is a mile route that you can take at your own pace to keep your heart healthy while allowing you to take in some of the borough’s beautiful green spaces.

Head to one of the parks below for a route near you.

• Mesnes Park
• Pennington Flash
• Haigh Woodland Park
• Amberswood
• Three Sisters
• Lilford Park
• Jubilee Park
If you’re ahead of the trend and are already driving eco-friendly, here’s where you can charge your electric motor.

We’re seeing more and more electric-powered cars take to the road ahead of the planned ban on petrol and diesel vehicles by 2040. There are a number of charging points on car parks across the borough and motorists are welcome to drive up and plug in their clean-air inspired cars.

Local businesses are also doing their bit by installing their own charging points to help out their environmentally-aware employees. Wigan Metropolitan Development Company, which operates Wigan Investment Centre on Waterside Drive, recently installed two charging points thanks to employee demand. After speaking with other businesses based at the centre, they quickly realised that there was a real demand for on-site charging facilities.

Staff were interested in buying either hybrid or electrical vehicles but had delayed doing so due to lack of options or nervousness around how to charge them.

John Burns from the company said: “We’re committed to helping the environment where possible and want to encourage people to think about how air pollution can affect our carbon footprint and health. The charging points are well used and we have plans to install even more in the future.”

It is hoped more businesses will adopt the same approach and make it easy for employees to use an electric car – it’s the future!

If you have an electric car you can plug in for free at these council car parks:

- Mona Street - Wigan Town Centre
- Water Street - Wigan Town Centre
- Leigh Town Hall - Leigh Town Centre
- Church Street - Leigh Town Centre
- Lord Street - Leigh Town Centre
- Doctors Nook - Leigh Town Centre
- Spinning Gate - Leigh Town Centre

To use the GMEV charging network, you simply need to register online and purchase an annual access card for £20. For more information on the network visit www.GMEV.co.uk
People of the parks

We go behind the scenes with the people who help to look after some of the borough’s most loved green spaces.

How many members do you have?
There are five or six volunteers who undertake practical work in helping to improve the appearance of the park and develop the community garden, help to maintain the bowling green area, paint benches, do litter picking, maintain the flowerbed within the park and do other small jobs. Lots of local residents visit the park daily and local councillors have invested in the park so I guess you could say they are all Friends of Alex Park.

How long have you been part of the group?
Since 2009. The friends group was started at a meeting in St Mark’s Church. There were plans and ideas to form a committee and organise lots of volunteers who could maintain some of the park areas and run activities, but things don’t always turn out as hoped. We do our best but our main problem is finding people who want to be involved in their community and give their time – we would love some more volunteers. We want to develop the park further with a view of entering Britain in Bloom.

What made you join the group?
I joined the Friends of Alex Park because I have spent my life working in Wigan and St Helens parks. Parks and open spaces are very important to the wellbeing of a town and community, they are the lungs of a town, areas that improve the health of the residents, meeting places, places to relax and enjoy, places to pass time. I joined so that I could help make Alex Park better.

What’s your favourite thing about your local park?
I like the whole park - the trees, the different habitat areas, formal bedding to wild flower areas, play areas and open grass land, community garden and the bowling greens.

Why do you enjoy volunteering?
Volunteering is a way of helping in the community, meeting new people and improving the park for others. For me it is a form of mindfulness and wellbeing. It occupies my mind and body and helps me to keep fit and active!
How many members do you have?
We have about a dozen members of which seven are active workers. However we do accept help from anyone else we can persuade to join us!

How long have you been part of the group?
I joined the group 15 years ago when I retired.

What made you join the group?
I wanted to do something to get me out into the open air and give me some exercise. Our children, now in their 50s, had worked on the site when it was being made for part of their Duke of Edinburgh Award. The group worked one morning a month with the Ranger Service and I thought this sounded manageable. We learned lots of skills from them but over the years the service has disappeared and the ‘one morning a month’ has become ‘as many hours as I can spare’.

What’s your favourite thing about your local park?
I think the Three Sisters is a hidden gem, it has a wealth of wildlife and there is always something interesting to see and someone who will talk to you about what you do see. The regulars, usually dog walkers, are very protective of ‘their’ environment and pick up litter on their walks which keeps the park a pleasant place to be in.

Why do you enjoy volunteering?
It is satisfying to see the results of our hard work and know that we are helping to make the park a better place and are preserving it for our grandchildren to enjoy.

Joy Winstanley
The Friends of Three Sisters
How many members do you have?
Around 100 signed up members and 20 who regularly volunteer. We have also engaged with local businesses who have helped with volunteering and sponsorship.

How long have you been part of the group?
Since we formed the group in April 2012, I have been acting chair.

What made you join the group?
I originally moved to the area with my wife and two young boys because of the close proximity of the park in 1985 and saw it go into sad decline when the council only did basic maintenance. The most significant loss was the closure of the public toilets which made the park less accessible to local clubs, nurseries and schools. Thanks to investment from our local councillors and our volunteers we have got the toilets open and working again and we maintain them on a daily basis.

Schools now frequently visit the park with pupils to enjoy the play area and the woodland walks throughout the year. It would not have been practical for them to do this beforehand.

What’s your favourite thing about your local park?
There are 50 acres of unspoilt green space and woodland within 1.5 miles of Leigh Town Centre. I go there every day to relax and walk my dogs. I love to see others enjoying what our group has achieved for the community.

Why do you enjoy volunteering?
I am retired. It keeps me reasonably fit and managing the friends group also keeps me mentally agile. It would be a waste of my management and business experience to just sit at home and do nothing. Our voluntary work stops the park from becoming an eyesore and benefits everyone. Green spaces are so important to maintain a healthy community.

The Manchester Disc Golf Association have just put a trial hole in Lilford Park and they’re hoping to have a full disc golf course installed. Anyone can play disc golf and there are different levels for children, intermediate or professionals. Find out more about the new sport coming to Leigh on the Friends of Lilford Park Facebook page. For the last two years the park has also held the popular Rock-n-Stroll live music event – stay tuned for a bigger and better event next summer!
The Allotment is a small, cosy café set back from busy Wigan Road next to Wigan Infirmary. Open Tuesday to Saturday every week, owners Bernie and Martin serve a light breakfast and a hearty lunch made to order, homemade cakes, sandwiches and soups.

The husband and wife team have a passion for growing and eating their own produce and have their own allotment in New Springs. Fruit and vegetables Bernie and Martin grow are used in the dishes on their menu. And if produce runs low they work with other local suppliers with similar values including Greenslate Farm in Billinge.

Martin said: “We believe that homegrown organic produce is not only healthier, but is tastier too. The majority of our stock is local from the bread, which we source from All You Knead in Haigh Woodland Park, to the eggs, which are sometimes provided by our chickens! We’re also currently on the hunt for a milkman who can provide organic milk for the café. We want to be an important part of the community and inspire others to grow and eat more vegetables.”
Cook & Foragers

Jack Flusk and Katie Swift kick-started their business, Conservation Pigs, five years ago. Rearing rare breed British saddleback pigs mainly in the Wigan Borough area, Jack and Katie are passionate about their produce and graze their pigs on conservation sites for the best quality meats. They expanded from the rearing trade and now have their own butchers, Cook & Foragers, based in Haigh Woodland Park where pork and beef that have grazed at Haigh, Borsdane Wood and Three Sisters is sold. Jack and Katie also source fruit and vegetables from local farms too and believe they bring something a little different to Wigan.

Bag and Bean

Set inside an independent gallery full of handmade products by UK designers, Bag & Bean is an inviting café on Winstanley Road, Billinge. Serving a range of locally sourced foods, including vegan and gluten free options, Bag & Bean is certainly one of the borough’s hidden gems. Owners Stephanie and Ian O’Brien pride themselves on buying fresh fruit and salad from the farm shop and sourcing their cakes from local businesses in the area. They opened the café in 2015 thanks to high demand from customers visiting the gallery and since then it has gone from strength to strength. They serve hearty soups, homemade sandwiches and pork pies and quiche supplied by Wigan bakery, The Muffin Man. Stephanie said: “We love to support local businesses because we’re a small business too and appreciate the support we’ve had over the year. Sourcing food locally also means we can remain exclusive! We always listen to our customers because they play a big part in our business so some of our suppliers have been recommended by them.” In addition to their extensive lunch and dinner options, Bag & Bean also offer a full vegan or gluten free afternoon tea experience.

Lots of community groups and residents have joined the ‘Incredible Edible’ project, where herbs, fruit and vegetables are planted across the borough and anybody can pick them when ripe. If you want to grow your own food in local places visit www.wigan.gov.uk/volunteering to join the movement.
Equipment and preparation: for this recipe, you will need a 12-hole muffin tin and 8cm/3in fluted pastry cutter.

Ingredients

**For the pastry**
- 175g/6oz plain flour
- 75g/2½oz cold butter, cubed
- 25g/1oz icing sugar, plus extra for dusting
- 1 large orange, grated zest only
- free-range egg, beaten

**For the filling**
- 250g/9oz good-quality ready-made mincemeat
- 100g/3½oz ready-to-eat dried apricots, finely chopped (do this in a food processor if you’re short on time)
- 125g/4oz uncoloured marzipan, grated

**Method**

Preheat the oven to 200C/180C Fan/Gas 6 and place a baking sheet inside to heat up.

For the pastry rub the flour and butter together in a large bowl using your fingertips until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs.

Stir in the icing sugar and orange zest, then stir in the beaten egg and mix until the ingredients just come together as a dough. Wrap the dough in greaseproof paper and chill in the fridge for 10-15 minutes, or until firm.

When the pastry has rested, unwrap it. Place the greaseproof paper on a work surface and lightly dust with icing sugar. Place the dough on top, dust with icing sugar, then cover with another sheet of greaseproof paper. Roll the pastry between the sheets of greaseproof paper to a thickness of 1-2mm.

Stamp 12 rounds from the pastry using a 8cm/3in fluted pastry cutter. Line each hole of the muffin tin with one of the pastry rounds and prick the base of each with a fork.

For the filling, mix the mincemeat with the chopped apricots until well combined. Divide the mixture equally among the pastry cases. Top each tart with some of the grated marzipan.

Slide the muffin tin onto the hot baking sheet and bake in the oven for 12-15 minutes, or until golden-brown and crisp. Dust with icing sugar and serve warm.

Mary Berry’s Mince Pies recipe courtesy of www.bbc.com/food
Kathryn Coffey, aged 51, from Pennington, opened Finesse gift shop in August 2005, and has been located on Bradshawgate in Leigh for those 13 years. Kathryn explains: “When I was younger, I wrote a bucket list of things I’d like to achieve, and having a shop in Leigh was one of them.” At Finesse you can pick up a range of different gifts, from bath bombs to shabby chic dressers, for every occasion, from Mother’s Day to a secret Santa gift, there’s something for everyone at affordable prices. And just in case you needed another reason to shop, there’s now free weekend parking on all Wigan Council’s town centre car parks, and this is great news for businesses like Kathryn’s. “It’s great for local independent businesses like mine. It’s really good news for the high street shops.”

Looking to step-up your gift game this Christmas, but struggling for inspiration?

Shrieking Violet jewellery

These beautiful handcrafted pieces of silver jewellery are complete with real pressed flowers. With a choice of different colours, there are necklaces, earrings, bracelets and rings.

Prices start at £19.99
Borough Life / Winter 2018

Shop local

**Bomb Cosmetics bath bombs**

Bomb cosmetics use natural ingredients and pure essential oils in creating handmade bath treats. No animal testing.

£2.55 single bath bomb - Sets from £14.50

**Sunny By Sue gin glass**

These quirky gin glasses are hand crafted and finished off with a gin recipe to try out in your glass.

£15

**Lily Flame candles**

Made in Somerset, these candles burn for 30-35 hours, and can be purchased in a number of different fragrances.

£8.99

**Friendship ball**

With a wide range of shapes to choose from the friendship balls, which are handmade in Poland, can be matched to your birthstone colour for that month.

£11-£15.99
Many people feel pressure around Christmas but the main thing to remember is not to spend more than you can afford. It sounds simple, but it’s really easy to get carried away.

One way to pay for Christmas at short notice is by applying for a zero per cent credit card. This allows you to repay your card each month in affordable chunks until the zero per cent runs out. Interest free periods can be as long as 24 months or more, so it could be a real weight off your shoulders.

We advise using comparison websites to check your eligibility first as applying for a card does require a credit check.

It’s also never too early to think about Christmas. Why not open a savings account now for 2019? With Unify, your money is protected and you could have access to credit if you do need it next year. Putting a little money aside each month can give your money management a boost.
Money

There is so much advice available through Unify, Wigan Council and Citizen’s Advice regarding budgeting but the main thing to remember is to ensure your priority bills are paid first. Look at your outgoings in order. The most important are the ones that keep a roof over your head, keep you warm and keep you fed.

Unify Credit Union has a new programme which gives residents the opportunity to purchase household goods (including white goods) at lower prices than retailers such as Brighthouse, by using a low cost credit union loan. An alternative to banks or building societies, credit unions are not-for-profit co-operatives owned by the people who use their services instead of external shareholders or investors. The benefit of this is that you can look into loans, savings and more with the reassurance that emphasis is always on providing the best service to members instead of maximising profits.

I’m pregnant and need a bit of help getting furniture and my nursery sorted. What can I do?

Having a baby isn’t cheap but there are a few ways you can make the preparations a little more purse-friendly. If you’re having your first baby, it could be really easy to get excited and want everything brand new. But there are so many fantastic quality, pre-loved items online that have only been used a handful of times.

If you need a little more support, there are low interest loans available. Again, we advise using comparison sites to see what is around but make sure you look at the total cost of the loan after interest before you commit. The monthly repayments may seem low but you could end up paying more overall.

I have no idea where to start with budgeting. Can you help?

There is so much advice available through Unify, Wigan Council and Citizen’s Advice regarding budgeting but the main thing to remember is to ensure your priority bills are paid first. Look at your outgoings in order. The most important are the ones that keep a roof over your head, keep you warm and keep you fed.

You should also think about setting up a budget by working out the difference between your money coming in and the money going out. What is left will need to last you until you receive your next salary or benefit payment. If you’re in need of further support, charities like The Brick in Wigan Town Centre can help.
Be active

Parkrun has become a global phenomenon. Organised by volunteers, there are now 1,700 parkruns held across the world with 3.3 million people having taken part. If you haven’t heard of it before, it’s a free weekly 5km event and is open to anyone. People of all ages and abilities register online, then you can just show up and get involved, whether you are looking to start exercising or are an elite runner. Whether you run, jog, walk, or skip you will be cheered on along the route by a host of friendly volunteers. We’re lucky enough to have two parkruns each week in the borough at Pennington Flash Country Park and Haigh Woodland Park. The running course at Pennington is an offroad trail around the grounds of Pennington Flash Country Park. The course at Haigh Woodland Park goes through the upper and lower plantations including varied terrain of mainly woodland trails and hard standing surfaces. Both parkruns take place every Saturday at 9am and have a tail walker and a fully marshalled course to direct and support each runner. After the exercise is done you can grab a brew and enjoy a chat with other parkrunners.

To register for free and receive your barcode please visit www.parkrun.org.uk. Keep up to date with parkrun news by following them on Facebook @penningtonflashparkrun, @haighwoodlandparkrun.
Be active

Running starter kit

Taking up running for the first time this winter? Here’s everything you need to get going.

• Invest in a good pair of running trainers.

• Wear a high-vis vest or reflective clothing so you can be seen.

• Download a free running or route planning app on your smartphone.

• Buy a mobile phone armband - you don’t have to carry it and can listen to music.

• Don’t forget to stretch before and after a run. There are some simple stretches at www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise

Making a splash

Need some inspiration to get active? Jack Atherton, aged 93, from Pemberton, swims at the Wigan Life Centre every Thursday, and he also cycles and walks almost everywhere. He first got into swimming when his grandson encouraged him to take it up, he said: “I’ve always been active, but when my grandson suggested swimming I decided to give it a try.

“One day when I was swimming I overheard some men chatting, saying that 32 lengths of the pool was a mile, so I set myself a challenge. The first week I managed to do six lengths, then each week after I continued to progress until one day I reached 32 lengths. I continued to do this for many years after. Now, Jack swims 40 lengths each week, and believes this is the key to his good health. Jack explained: “Swimming has kept me going, it’s really helped me with my breathing and has kept me active.”
The story of Susan Marsh’s efforts to make a difference is one of those inspiring stories that should make anyone get up and do something positive for others in their community. She was the catalyst to creating Hag Fold Community Centre in Atherton, which still opens its doors to the public now after first opening with Susan’s help in April 1976.

Susan instigated the campaign to make a focal point at the heart of the Hag Fold community where she lived and provide people with a place to go. She was supported by others who shared her vision for the area and she inspired the young people on the estate to campaign for a community centre and youth club back in 1971. Seventeen young people aged between ten and 14 collected signatures on the petition and handed it to the district council. Susan sadly died in 1980, aged only 30, but was able to see her dreams of a community centre come true. The centre, which later became known as Dorset Road Community Centre, is now run by volunteers through a charity who continue Susan’s community work.

Norman Bradbury, chairman at the centre, said: “It was with great pride that I was able to help organise the celebration to commemorate the contribution made by Susan Marsh to the Hag Fold Community in the early 70s. She is an inspiration to us all, showing how one person with vision of how things can be improved, can achieve their objective with the help...
of a group of young people. Susan Marsh died at the age of 30 leaving her daughter without a mother and a community with a lost great champion, but with the lasting legacy of a community centre."

This summer a memorial garden was opened at the centre, now known as The Bridge at Dorset Road Community Centre, in Susan’s honour. Her daughter Vicky and granddaughters Chloe and Esme were among those who attended the event to celebrate Susan’s crusading spirit and had also helped to create the calm space.
A fostering family

You can change a child’s life by opening your home to them when they most need it.

It’s often hard to get a spot on the sofa at Chris and Sharron’s house. And it’s not unusual for them to have more than 20 people round the table for Sunday lunch.

Fostering can change a child’s life and Sharron and Chris King have spent the last 20 years doing just that.

The family have never had less than three foster children at any one time living with them and have fostered 36 children.

The couple also have four children of their own and have lived in their seven-bedroom house in Whelley for 30 years.

Sharron said: “I was an only child and I didn’t like it. I started childminding and then we thought about fostering. When we started fostering our youngest child was five years old. Our own children are aged between 23 and 30 now and the youngest has only just left us. At the moment we have five foster children placed with us.

“In the last 20 years we’ve always had a full house along with our own kids.”

At Christmas the King’s always have a full house, as many of their children and foster children now have young families of their own – but everyone is welcome.

Chris said: “We foster as a family. Our own children consider our foster children as their brothers and sisters and that’s how they refer to them.”
Think you can’t foster?

We bust some of the most common myths we hear from people who don’t think they can foster.

“I’m too old”
There is no upper age limit to fostering and many people foster later in life when their children have left home.

“I don’t own my own home”
It doesn’t matter if you rent your home as long as your accommodation is a secure tenancy and you have a spare bedroom.

“I can’t foster if I’m single”
It doesn’t matter if you are single as long as you can provide a warm and loving home for a child.

“I can’t foster if I’m gay”
Your sexuality doesn’t matter - if you can provide a safe and loving home then we’d love to hear from you.

“I can’t afford to foster”
Our generous weekly allowances range from £195 to £586, per child, per week, depending on the skills and experience of foster carers and the needs of the child being looked after.

“I don’t have children”
You don’t have to have raised your own children but you need some childcare experience to be a foster carer.

“I have to give up work to foster”
You don’t have to give up work but you will need to consider whether your hours are flexible enough to fit around school runs, meetings and appointments.

“My children still live at home”
Many carers have their own children and they can be of great support for foster children.

“I have a disability”
As long as you can provide a safe, secure and happy home then your disability should not stand in your way of fostering.
Imagine if one day you were told that you had to pack up everything that was important to you. We spoke to four young people who live in Leigh but who originally came from different countries. Their families brought them to the UK in the hope that they would be able to lead better lives.

Giulia, aged 12, is originally from Romania and Viera, aged 15, Kristina, aged 13, and Patricia, aged 12, are originally from Eastern Slovakia.

**What do you remember about first coming to Leigh?**

**Giulia:** I remember the day we came was exciting. I thought that the buildings were really nice. They were much bigger than the buildings at home.

**Viera:** In Slovakia there are some beautiful places but there are also poorer parts and I lived in one of the poorer parts. So my first impression of Leigh was that the buildings and streets were much cleaner. And also that it rained a lot!

**What are the main differences between life in Leigh and life in the country you came from?**

**Viera:** Some of the foods are different and Slovakia has traditional clothing that you can choose to wear. Here we have school uniforms, which we didn’t have in Slovakia.

**Giulia:** In Romania we had hot summers and would go and swim in a lake near my house. I miss that and I miss the building I lived in. In the winter it gets very cold and snows so I would go up into the hills and sledge. We also had a lot of festivals in the summer.

**What do you enjoy about life in Leigh?**

**Viera:** I like a lot of the people. I’ve made some good friends.

**Giulia:** I really like the shops. I love Poundland! Everything is so cheap and so good.

**How difficult was it to learn English?**

**Viera:** The language was hard at first because I couldn’t speak English at all but because I was young I learned to speak English quite quickly. That experience has meant I’m now good at learning other languages too.

**Kristina:** Our mum doesn’t want us to forget our own culture or language so at home we speak Slovak. That can sometimes be confusing and I sometimes forget an English word and can only think of the Slovak word. In Year 7 we learned Spanish and then sometimes I spoke Spanish when I wanted to speak Slovak or English!

**Giulia:** I couldn’t speak English when I first got here but my teachers helped me.

**What is difficult about living in England but coming from a different culture?**

**Giulia:** The hardest thing for me was leaving a lot of my family behind. I miss my Grandma who is still in Romania.

**Viera:** The most difficult thing that I had to do was leaving my family and friends. I also had nine pets but I had to leave them all in Slovakia.

**What helped you settle in?**

**Viera:** Some of our neighbours helped us and brought food round. We went to a youth group that was for children from different countries and that was good because we made new friends who understood our situation.

**What advice would you give to young people who have come to Wigan Borough from different cultures?**

**Viera:** My advice is that you should always respect others. This is because you don’t want to be treated differently. Another piece of advice is to never forget where you come from or your family and friends.

**Giulia:** Just be friendly and stay away from bad people.

**What would you like to do in the future?**

**Viera:** I want to be an artist.

**Kristina:** I want to either do drama or be a charity worker and help people in lots of different countries.

**Patricia:** I love animals so I either want to be a vet or work for the RSPCA.
If you’re a young person who originally came from a different country and would like to join a youth group to get support and make friends, please email Wigan Council’s Targeted Youth Support Services, tyssweb@wigan.gov.uk

Left to right Kristina, Viera, Giulia and Patricia.
Today its skyline is still dominated by the former cotton mills while the area’s mining past is reflected in present day sporting clubs for all to remember the role it has played in its history. The village was first recorded as Aderton in 1212, later being referred to as Atherton from 1259. But surprisingly was known as Chowbent for around 300 years, often being shortened to Bent, based around the Chow family who lived in the area from around the 17th Century.

Industries including coal mining and nail manufacturing drew in workers from around, with the cotton mills adding to the strong industrial background. Indeed the coal mines helped lead to the creation of the football team Atherton Collieries FC, who were founded by miners from six local pits in 1916. Today the club still play at their first home Alder House, now known as the Kensite Stadium, and play in the Evo-Stik Division One West league. They have experienced success recently after being crowned Northern Premier League Trophy Winners for 2017/18. While the whirring sounds of the machinery no longer lingers in the air some of the former cotton mills are

Cotton, coal and community are at the heart of Atherton.
With strong ties to its industrial past, there is no getting away from Atherton’s place in the Industrial Age.
still thriving centres for business with Victoria Mill a shopping and leisure destination, and Ena Mill offering a unique shopping experience. Opened in 1908 the mill is a classic example of the type of cotton spinning mill where manufacturing continued into the 1990s. After a period of time as warehousing business owners Simon Yates and Jonathan Addis took up the Grade II listed building and transformed it into a retail destination. Going from strength to strength they now have ambitious plans to expand retail space to meet the growing demand from shoppers. Green spaces and flowers fill the streets of Atherton, which has a proud tradition of supporting the In Bloom campaign. The Atherton community are also a committed bunch volunteering countless hours to keep not only their homes in bloom but also to help each other out. Nowhere is this more evident than at The Green Grass Centre. The centre offers a wide variety of courses and support for families, even having its own food store where people can buy tasty produce at a fraction of the price in the supermarkets. Lynn Hayes, centre manager, said: “Our volunteers are really important because they come from the local community and give up their time to help others. Because our volunteers are local they know what it’s like in the community and what is needed out there. “The people of Atherton are very community focused. We feel lucky because we are in their neighbourhood, we are more like friends to the community and they feel they can trust us.” Atherton Town Hall has also undergone a full transformation with £1m of investment and now hosts the library, a Life Centre service and digital services all under one roof.
Enjoy a great day out at Haigh Woodland Park and then sit back and relax and enjoy a wide choice of delicious food in the Tea Room which you’ll find on the first floor above the Courtyard Café.

The Tea Room offers a selection of food including full English breakfasts served every Saturday and Sunday between 10am and 12noon, fresh seasonal soup and gourmet sandwiches served daily from 12noon to 2pm, comfort favourites and desserts plus afternoon teas*. The Tea Room also has a choice of coffees, flavoured teas, soft and sparkling drinks and is licensed so you can enjoy a glass of prosecco or choose from a carefully selected range of bottled craft beers.

*24 hour advanced booking required for afternoon tea. To book, call 01942 828479 or pop in. The Tea Room is on the first floor directly above the Courtyard Café and is accessible by stairway or lift.

Always time for tea

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Win! A luxury afternoon tea for two worth £25

You and a friend could enjoy a delicious luxury afternoon tea at the Haigh Woodland Park Tea Room. You’ll tuck into a selection of freshly made sandwiches and savoury bites. Two homemade scones with strawberry jam and clotted cream and a selection of sweet treats and cakes that you can wash down with a pot of tea or americano coffee.

To be in with a chance of winning simply write you name, postcode, and a contact number or email address in the space below and post it to us before the closing date of 21st December 2018.

Name: 
Contact phone number: 
Postcode: 
Email address:

Prize valid until 28th February 2019. Please cut out and return to the Public Relations Team, Wigan Town Hall, Library Street, Wigan, WN1 1YN.
Earlier this year he moved into a state-of-the-art housing development for adults with autism in Orrell. The development at Mayfield House in Orrell is one of only a handful across the country which provides housing specifically to suit the needs of someone with autism. And Stephen, aged 17, is looking forward to the festive period in his new apartment.

Stephen said: “I’m really enjoying being in my own home and learning new things. My next challenge is to learn how to make my own bed. “I’ve made lots of new friends with my neighbours as more people have started to move in, I really like having friends over. We also go to a disco every Thursday.”

Mayfield House consists of 12 self-contained apartments, each with a lounge, kitchen area, bedroom and bathroom, and some with a garden. There are two communal areas, which have a kitchen and dining room, and an interactive immersive sensory room which can be used to play games, music or films. It means adults with autism can get support to suit their needs while living with other people and being part of a community.

Stephen can’t wait to decorate his apartment with festive cheer. He said: “I’m going to buy a new tree and decorate it. It will be nice to have my presents under the tree. “I’m also looking forward to having friends and family round to look at my apartment.”

There are plans for more housing developments similar to Mayfield in the borough for residents with different needs including autism and learning disabilities.
Child’s Play – A celebration of childhood
A new exhibition giving children a taste of life in the Victorian era.
Open every day. See Museum opening times. Museum of Wigan Life, Library Street, Wigan
Free to visit.

Leigh Christmas lights switch-on
Wigan will be switching on the Christmas lights in partnership with Wish FM.
Thursday 15th November: 4:30pm – 7:30pm
Wigan Town Centre
Free – No need to book.

Leigh Film Society – Inspired by Film launch night
The film this week is The Square.
Thursday 22nd November 2018: 7:30pm
The Old Courts, Gerrard Winstanley House, Crawford Street, Wigan WN1 1NA
Tickets: Adults - £5, Students - £3 – Available from www.theoldcourts.com or call 01942 834747.

How to Be Woman
A one woman show based on true events.
Saturday 24th November: 3:00pm (1 hour performance)
Turnpike Gallery, Civic Square, Leigh
Tickets: £6.00 from Leigh Library.

Leigh Santa Parade
Santa and his reindeer will lead a large community parade from Mesnes Park into Wigan Town Centre.
Saturday 25th November
Free – No need to book.

Rebel Women – the fight for suffrage in Wigan and beyond
Local historian and suffrage expert Yvonne Eckersley will open the day with her talk on ‘Wigan Borough – 50 Years of Women’s Suffrage 1868 – 1918’. Women’s rights activist and writer Dr. Helen Pankhurst, feminist and academic Dr. Ali Ronan, and local historians Sue Maiden and Marianne Howell.
Thursday 22nd November: 10:00am – 5:30pm
Museum of Wigan Life, Library Street
Tickets: £12 for residents from Wigan Borough and £15 for everyone else - Lunch is included. Places are limited so please book now on 01942 828128 or email wiganmuseum@wigan.gov.uk

Leigh Santa Parade
Santa and his reindeer will lead a large community through Leigh Town Centre.
Sunday 25th November
Free – No need to book.

Leigh Film Society presents Journey’s End
Innocence lost, Courage found – Journeys End. Commemorating the 100th anniversary of the end of WW1. BYOB and pizzas welcome.
Friday 30th November 2018: 7:30pm
Turnpike Gallery, Civic Square, Leigh
Tickets: Adults - £5, Students - £3 Available from www.leighfilmsociety.com or call 07969647466.

Noasis – Oasis Tribute
Friday 30th November: 8:00pm – 11:30pm
DW Stadium, Loire Dr, Robin Park, Wigan, WN5 0UH
Tickets: - £10 (includes a drink) available from www.dwstadium.com
The Haigh Christmas Grotto
Saturday 1st December: 11:00am – 4:00pm. Open daily until 23rd December. Haigh Woodland Park, School Lane, Wigan, WN2 1PE
£5 per person. Advance booking recommended: 01942 828280.
Christmas Artisan Market
Plus all the traders of the Kitchen Courtyard will be open for festive business. Golborne Brass Band. Sunday 2nd December: 10:00am – 3:00pm. Performances at 1:00pm and 2:30pm. (40 minute sets).
Santa's Grotto open: 11am – 4.00pm. Haigh Woodland Park, School Lane, Wigan, WN2 1PE
Free to attend.
Light for a Life switch-on ceremony
The lights on the hospice Christmas tree will be switched on as part of the annual Light for a Life appeal. All are welcome. Tuesday 4th December: 6:30pm – 7:00pm with the opportunity to stay for drinks or to make a dedication to a loved one. Wigan and Leigh Hospice, Kildare Street, Hindley, WN2 3HZ
Free – No need to book.
Shades of Blue - Band of the RAF Regiment, RAF Northolt
A special Christmas concert by Shades of Blue, an 18-piece big band ensemble renowned for performing the music of Glenn Miller, Count Basie and modern arrangers such as Gordon Goodwin and Callum Au. The event is in aid of the RAF Benevolent Fund and made possible by the Higham Brothers Memorial. Friday 7th December: 7:30pm – 10:00pm Tickets: Adults - £10, Children - £7, Under 5s – free.
For tickets call: 01942 828508 or online – BoxOffice.WLCT.Org
Wigan Maker’s Market
Meet the makers and explore hundreds of unique items at the first Makers Market.
Sunday 9th December: 1:00pm
Live from the Kitchen Courtyard, Haigh Woodland Park, School Lane, Wigan, WN2 1PE
Free to attend.
Jack and the Beanstalk Panto
It is that time of year again. Oh no it isn’t! Only Jack can save the day in this fun pantomime! All ages welcome. Wednesday 12th December – Sunday 16th December The Old Courts, Gerard Winstanley House, Crawford Street, Wigan WN1 1NA
For more information visit www.theoldcourts.com
New Year’s Event with Not The Rolling Stones
An outrageously good tribute to the biggest and best band in the world. Ages 14+. Monday 31st December. The Old Courts, Gerard Winstanley House, Crawford Street, Wigan WN1 1NA
For more information visit www.theoldcourts.com
Pizza and Pint Night
Join us for an evening of artisan pizza and craft beers.
Friday 14th December: 6:00pm – 10:00pm
Haigh Woodland Park, School Lane, Wigan, WN2 1PE
Free entry.
Raspberry Fields – Christmas Pony Party
Saturday 15th December. Wigan Market, Wigan Town Centre, Wigan
Free Event – No need to book.
Haigh Children’s Courtyard Christmas
Sunday 16th December: 11:00am – 4:00pm
Haigh Woodland Park, School Lane,
Winter Services

Council offices will be closed from Friday 21st December 2018 and re-open Wednesday 2nd January 2019. The contact centre will be open to take calls on the 24th, 27th, 28th and 31st Dec from 9:00-16:00, Call 01942 404364.

Leigh and Wigan Life Centres (including Register Office and Libraries)
Wigan & Leigh Life Centres will be open on Monday 24th, Thursday 27th, Friday 28th and Monday 31st Dec from 9:00 to 16:00 and will be closed on 22nd & 29th Dec and Tuesday 1st Jan 2019. They will re-open Wednesday 2nd Jan 2019 at 9:00.

During the festive period, 22nd Dec-3rd Jan 2019 inclusive, all libraries and Life Centres will be closed, with the exception of the boroughs two central libraries and Life Centres at Leigh and Wigan.

Cemeteries
All cemeteries will be open from 9:00 and close at dusk every day throughout the holiday period.
No burials will take place on Christmas Day, Boxing Day or New Year’s Day.
Monday 24th, Thursday 27th, Monday 31st Dec and Wednesday 2nd Jan, burials 12:00 -15:00.
Friday 28th Dec and Thursday 3rd Jan, burials 10:00-15:00.

Bereavement Services Office
Call 01942 486992

Crematorium and visits to the book of Remembrance
Closed: 25th, 26th Dec 2018 & 1st Jan 2019. Open: 24th Dec 2018 - 9:00. (Last Cremation Service 14:00).
Normal opening hours (9:00-16:00) – 27th, 28th and 31st Dec 2018 & 2nd Jan 2019.

Adult Social Care Services
Closed: 22nd, 23rd, 25th, 26th, 29th and 30th Dec 2018 & 1st Jan 2019
Open: 24th, 27th, 28th & 31st Dec - 8:45 – 16:00
Normal operating hours will resume from 8:45 on 2nd Jan 2018.
When we are closed, the out of hour’s service will operate. For help over the holiday period please contact the central duty team on 01942 828777.

Home Care Service
Service is as normal throughout the holiday period. For enquiries, contact your individual service provider (open all over Christmas).

Refuse and Recycling Collections
Don’t forget to check your calendar for changes to your bin collections over the Christmas period.
This time of year brings a substantial increase in waste and recycling material, please ensure you recycle or reuse as much as possible and keep your black bin waste to a minimum.
Please do not put the wrong items in your recycling bins as this creates quality issues which could mean material is rejected and not recycled. Please put your (real, chopped up) Christmas tree in your green bin or take it to one of the borough’s Household Waste Recycling Centres.
You can check your collection calendar online at www.wigan.gov.uk/recycling. Collections may be earlier or delayed by one day.

Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs)
All HWRCs will be closed Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year’s Day.
Normal opening times will be in place on all other days. Chanters, Kirkless and Slag Lane are open 9:00-17:45pm every day. All three sites are exceptionally busy between the hours of 10:00 and 15:00. Recycle more, recycle right by pre-sorting your waste before attending the HWRC site.

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 and website or by calling our telephone helpline 01942 404364. More information available on the following web link - www.wigan.gov.uk/winter.

To avoid putting extra pressure on A&E services this winter, consider accessing the following services instead.

Medicines
Have a supply of remedies in your house for common conditions like coughs and colds.

Pharmacy Rota
All local pharmacies will be open on a rota basis over the Christmas period. Please check the local press or with your nearest pharmacy closer to the time.

Leigh NHS Walk-in Centre
The centre offers fast and convenient access to healthcare advice, information and treatment.
No appointment is necessary and the centre is open from 7am to 9pm seven days a week, including during the holiday period.
An experienced NHS nurse is available to provide treatment for minor injuries and illnesses, issue emergency contraception and give advice and information on local pharmacy services as well as out of hours.
Leigh NHS Walk-In Centre is situated at Leigh Health Centre, The Avenue, Leigh, WN7 1HR, telephone 01942 483453.

GP and Dental Services
Contact NHS on 111 for confidential health information and advice 24 hours a day, seven days a week or go online.
GP Out of Hours Service: 01942 829911
Dental Out of Hours Service: 01942 614376
If you are NOT registered with an NHS dentist but require emergency treatment please call the In-Hours Emergency Dental Service on 01942 614390 (weekdays 9am-5pm).

District Nursing
District Nurses will be available throughout the Christmas and New Year period, including bank holidays for essential services. Contact your local clinic or health centre for more information.