

## **WIGAN COUNCIL**

### **LOCAL BANDS BATTLE IT OUT FOR SPOT AT FESTIVAL**

Community group, Strike a Chord, are calling for local bands to battle it out for a place in the next RocknStroll festival. The festival will be held in Lilford Park on Saturday 14th July but hopeful bands will need to enter the competition before the deadline on Friday 16th March.

Wigan Council part-funded last year's event, awarding money to Strike a Chord from Brighter Borough and the Community Investment Fund and the local authority is keen to support the festival again this year for its community spirit.

Bevan Thompson and David Dubois, founders of Strike a Chord, are encouraging bands from schools and colleges across the borough to send them videos to enter the competition. Successful submissions will then be invited to attend the final, which will take place on Saturday 19th May in the Masonic Hall, Leigh, where bands will perform before the judges choose their favourite to play at the festival.

Speaking about the festival and competition, Bevan said: "Our first RocknStroll festival last year was a huge success thanks to all of the hard work our volunteers put in and the support from the local community. We're really looking forward to this year and seeing the plethora of talent we know the town has to offer. By holding a battle of the bands style competition, we're giving school kids and college students the opportunity to gain experience playing in front of other people, while also offering up a fantastic prize."

Bevan and David set up 'Strike a Chord' in September 2016 to encourage young people to play instruments and set up bands. The community group also helps disabled people and disadvantaged people get into music.

Mayor of Wigan Borough said: "There are so many talented young people borough-wide so it's great that Strike a Chord are giving them a platform to be heard and share their creativity. We really want to encourage our future generations to follow their dreams and it's community events such as RocknStroll which help to celebrate and support this."

If you or your child is part of a school or college band, they can submit a video of their band playing to [david@rocknstroll.org.uk](mailto:david@rocknstroll.org.uk) including the name of the band, where they are based and which school or college the band members attend.

### **ARTIST'S EXHIBITION INVOLVES THE WHOLE COMMUNITY**

If you could create anything at all, how would you make your mark on your town? This is the question asked by Wigan-based artist, Jess Rotherham, who is calling for her whole community to explore their artistic flair as part of a new visual project.

Jess, 25, is one of eight artists-in-residence as part of Wigan Council's Imago programme and is leading on the project 'Ideas for a town', which encourages the local community to take ownership of the places that they live through art.

Members of the public can sculpt, draw or write about their ideas before handing them into their local library or taking a photograph and uploading to the project blog. All submissions will then be included in Jess' open exhibition from **10th March** in Wigan Library.

Speaking about the project, Jess said: "I am really keen to work with people across Wigan Borough and with people who don't necessarily engage with art on a daily basis. "The sky is the limit! A lot of people have great ideas for public artworks and places and this project is all about creating a platform for those people to express themselves. Ideas don't have to make sense and they don't have to be realistic – I just want to give everybody the opportunity to be an artist. I'm excited for what will be an eclectic exhibition that has been contributed to by the whole community regardless of age, gender or background."

Sculpture packs can be picked up from the Grand Arcade or Wigan Library's mezzanine, which have all the materials needed including a backdrop, clay and figurines. There have been more than 60 submissions so far with ideas such as a tower of pies, a brick maze and even a spaceship.

Donna Hall, Chief Executive at Wigan Council and Greater Manchester Combined Authority's Lead Member for Arts And Culture Said: "The Imago Artist in Residence programme is a fantastic opportunity giving talented people a platform to engage with our communities, highlighting the fun and creativity that comes with arts and culture. "Our artists-in-residence are very committed to working with local people and we're very excited to watch their projects develop. We encourage residents to find out more as each artist has a completely different approach to their work."

Jess also has a studio at The Old Courts, Wigan, where she explores ongoing ideas that can last a lifetime such as her ambitious '5416 Mammal Hearts' project, which focuses on sculpting the heart of every individual mammal in the world.

For those who would like to work with Jess directly on their submission, there will be a free drop-in workshop on Monday 19th February suitable for all ages at the Museum of Wigan Life, 11 am-12:30 pm. Alternatively, visit the project blog at [www.ideasforatown.tumblr.com](http://www.ideasforatown.tumblr.com) for more information or to submit your ideas.

### **A STYLISH FITNESS OFFER FOR ASHTON**

Ashton Leisure Centre's £3.2m transformation is nearing completion and it's promising to bring a touch of style to the local leisure and wellbeing scene.

The current building has been extended to accommodate a new first floor, 393 sqm metre gym, complete with 80 individual stations. Planned to open early May, the new look leisure centre will be packed with the latest Technogym equipment. A new group exercise studio, indoor cycling studio, sauna and steam room and ultra-modern changing rooms will complete the modern new look. While outside a new synthetic playing pitch and a multi-use games area ideal for hockey, netball, football and basketball will be available for hire.

Inspiring healthy lifestyles manage the site on behalf of Wigan Council.

Managing Director Peter Burt, said: "This is a stylish design but it doesn't just look good. "We have listened to our customers and will be giving them more of what they want. More classes and group exercise classes based around their needs and at times that suit them. "Our aim is to inspire everyone to achieve a healthier, happier life. Ashton Leisure Centre is part of a bigger network of Inspiring healthy lifestyles services and activities. This means more opportunities to reach your fitness, health and wellbeing goals, whatever your ability or interests.

"From cycling and walking sessions across the borough to kayaking and sailing at Scotman's Flash, golf at Haigh or climbing at Howe Bridge Leisure Centre - no other leisure provider offers such variety. "Everybody's health and wellbeing journey is different and when you join Inspiring healthy lifestyles we

can match activities and services to suit where you are now and support you to get to where you want to be.

The new Technogym kit at Ashton will also mean the introduction of the MyWellness Cloud, which allows you to track and keep a record of your sessions and the progress you are making wherever you are. Other innovations coming to Ashton Leisure Centre include group sessions in the gym and virtual Les Mills exercise classes.

The transformation of Ashton Leisure Centre is part of a larger £6m investment in health, wellbeing and fitness in the borough under Wigan Council's Deal for Health and Wellness. The funding has been used for similar transformations at Howe Bridge and Leigh Leisure Centres. The team behind the transformation are now looking forward to the official re-opening of Ashton Leisure Centre in early May.

To keep up to date with the developments at Ashton Leisure Centre, visit [new.ashtonleisurecentre.org](http://new.ashtonleisurecentre.org) A temporary gym is currently open for business and the swimming pool is not affected by the development. You can join now by visiting [leisurecentres.org](http://leisurecentres.org) or calling in for a chat.

### **MINING STATUE GETS BIG BOOST**

A local history group passionate about commemorating the borough's mining heritage with a statue have been given a hefty £10,000 cash boost.

Wigan Council presented Wigan Heritage and Mining Monument (WHAMM) with the cheque, bringing them one step closer to their £150,000 target. The money will fund a statue featuring a miner, pit brow lass and a child, which will sit near Wigan Town Hall - the borough's former mining college. The £10,000 donation from the council follows a £7,000 donation in 2017 from councillor's Brighter Borough funds. WHAMM have also been crowdfunding, which encourages the public to donate as much or as little as they can.

WHAMM, which is a branch of Wigan Local History and Heritage Group, commissioned Hull-based sculptor, Steve Winterburn whose recent work locally includes the Billy Boston statue on Believe Square.

Neil Cain, treasurer of WHAMM, said: "Anyone who has a connection with Wigan has likely had an ancestor work in the pits. Mining in Wigan district was first documented in the 1300's so there's a strong history here. "We believe there have been around 3,000 plus deaths through accidents in the pits and some workers have endured long-term health complications as a result. It's because of all these reasons why we need this statue. We want to commemorate the centuries of heritage, the people who suffered and also the incredible contribution Wigan had to the industrial revolution.

"We have had so many generous donations and we are so humbled by the support we've received, however, we still need approximately £40,000. "We can't thank the council enough for their fantastic support since the beginning of this project and the money they have pledged has gone an extremely long way."

Mayor of Wigan Borough, Councillor Bill Clarke said: "I speak for myself and the rest of Wigan Council when I say we're happy to support this fantastic project. "Wigan Borough is filled to the brim with proud residents and it's because of this I hope everybody will donate to this worthwhile cause."

WHAMM has been a registered charity since January 2017 and has received other donations from the likes of Heinz, the National Union of Miners and more.

If you'd like to donate to the page, visit [www.wiganminingstatue.org.uk](http://www.wiganminingstatue.org.uk) where you will find a link to the group's JustGiving page.

### **BROWNFIELD LAND TARGETED FOR THOUSANDS OF NEW HOMES IN WIGAN BOROUGH**

Thousands of new homes in Wigan Borough will be built on previously developed land, new figures reveal. Wigan Council has published its brownfield land register which identifies 130 disused sites suitable for new housing development.

The borough has a strong track record in delivering brownfield sites for housing, with almost 1,000 homes built on previously developed sites over the last two years - two-thirds of the total completed. The 130 identified sites have the potential to accommodate 9,600 homes in the future.

Wigan Council has a 10 year ambition to deliver enough quality housing to match demand and provide jobs and economic growth for the benefit of residents. As set out in its Economic Prospectus, the council aims to create 10,000 jobs, enable the building of 10,000 new homes and create 12,000 apprentices over the next decade.

Karl Battersby, Wigan Council's director for economy and environment, said: "The council is committed to maximising housing delivery on previously developed sites in the borough. "Brownfield land will make a significant contribution to addressing housing needs over the next 20 years. "A key objective for the council is to reduce the amount of green belt release needed to meet housing needs. The sites in the brownfield register will contribute to this need."

Around 70 sites within the brownfield register already have planning permission, totalling around 5,400 homes, with the remainder deemed to be available, suitable and deliverable in the short to medium term. Due to the borough's mining and industrial past, a proportion of the brownfield sites have development constraints which need to be overcome, including contamination and mine shafts. The council is committed to unlocking these sites and to proactively work with landowners and developers to bring these sites forward.

Wigan borough's brownfield figures are:

- 50.7% of the borough's housing land supply (2017-35) is on brownfield sites (10,675 of 21,036 homes)
- 65.8% of net housing completions were on brownfield land between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2017 (958 of 1,456 homes)

Any landowners with brownfield land available for development should contact the council. The borough's brownfield register can be viewed at: [www.wigan.gov.uk/brownfieldregister](http://www.wigan.gov.uk/brownfieldregister).

### **NEW ELECTRONIC SYSTEM FOR WASTE PERMITS AT RECYCLING CENTRES**

Residents who use a trailer or van to take items to one of the three recycling centres across Wigan Borough will soon be able to download and print their own permit within hours under a new online permit scheme. The scheme will launch in April when residents will be able to download a permit at any time of the day.

Currently residents have to apply by phone or email for a permit in advance and wait for it to arrive by post, which can take up to five working days. The printed permit will be scanned at the recycling centre and is being introduced as part of The Deal. To save time at the recycling centre residents are asked to sort their waste before they arrive as this will ensure a smoother passage for everyone.

Currently only those residents who use a twin-axle trailer or van to take items to the centres require a permit - residents who use a car without a trailer don't require one. Residents are allowed one permit per month and it must have on it the address where the waste is coming from. Trade waste is not permitted at any of the recycling centres, including waste from shops, landlords, property developers or businesses.

Paul Barton, assistant director for environment, said: "Our old system was time-consuming so as part of The Deal we want to improve things for our customers and help them to recycle more, recycle right. This new digital offer will mean residents can quickly obtain a permit 24/7 at a time that suits them."

For more information about visiting the household recycling centres visit [www.wigan.gov.uk/recycling](http://www.wigan.gov.uk/recycling)

### **FREE CADDY LINER DELIVERY FOR ALL HOUSEHOLDS**

From January 2018 caddy liners will be delivered to all households by Wigan Council's waste crews meaning residents no longer need to purchase their own or collect liners from life centres or libraries.

It is hoped this will make it easier for residents to recycle their food waste in the kitchen caddy before putting it in the green bin. Recycling food will also save space in the black bin.

To let the crews know you need a new roll of liners, residents are being asked to tie a caddy liner to the handle of their green bin on their collection day. When the crews come to empty the bins they will leave residents a new set of liners.

Residents are being encouraged to contact the council to order a free kitchen caddy if they do not already have one so they can start to recycle food.

Paul Barton, assistant director for environment, said: "Thank you to residents for recycling more, recycling right as part of The Deal. We have already seen an increase in our recycling rates but we can still do more to reach our targets. "Recycling food and garden waste in the green bin is really important as it is composted and then reused which means it doesn't go to landfill. "Crucially, recycling correctly using all three recycling bins will save space in your black bin. The black bin should be a last resort for items that cannot be recycled."

If you don't currently recycle food and would like to start you can order a kitchen caddy via My Account [www.wigan.gov.uk/MyAccount](http://www.wigan.gov.uk/MyAccount)

Find out more about recycling at [www.wigan.gov.uk/recycling](http://www.wigan.gov.uk/recycling)

### **"LET'S TALK RUBBISH" SAY STAFF WIGAN BOROUGH'S RECYCLING CENTRES**

Councillor Kevin Anderson, Cabinet Member for The Environment, said: "Thank you to residents for recycling more, recycling right as part of The Deal. We have already seen an increase in our recycling rates but we still need to do more to reach our targets. "Recycling food and garden waste in the green bin is really important as it saves that waste from going to landfill and it has an important role to play in helping grow our future food. "Crucially, recycling correctly using all three recycling bins will save space in your black bin. The black bin should be a last resort for items that cannot be recycled."

Residents are reminded that our Household Waste Recycling Centres can be exceptionally busy, particularly in peak hours between 10am and 3pm, so are advised to visit outside of these hours to avoid queues. To further reduce queues residents can also help by pre-sorting their recycling at home before they get on site. Visit your local Household Waste and Recycling Centre:

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

Please check the wide range of items that can be recycled before attending site, log on to [www.wigan.gov.uk/recycling](http://www.wigan.gov.uk/recycling) for more information

Opening hours including Bank Holidays:

Summer - everyday, 8am to 7:45pm (from last Sunday in March)

Winter - everyday, 9am to 5:45pm (from last Sunday in October)

Cars with or without a single axle trailer are accepted. Vans, pick-ups under 3.5 tonnes and twin-axle trailers require a permit. If using a hire vehicles. Please take hire documents and waste permit with you when visiting the centre. All sites have a 2m height restriction and 5mph speed limit.

For more information about recycling visit [www.wigan.gov.uk/recycling](http://www.wigan.gov.uk/recycling)

### **COMMUNITIES IN CHARGE OF ALCOHOL**

Residents of Hag Fold are contributing their time as part of a pioneering programme 'Communities in Charge of Alcohol' which launches this week in Wigan. The programme aims get people talking about alcohol and changing their relationship with alcohol.

The champions will work together with others to decide what ways they could involve the wider community in reducing alcohol related harm, including getting involved with licensing decisions if this is important to them in their area.

Being delivered across the ten areas of Greater Manchester, the aim of the programme is to reduce alcohol harm in local communities. The success of the project will be measured over five years and will look at hospital admissions, ambulance call outs and levels of alcohol related crime. The latest statistics from Public Health England show that residents from across all ten areas are consuming more alcohol than the national average, which is putting our emergency services under great strain.

The new programme of work will be led by community volunteers called 'Alcohol Health Champions' who are being trained to talk to family, friends and colleagues about alcohol and health and to let them know what services and information are available, if people want support with cutting down. Wigan Council hopes to recruit a network of around 30 Community Alcohol Champions who live or work in the area to collaborate with the Wigan & Leigh Recovery Partnership who will be the local co-ordinators for the Alcohol Health Champion network in Hag Fold.

### **MANAGE YOUR MONEY, DON'T STRUGGLE WITH DEBT**

'Don't struggle with debt' is the message of a new campaign launching in Wigan Borough. Wigan Council has teamed up with Unify and the Citizen's Advice Bureau to help residents manage their money at one of the most expensive times of the year.

In the last twelve months, (October 2016 – November 2017) 1,718 people visited Wigan Council's crisis desk due to having no food, no money or no gas or electric so the local campaign will encourage residents to get support if they are worried about falling into debt or are already struggling.

There is lots of local support and advice out there for people but sometimes it can be difficult find help before it is too late. Credit Unions can provide loans for individuals without a good credit history and interest rates start at just 12.7 per cent, compared to payday lenders which charge APR of up to 1,509 per cent. The council is warning residents against using a payday lenders or loan sharks and is instead urging people to apply for a cheaper loan through a Credit Union or seek advice for how to manage their finances.

Lesley O'Halloran, Assistant Director for Customer Services at Wigan Council said: "If you find that you are struggling with debt and are unable to manage repayments, it is important to think about which debts you need to deal with first. There can be serious consequences to not paying your bills and we don't want people falling into debt. "At this time of year it can be easy to spend money on things that aren't needed

and there is support out there for residents who need help managing their money. There are cheaper and safer alternatives to payday lenders and loan sharks. Although they may seem like the easy option, people don't realise how much interest they charge and it can be so damaging."

Angela Fishwick, Chief Executive of Unify Credit Union, said: "Residents should take extra care when borrowing money to pay for the cost of Christmas. Always ask how much the repayments will be, and what is the total cost of credit and only borrow from licensed lenders. Don't be tempted to borrow from doorstep lenders charging on average 400 per cent APR or from payday lenders charging in excess of 1000 per cent APR. If you are struggling to repay your high cost loan, talk to Unify, we are here to help."

For help and advice on how to manage your money, visit: [www.wigan.gov.uk/moneyadvice](http://www.wigan.gov.uk/moneyadvice)  
Alternatively, email [welfarerightsadvice@wigan.gov.uk](mailto:welfarerightsadvice@wigan.gov.uk) for information about the council's welfare outreach sessions.

### **ADVICE AT HAND EASIER THAN EVER**

Starting Point Plus will now have longer opening hours and a new online service when Wigan Council begins offering the highly regarded support which has previously been provided by Age UK Wigan Borough.

To find out more go to [www.wigan.gov.uk/startingpointplus](http://www.wigan.gov.uk/startingpointplus).

The new phone lines will be available Monday to Friday 8.45 am to 5 pm and 8.45 am to 1 pm on Saturdays. To contact the service call 01942 489011

### **THINK YOU CAN FOSTER?**

To find out more about fostering and how to become a foster carer in Wigan Borough go to [www.wigan.gov.uk/fostering](http://www.wigan.gov.uk/fostering) and for more details on 'You Can Foster' go to [www.youcanfoster.org](http://www.youcanfoster.org)

### **INCREDIBLE EDIBLE WIGAN**

What is Incredible Edible?

What Can I Grow?

How to get involved

Is there Funding Available?

Keep up to Date with Events & Workshops

Go to <https://www.wigan.gov.uk/Council/The-Deal/Deal-Communities/Incredible-Edible/index.aspx>

For lots more information

### **WIGAN COUNCIL'S GOOD TRADER SCHEME**

Wigan Council's "Good Trader Scheme" is a directory of over 200 local, reputable businesses. All the listings have star ratings of up to five gold stars that previous customers have awarded them.

Ratings are given based on workmanship and customer service; the more satisfied the customer the higher the rating.

The scheme has been set up to ensure that the residents of the Wigan Borough are getting a fair deal when it comes to work round the home.

Trading Standards check out the traders' trading history before allowing them to be part of the scheme.

Whether it's painting and decorating, joinery, or just tidying up your garden make sure you visit [www.wigan.gov.uk/goodtrader](http://www.wigan.gov.uk/goodtrader). Or ring the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on 03454 040506.

If you are aged over 50 or have a disability Wigan Council Starting Point Plus can access the Scheme on your behalf, contact Starting Point on 01942 489011

### **HEART HEALTH HELPS WITH FIGHT AGAINST DEMENTIA**

To find out more about dementia support visit [www.wigan.gov.uk/dementia](http://www.wigan.gov.uk/dementia)

### **TOGETHER FOR ADOPTION**

To find out more about Together for adoption visit [www.togetherforadoption.co.uk](http://www.togetherforadoption.co.uk)

### **COULD YOU BE ELIGIBLE FOR HELP WITH YOUR FUEL BILL?**

Thousands of residents could be entitled to help reducing their fuel bill thanks to our AWARM Plus scheme.

With temperatures continuing to drop living in a cold home can have a detrimental effect on a person's physical and mental wellbeing. Wigan Council works closely with Wigan Care and Repair to visit homes across the borough and complete a Healthy Home Check, which assesses what help and support is available.

The AWARM Plus service is open to anyone who is currently living on a low income, has high energy costs and living with a long term health condition. The service offers a number of energy saving measures to help keep people warm and safe, including draught proofing, loft and wall insulation, benefit checks, energy switching and much more.

If you're struggling to keep warm at home or for more information on AWARM Plus and other schemes available visit [www.wigan.gov.uk/warmhome](http://www.wigan.gov.uk/warmhome) or call 01942 239360

### **ON YOUR MARKS...GET SET...IT'S LEIGH'S SECOND 10K**

It's back and this time it's going to be even bigger!

MP Jo Platt officially launched the countdown to the 2018 Leigh Community 10k on Friday by urging Leigh residents to take up the challenge and help make it an annual event. Last year's inaugural race saw 600 people of all ages and abilities taking part with more than £10,000 raised for chosen charity, Wigan and Leigh Hospice.

This year, organisers are aiming for 1,000 runners. Inspiring healthy lifestyles, FCR Events Ltd, Leigh Harriers, Nectar Creative, Rotary Club of Leigh, Time2Run Events, Wigan and Leigh Hospice and Wigan Council are all working together once again to put on the event with the support of Leigh MP, Jo Platt.

Jo said: "Last year was tremendous, there was a real buzz in the town centre. It would be great to get even more people taking part and cementing Leigh Community 10k as an annual event. "Wigan and Leigh Hospice is a charity close to many of our hearts and a worthy cause to raise money for whether you're running for fun or to beat your personal best."

The Leigh Community 10k, which takes place on Sunday 12 August in Leigh town centre, bolsters an already impressive calendar of running events in Leigh including the popular Flash in the Park 10k, Festive Flash Five and parkrun at Pennington Flash. All runners, joggers and walkers of any ability can join in the second Leigh Community 10k as long as you are over 15 years of age on the day of the event.

Standard entry fee is £17 or £15 if you run for a UK Athletics/ARC Running Club.

You can register for a place in the race at [www.leigh10k.co.uk](http://www.leigh10k.co.uk)

You can also make a direct donation to the Wigan & Leigh when you register or raise money for a charity of your choice. Wigan and Leigh Hospice has been providing palliative care for adult patients across the

borough for more than 30 years. It currently cares for more than 1,000 people with life-limiting illnesses, as well as those people important to patients, every year.

Hospice Chief Executive, Dr Alan Baron said: "We're delighted this event is back for a second year and once again supporting the hospice. "We are fortunate to enjoy fantastic support from local people in Leigh who donate, volunteer their time and participate in fundraising events to help us raise the £8,700 a day we need in order to deliver all of our services. The funds raised through the Leigh Community 10k will help us to continue to provide care for local people who have been diagnosed with a life-limiting illness and support for their loved ones."

Inspiring healthy lifestyles are also planning Couch to 10k training sessions to help people get in tip-top shape for the day.

And if you can't wait until then Run Wigan Festival is **Sunday 18 March**. More info at [www.runwiganfestivals.co.uk](http://www.runwiganfestivals.co.uk)

### **YOU'VE GOT A FRIEND IN ME**

"It's like having an extended member of the family" is the way a woman from Wigan has described being a champion for a local support service. Jeanette Lancaster signed up to be a volunteer for Wigan Council's Shared Lives service because she had some time on her hands and wanted to give something back. She was delighted when she became the champion for Philip Rostron, from Atherton, who was living alone and had lost a lot of his independence after a fall had left him in a wheelchair.

Shared Lives provides companionship to adults who need support due to disability, age or illness. When an adult is referred to the service they get matched with a volunteer who shares similar interests and will be their champion.

Each week when Jeanette visits Philip they go out into the town centre, to visit his brother or to a local café or pub. His time spent with Jeanette is the only time Philip leaves the house. Jeanette said: "Me and Philip clicked immediately, had the same sense of humour and could share life experiences. "I was nervous coming into it. I had some time on my hands with my job. It sounds cheesy but people have been good to me over the years and I wanted to give something back. You've got a lot of support with Shared Lives.

"I always say now I've made some extra friends and it's honestly the best thing I've done. "When I first met up with Philip we were both weary but when he said to me the television was becoming his best friend I could really see where I was making a difference. It pulled at my heart strings and I wanted to give it a try."

Since working with Shared Lives Jeanette has even helped Philip reunite with his long-lost brother. He has also reconnected with the chapel he was part of and has been able to regain some independence.

Philip said he is feeling much happier now and Jeanette has seen an improvement in his overall health and wellbeing. Jeanette said: "You can also help in other areas and make sure someone's needs are being met. Philip's wheelchair is too wide to fit through the doors in this flat so I'm helping him sort that out so he can have better access to his community.

Anyone aged over 18 can become a champion for Shared Lives and will be matched with someone who will suit their personality. It is up to the champion how many hours they volunteer or what support they can provide and, in return for volunteering their time, the champion receives a modest expense payment.

Stuart Cowley, director for adult social care and health at Wigan Council, said: "What we're trying to do is build friendships. There are many residents across the borough who may be isolated and lonely and simply

need a friend. We need more champions – local people with big hearts who want to volunteer and make a difference.”

To find out more about becoming a Shared Lives champion email [sharedlives@wigan.gov.uk](mailto:sharedlives@wigan.gov.uk)  
or call 01942 487044