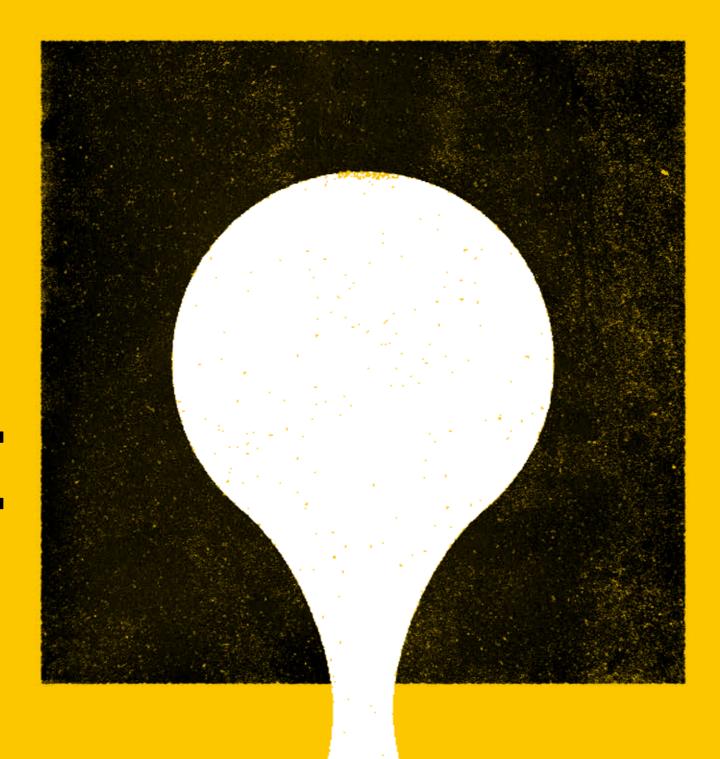




THE NEW VISION
FOR CULTURE AND
HERITAGE IN WIGAN
BOROUGH FROM
2025 TO 2030



The Fire Within The FORGE



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INTRODUCTION

A TRANSFORMATIONAL

JOURNEY...

In 2019 the first artist entered *Wigan's* **THE FIRE WITHIN** creative space, a footstep to sound the restart of the borough's cultural heart. The place as a foundry for new ideas, its people a collective of modern creative industrialists. The beat goes on.

The Fire Within Cultural Manifesto (2019-2024) reignited the connection between Wigan Borough creatives, collaborators and cultural organisations and the people, heritage, art and culture that shape the area's history. From detailed consultation with partners and community organisations, the die was cast for the long-term transformation of cultural provision.

WE EMERGED AND EVOLVED.

ADVOCATES, FUNDERS AND PARTICIPANTS JOINED US.

LIVES AND PLACES TRANSFORMED.

OURS IS A NEW CULTURAL LANDSCAPE.

Five years on, the context in which arts and culture is delivered and received has radically changed.

WIGAN BOROUGH'S CULTURAL PARTNERSHIP continues to re-shape and enhance our creative place, strengthening the sense of who we are and where we have come from. Our journey brings us to THE FIRE WITHIN: THE FORGE 2025-30.



...FORGING THE FUTURE TOGETHER THE FIRE WITHIN: THE FORGE 2025-2030

Culture enables communities to thrive. It breaks down barriers and challenges inequalities, creating opportunities for children, families, residents, and businesses to flourish. Our innate drive to create and share deepens our understanding of ourselves and others.

We are united in our commitment to strengthening and expanding the cultural sector, increasing resident engagement in arts and cultural activities. **THE FORGE** embodies our progress so far, with over £36 million in external funding secured by sector partners, including four *National Portfolio Organisations* and the *Creative People and Places* programme, *Down to Earth.*

THE FORGE fuels a bold, collective ambition - to push further and achieve more by 2030.

The people and institutions of *Wigan Borough* have shaped a plan for a new era:

PROGRESS WITH UNITY

This strategy builds on *Progress with Unity*, embedding culture at the heart of our shared missions to:

- 1. Create fair opportunities for all children, families, residents and businesses; and
- 2. Make all our towns and neighbourhoods flourish for those who live and work in them.

It cements equality and inclusion as durable community values and commits to safeguarding our environment for future generations. **TOGETHER WE SHAPE OUR FUTURE.**





DOWN TO EARTHA CREATIVE PEOPLE AND PLACES PROGRAMME FORGED IN WIGAN

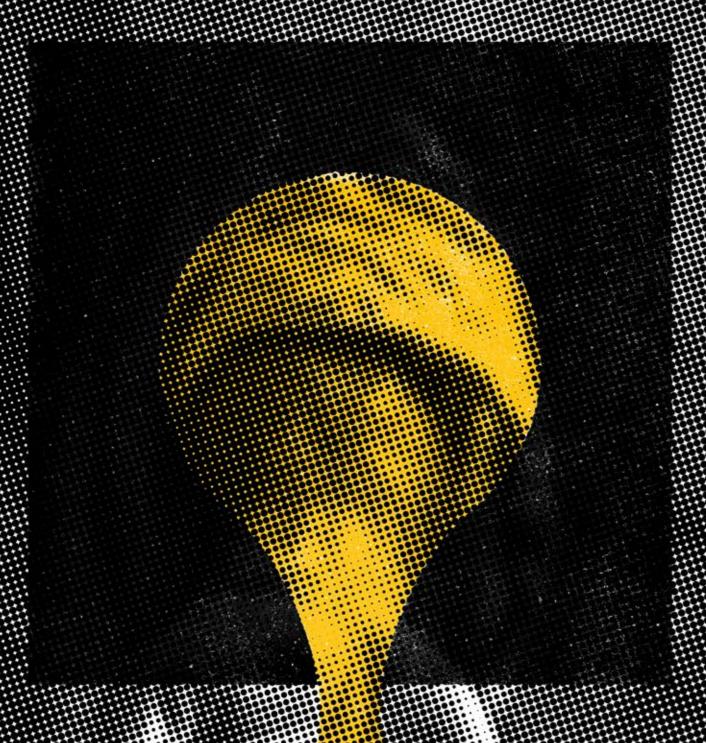
DOWN TO EARTH is part of *Arts Council England's Creative People and Places* programme; a national initiative that puts local people in the lead, giving communities the power to shape their own creative lives.

In Wigan Borough, **DOWN TO EARTH** is transforming everyday places - from Leigh town centre to the parks of Ince, the greenspaces of Worsley Mesnes to the high streets of Hindley - into platforms for creativity, celebration and connection. This is where imagination is grounded in real places, and culture grows from the ground up.

Rooted in *Wigan's* unique identity, from its working-class pride to its unmistakable humour, its music, sport and dialect, **DOWN TO EARTH** channels the borough's unshakable spirit. It's not only about honouring what already exists, but about creating space for new ideas to spark, grow and take hold.

With communities and cultural partners working side by side, **DOWN TO EARTH** is bringing more people into the joy of making, performing and dreaming. Together, they're building a cultural movement that is proud, playful, and unmistakably *Wigan*.

This is where creativity belongs to everyone. This is where the future is made.



WITHIN AND BEYOND WIGAN BOROUGH ...POWERED BY PLACE CONNECTED BY PURPOSE

THE FORGE is a vital contributor to the *Greater Manchester Combined Authority's* Create GM regional vision. We play a key role in realising ambitious cultural aspirations across the region, working together to nurture and invest in our artists, audiences, heritage sites, and cultural organisations.

We will continue to build and strengthen relationships with regional and national funders, securing ongoing and increased investment in arts and culture across the borough. This will support the growth and sustainability of the cultural sector and expand opportunities for creative excellence.

A core part of our plan is transforming perceptions of *Wigan Borough* as a thriving visitor destination and regional production hub. By demonstrating our collective impact and amplifying our achievements through shared sector-wide communications, we will showcase the remarkable work taking place here—cementing our place on the cultural map.



Wigan's Cultural Partnership unites cross-sector expertise, strength, and determination to build on the foundations of The Fire Within - Wigan Borough's original five-year cultural manifesto. As a defining vision, it continues to shape the cultural landscape and inspire cultural ambition. Now, as we enter a new era, we carry this legacy forward, evolving to meet the borough's changing aspirations and priorities, ensuring a dynamic and future-focused cultural movement.

By connecting ambitions and working collectively, our diverse membership drives the delivery of The Fire Within -*The Forge*, with a renewed commitment to be:

DURABLE

Resilient and adaptable, building long-term sustainability FOR THE CULTURAL SECTOR.

INNOVATIVE

CONTINUOUSLY EVOLVING OUR CULTURAL LANDSCAPE, EMBRACING PIONEERING OPPORTUNITIES.

INCLUSIVE

Ensuring equitable access to culture for all residents and FOSTERING COLLABORATION AMONG CULTURAL PARTNERS.

CELEBRATORY

Showcasing, evidencing and championing the GROUNDBREAKING CREATIVITY THRIVING IN WIGAN BOROUGH.

FORGED IN WIGAN CULTURAL STRATEGY AT A GLANCE

THE FIRE WITHIN: THE FORGE WIGAN BOROUGH'S CULTURAL STRATEGY 2025–2030

sets the direction for how culture will shape the borough's future—driving opportunity, inclusion and pride of place.

Culture in *Wigan Borough* is already rich, rooted and real. This strategy builds on that strength, setting out a clear framework for investment, partnership and action over the next five years. It recognises culture as a powerful force for positive change - supporting wellbeing, growing the economy, and connecting people to each other and to place.

Through seven strategic missions, **THE FORGE** provides the foundation for delivery - guiding programmes, partnerships and plans across the borough's cultural ecosystem.

This strategy builds on 'PROGRESS WITH UNITY', embedding culture at the heart of our shared missions to:

I. CREATE FAIR OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL CHILDREN, FAMILIES, RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES.

"Together, we will break down the barriers that create financial, health, education and environmental inequalities in our borough."

2. MAKE ALL OUR TOWNS AND NEIGHBOURHOODS FLOURISH FOR THOSE WHO LIVE AND WORK IN THEM.

"Together, in genuine partnership with our residents and businesses, who know our communities best, we will help each town and neighbourhood in the borough to celebrate and maintain their identity whilst understanding and helping to achieve what is needed to thrive."

Through 'PROGRESS WITH UNITY' we will strengthen the way we work through the following six tried and tested ways of working to achieve long-lasting change.

- I. See the person
- 2. Listen deeply
- 3. Know this place
- 4. Do the right thing
- 5. Connect to neighbourhoods
- 6. Show our love and pride



SUPPORTING PROGRESS WITH UNITY MISSION I:

Create fair opportunities for all children, families, residents and businesses

I. CULTURAL EDUCATION

We will champion creative learning at every stage, cultivating the next generation of creators, curators, dreamers, doers, audiences and changemakers.

2. HOPE, HEALTH AND HAPPINESS

We will embed culture into approaches to health and wellbeing, tackling loneliness, supporting mental health, and fostering belonging.

3. FUTURE WORKFORCE

We will develop skills pathways into the creative and cultural industries, enabling inclusive access to good work and enterprise.

SUPPORTING PROGRESS WITH UNITY MISSION 2:

Make all our towns and neighbourhoods flourish

4. EVERY STAGE CREATES COMMUNITY

We will support cultural activity that brings people together, through performances, exhibitions, festivals and shared creative experiences.

5. ROOM FOR DREAMING

We will unlock and support spaces for making, sharing and collaborating, powering creativity across communities.

6. CREATIVE PLACE

We will put culture at the heart of regeneration, driving economic growth, local identity and vibrant town centres.

7. A NEW HERITAGE

We will tell the stories of Wigan Borough - past, present and future - by celebrating diverse identities and shared cultural heritage.



CULTURAL EDUCATION

Supporting Progress with Unity Mission 1:

Create fair opportunities for all children, families, residents and businesses

Wigan Borough has long been a trailblazer in cultural education. In the 1970s and 1980s, visionary initiatives like the Drumcroon EDUCATION ART CENTRE, the ARTISTS IN WIGAN SCHOOLS SCHEME, and the radical theatre-in-education work of PIT Prop THEATRE set national benchmarks embedding creativity into the fabric of our community. During this time, every student participated weekly in music, drama, and visual arts, with dance added in the 1980s. These programmes not only provided students with direct access to the arts but also fostered collaborations between educators and artists, cultivating a generation that valued and participated in cultural expression.

Building upon this legacy, we now move forward together with a shared purpose: **CULTURAL EDUCATION**.

At its heart, this is about making creativity an entitlement for every child and young person, inside and outside the classroom. It's about opening doors to possibility, nurturing confidence, and celebrating every kind of talent. We see a future where artists and educators collaborate as standard practice, where creative learning unlocks potential, and where young people's voices aren't just heard - they shape the cultural life of our borough.

Through this commitment, we will nurture the dreamers, makers and leaders of tomorrow, ensuring every young person in *Wigan Borough* can discover their creativity and use it to shape a future full of possibility.

OUR COMMITMENTS:

- Establish *Wigan Borough* as a recognised leader in arts and cultural education by embedding creativity into learning at every stage, demonstrating its impact on children's development and wellbeing.
- Forge strong, sustainable partnerships between teachers, artists, schools, and cultural institutions to enhance creative teaching, enrich the curriculum, and provide more opportunities for young people to engage with the arts.
- Guarantee every child has access to high-quality creative experiences by expanding arts education programmes, increasing participation, and ensuring that creativity is a core part of their personal and academic growth.
- Strengthen and grow the cultural education workforce by increasing access to professional development, mentoring, and peer networking opportunities ensuring educators, artists, and cultural practitioners have the skills, confidence, and support to inspire the next generation.

Through these commitments, we will make access to creative and cultural opportunities an entitlement for every young person - supporting them to develop their talents and take their place in the cultural life of *Wigan Borough*.



CURIOUS MINDS CURIOSITY SPARKS CREATIVITY IGNITES FUTURES ARE FORGED

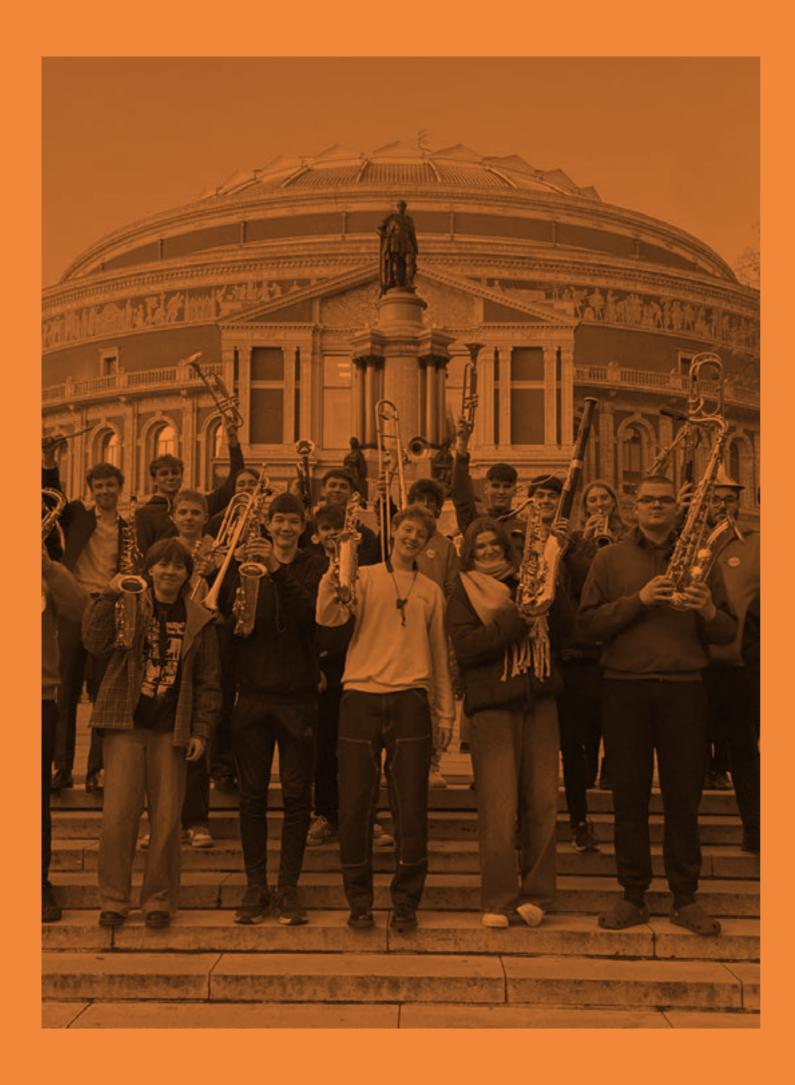
CURIOUS MINDS is a nationally significant Wigan-based charity dedicated to ensuring all children and young people have access to the life-changing power of arts and culture. Through bold initiatives and strategic partnerships, it champions creative learning, empowers teaching artists, and strengthens cultural education across the region and beyond.

Now, **CURIOUS MINDS** is reigniting Wigan Borough's legacy as a powerhouse of teaching artistry, restoring its reputation as a global leader in creative education. As the ENGLAND ITAC HUB (International Teaching Artist Collaborative), it is bringing world-class creative practices into local communities - showcasing Wigan's pioneering work while empowering teaching artists and creative educators to inspire the next generation.

Dedicated to expanding opportunities for young people, **CURIOUS MINDS** is harnessing the transformative power of arts and culture. In partnership with *THE LATHUMS*, it has launched the *CHANCE TO SEE FUND* - a bold initiative that unlocks creative experiences for *Wigan's* youth. By funding projects that spark curiosity, nurture talent, and break down barriers, this fund ensures every young person has the chance to explore their artistic potential and connect with their community's cultural heartbeat.

But this work is about more than creativity - it's about shaping engaged, socially conscious citizens. By embedding culture at the heart of communities, **CURIOUS MINDS** gives young people the confidence and tools to tell their stories, amplify their voices, and take an active role in shaping the world around them. Whether through performance, creative projects, or civic initiatives, they are empowered to step forward, take action, and build a future where arts, culture, and community thrive together.

CURIOUS MINDS is more than an organisation - it is a forge of opportunity, shaping a future where creativity fuels both individual potential and collective progress. With every spark it ignites, *Wigan's* creative legacy burns brighter than ever.



WIGAN MUSIC SERVICE FROM SPARK TO SYMPHONY: FORGING THE MUSICIANS OF TOMORROW

With a proud legacy and an enviable reputation, WIGAN MUSIC SERVICE is a powerhouse of musical excellence, where the raw talent of children and young people is forged into artistic mastery. As a leading force within the *Greater Manchester & Blackburn* with *Darwen Music Hub* - a dynamic partnership committed to high-quality music education - it provides thousands of young people with access to exceptional musical opportunities, both in and beyond the classroom.

For decades, **WIGAN MUSIC SERVICE** has been at the heart of the borough's cultural life, nurturing talent and inspiring generations of musicians. With a dedicated team of over 80 specialist music educators, it delivers expert tuition across schools and colleges, ensuring that every child has the opportunity to discover, develop, and thrive in music. From instrumental and vocal lessons to a structured curriculum and an extensive range of ensembles, students refine their skills in a vibrant, collaborative environment that fosters creativity and ambition.

For the most dedicated young musicians, WIGAN MUSIC SERVICE offers tailored guidance, connecting them with some of the UK's finest teachers and performance opportunities. This unwavering commitment to excellence ensures that those with the drive and passion to succeed receive the highest level of support, helping them reach their full potential.

More than just a provider of music lessons, WICAN MUSIC SERVICE is the beating heart of musical education in the borough - shaping the next generation of musicians and driving forward *Wigan's* cultural ambition. Through its passion, expertise, and dedication, it continues to build a thriving artistic community, enriching lives and securing *Wigan's* place as a centre of musical excellence for generations to come.



HOPE HEALTH & HAPPINESSSupporting Progress with Unity
Mission 1:

Create fair opportunities for all children, families, residents and businesses

Our collective strength lies in our ability to ignite hope, spark connection, and nurture wellbeing across our communities. By embedding culture at the heart of public health, we can break down inequalities and create a future where HOPE, HEALTH AND HAPPINESS are nourished through creativity and culture.

At its heart, this is about recognising cultural participation as part of how we live well; mentally, physically and socially. Wigan's BE Well initiative is reshaping how people think about health, moving beyond clinical settings to support prevention, self-care and community wellbeing. By connecting creativity to this approach, we can grow opportunities for joy, resilience and belonging - reaching people in everyday places and enriching lives through meaningful cultural experiences.

Our Commitments:

- Build lasting partnerships with the health sector, working collaboratively to integrate cultural programmes into accessible health and wellbeing initiatives.
- Champion culture as a driving force in preventative healthcare, securing investment to expand its role in mental and physical wellbeing.
- Strengthen the evidence base for culture's impact on health, embedding research and evaluation to demonstrate its role in improving lives and shaping policy.
- Remove barriers to participation, ensuring that more residents experience the transformative power of the arts regardless of background, ability, or circumstance.

Through these commitments, we'll make space for creativity to nurture wellbeing, spark connection, and support a borough where everyone can thrive.



LANCASHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST FORGING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN PEOPLE, PLACE, AND NATURE

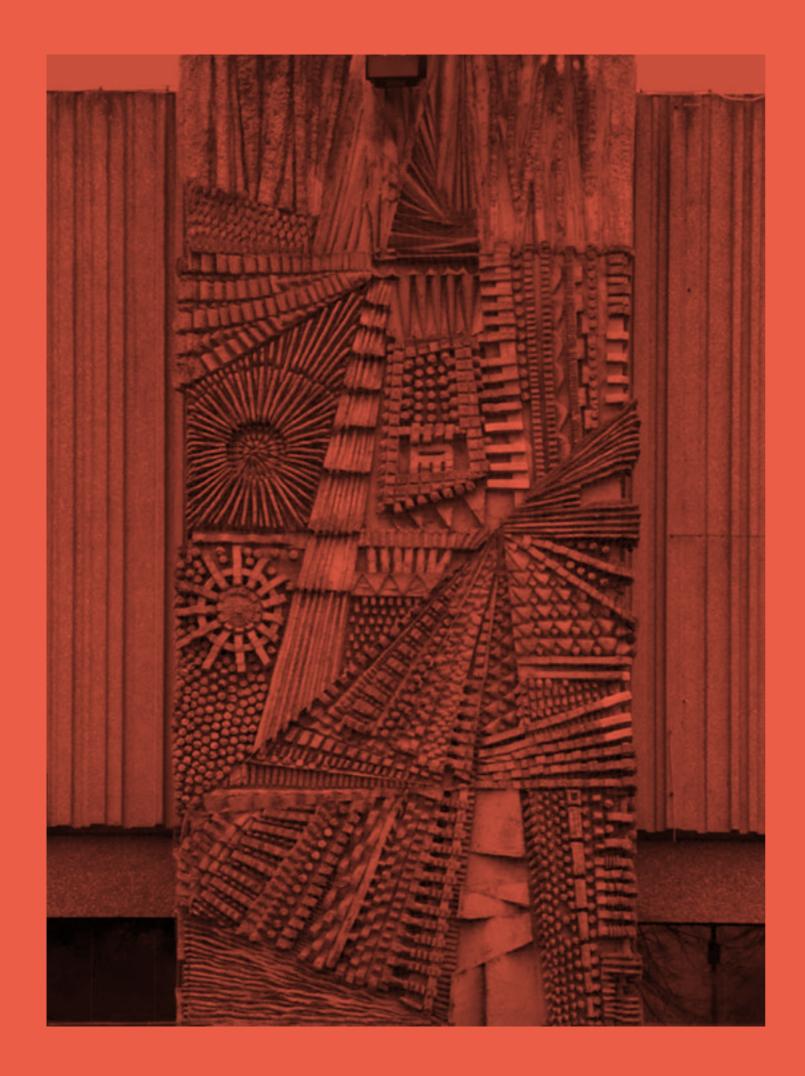
LANCASHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST is

a driving force in protecting and restoring Wigan Borough's landscapes, ensuring that both wildlife and people flourish. Once shaped by industry, these spaces are now revitalised into thriving ecosystems, where nature and creativity come together to spark new possibilities. At its core is a belief in the power of culture to ignite deeper connections, recognising that artistic expression can inspire action, strengthen communities, and reawaken our relationship with the natural world.

By weaving creativity into conservation, the Trust kindles new ways of seeing, understanding, and valuing the environment. Through visual art, storytelling, music, and performance, it sparks dialogue and brings people together - helping them to interpret, engage with, and respond to environmental challenges. These creative interactions not only illuminate the urgent need for action but also instil a lasting sense of belonging and stewardship.

Alongside its vital restoration work, the Trust fuels opportunities for learning, participation, and collaboration. Through education programmes, volunteering, and cultural partnerships, it ensures that people of all ages can experience the profound connection between creativity and the wild spaces around them. Exhibitions, performances, and participatory projects transform nature reserves into spaces where art and ecology work hand in hand, reinforcing the link between wellbeing, sustainability, and creative expression.

By uniting conservationists, artists, local authorities, businesses, and residents, **LANCASHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST** is forging a future where nature and culture thrive together. Its work not only protects and restores the land but also strengthens communities, inspires collective action, and ensures that *Wigan's* green spaces burn bright with life, creativity, and shared purpose.



WIGAN BOROUGH LIBRARIES GROWING CONNECTIONS, NURTURING CREATIVITY

WIGAN BOROUGH LIBRARIES

are rooted in the everyday life of our communities - from *Leigh to Tyldesley,* from *Wigan to Ashton.* Across fifteen friendly, accessible spaces, they offer more than just books: they are places where people of all ages feel welcome, inspired, and supported.

Every library is a space where creativity and connection come to life through literature, storytelling, music, performance, and hands-on making. From the first clap of a toddler's song to the quiet joy of reading with a local author, libraries offer chances to imagine, explore, and grow.

WIGAN BOROUGH LIBRARIES are

helping to deliver the borough's Progress with Unity Missions. They create fair opportunities by offering free, inclusive access to culture, learning, and support, especially for children, families, and residents who face barriers. They help towns and neighbourhoods flourish by being vibrant, safe, and trusted places at the heart of their communities that are open to all.

Libraries support mental wellbeing, reduce loneliness, and help people feel connected to themselves, to each other, and to their local place. Whether someone is joining a creative writing group, accessing support for job-seeking, or simply finding quiet in a busy world, libraries offer room to breathe and belong.

Looking ahead, libraries will continue to be key to the borough's cultural and civic ambitions. They will celebrate local stories, nurture emerging voices, and build partnerships that keep creativity within reach of everyone. As spaces of learning, care and imagination, they will help shape a fairer, more connected WIGAN BOROUGH, now and for the future.



LEIGH FILM SOCIETY CINEMA FOR CONNECTION, WELLBEING, AND COMMUNITY

LEIGH FILM SOCIETY is a shining example of how cinema can ignite connection, improve wellbeing, and enrich lives across Wigan Borough. This volunteer-led organisation harnesses the power of film to combat loneliness, support mental health, and bring people together.

Much like a forge - where raw materials are shaped into something enduring - LEIGH FILM SOCIETY has built an inclusive and accessible cultural space that puts community, wellbeing, and creativity at its core. Their Afternoon Classic Cinema Club provides tailored screenings for older audiences, including those living with dementia and social isolation, using film as a source of comfort, memory, and joy.

A defining achievement is the creation of Leigh Film Factory, a purpose-built cinema within the historic Grade II listed *Leigh Spinners Mill*. More than just a venue, it is a beacon of inclusion and community spirit, where film sparks conversation, creativity, and emotional wellbeing.

Beyond screenings, **LEIGH FILM SOCIETY** is a driving force for cultural engagement, ensuring that young people, marginalised groups, and diverse communities can experience the power of storytelling and shared artistic expression. Their impact was recognised with *The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service*, a testament to the dedication of their volunteers.

As WIGAN BOROUGH steps boldly 'INTO THE FORGE', **LEIGH FILM SOCIETY** stands as a pillar of *Hope, Health, and Happiness,* proving that film is more than entertainment - it is a force for social good, a catalyst for connection, and a spark that keeps communities thriving.



EVERYDAYA VITAL SPARK IN WIGAN'S CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

EVERYDAY plays a vital role in making creativity accessible, inclusive, and embedded in daily life. More than just an arts organisation, it brings residents together to create, connect, and belong. **EVERYDAY** has evolved to better reflect its mission: to make creativity an everyday experience, ensuring that artistic expression is open to all, regardless of background or ability.

As a driving force in the borough's cultural scene, **EVERYDAY** is instrumental in delivering the ambitions of Hope, Health, and Happiness, creating opportunities for people to explore their creativity, build confidence, and experience the wellbeing benefits of artistic expression. Through workshops in printmaking, pottery, crochet and collage, amongst other things, it provides an open invitation for individuals to discover new skills, share experiences, and strengthen connections. These sessions go beyond creative activity - they offer moments of respite, reflection, and joy, reinforcing the power of culture to improve lives and bring communities together.

At its heart, **EVERYDAY** champions the belief that truly inclusive creative spaces have transformative power. Whether someone is picking up a paintbrush for the first time, rediscovering a lost passion, or using creativity to navigate personal challenges, **EVERYDAY** ensures they are valued, heard, and encouraged. This support extends to artist development, ensuring that practises are developed and skills honed.

Beyond its public workshops, **EVERYDAY** plays a critical role in cultural education, working closely with schools to enrich learning and inspire the next generation of artists and creative thinkers. By embedding arts into education, it nurtures confidence, curiosity, and a lifelong connection to creativity, helping young people see art, culture and creativity as an entitlement.

EVERYDAY is a spark in Wigan Borough's creative landscape; where art is not only made but where friendships are formed, confidence is forged, and communities are strengthened. Through its commitment to inclusivity and creativity, it continues to shape a borough where art belongs to everyone, and everyone belongs in art.



FUTURE WORKFORCE

Supporting Progress with Unity Mission 1:

Create fair opportunities for all children, families, residents and businesses

Wigan Borough has always been built by skilled hands and determined minds: from the mills and mines of the past to the makers, performers and creators of today. That same spirit of resilience and ingenuity must now guide us as we shape a new kind of workforce for a new kind of economy.

Now, together, we prepare for what lies ahead: FUTURE WORKFORCE.

This mission is about ensuring local people are equipped to thrive in the creative and cultural industries with the skills, confidence and support they need to build sustainable and fulfilling careers. By strengthening pathways from education into employment, investing in local talent, and developing industry-ready spaces, we will grow a workforce that is rooted in *Wigan* but connected to opportunity across the North and beyond.

We are ambitious about our role in the region. With the right infrastructure, training, and partnerships, *Wigan Borough* can become a powerhouse of creative production, harnessing our strategic location, skilled communities and unique spaces to drive inclusive economic growth.

To get there, we must open up clearer pathways into creative careers through offering visible roadmaps, practical experience and progression routes that reflect the full diversity of roles in the creative economy. From lighting technicians to digital producers, arts managers to sound engineers, a thriving creative sector depends on a wide range of talent and skills.

We must support, attract and retain that talent - ensuring people can see a future for themselves in *Wigan's* creative industries and helping the next generation to step into it with confidence.

OUR COMMITMENTS:

- Actively support and connect *Wigan's* creative workforce, ensuring that artists, freelancers, and cultural professionals have access to opportunities, networks, and resources that help them thrive.
- Develop training and skills programmes in partnership with industry and education providers to prepare local talent for emerging creative sectors, including digital arts, immersive media, and AI-driven content creation.
- Strengthen the sustainability of local creative organisations, increasing their capacity to provide stable jobs, fair pay, and long-term career opportunities, while expanding commissioned opportunities for creative freelancers.

Through these commitments, we'll support the next generation to lead, innovate and thrive, laying the foundations for a self-sustaining creative economy that belongs to *Wigan*, and builds opportunity across the wider region.



OPEN EYE HUBFORGING CREATIVE PATHWAYS THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHY

The strength of Wigan Borough's cultural offer is built on collaboration, and OPEN EYE HUB is a shining example of this. Formed through an innovative partnership between OPEN EYE GALLERY in Liverpool, Wigan Council, and Wigan & Leigh College, the Hub supports photographers at all stages of their careers while engaging the wider community in one of the most accessible and democratic art forms.

Photography has the power to tell stories, spark conversations, and offer new perspectives. **OPEN EYE HUB** nurtures talent, creates career opportunities, and embeds photography within WIGAN'S creative landscape. Through mentoring, exhibitions, and commissions, it helps photographers develop their craft, gain industry experience, and showcase their work to new audiences.

Aligned with the FUTURE WORKFORCE ambitions of THE FORGE, **OPEN EYE HUB** plays a crucial role in creating pathways from education to employment. By working closely with *Wigan & Leigh College*, it ensures students and early-career creatives are supported as they transition into professional practice. This helps retain talent in the borough, strengthen the local creative workforce, and connect emerging photographers to wider industry networks.

Beyond career development, **OPEN EYE HUB** champions photography as a tool for storytelling, representation, and community engagement. By making the art form accessible to all, it ensures that everyone - regardless of background - has the opportunity to participate in shaping Wigan's cultural identity.

As Wigan Borough builds its future as a hub for creative excellence, **OPEN EYE HUB** continues to demonstrate the power of photography to inspire, connect, and transform both individuals and communities.



ZHA OLU FORGING INCLUSIVE PATHWAYS IN WIGAN'S MUSIC SCENE

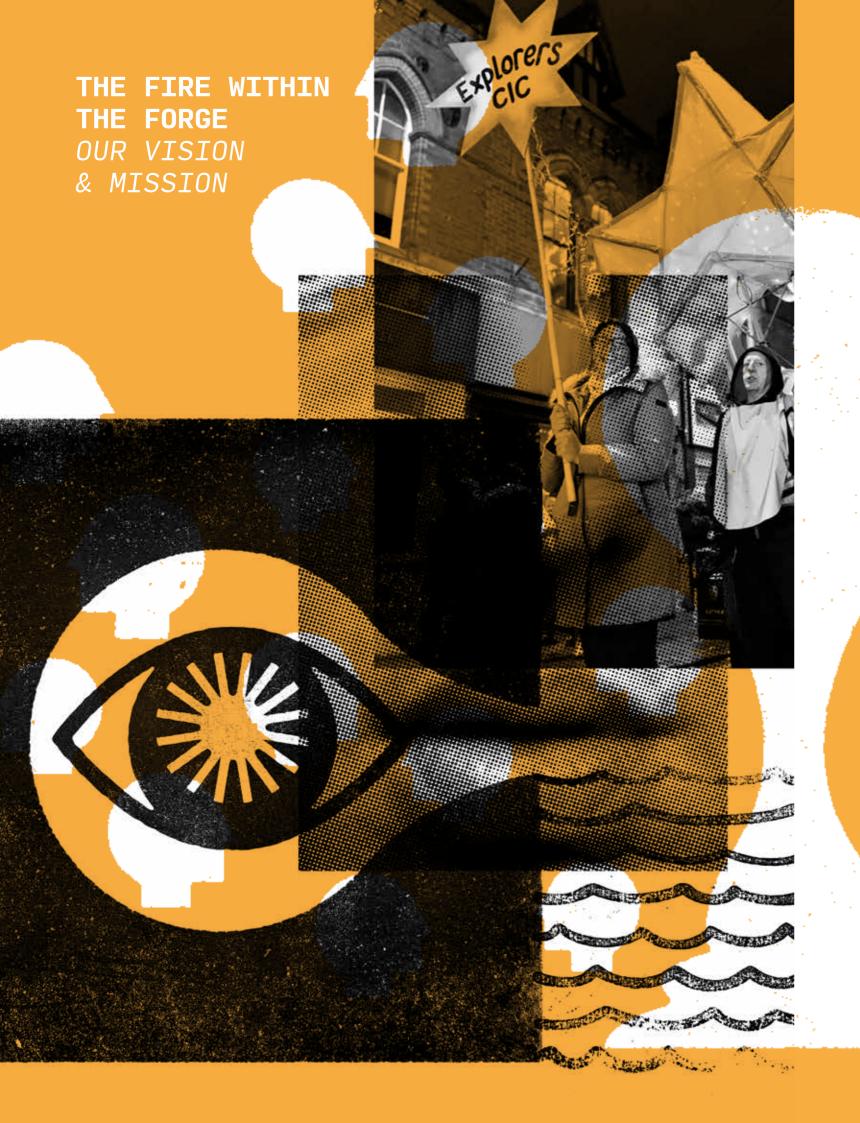
Wigan-born singer, songwriter, and creative producer, **ZHA OLU**, embodies the spirit of innovation and inclusivity within the borough's cultural landscape. Their multifaceted career not only showcases their musical talents but also highlights a dedication to empowering underrepresented voices in the community.

As the Music and Media Coordinator at Wigan Youth Zone, **ZHA** plays a pivotal role in nurturing young talent. She actively support initiatives like the 'Chance To See Fund,' a collaboration between Curious Minds and Wigan band The Lathums, aimed at providing creative opportunities for the borough's youth. **ZHA'S** involvement ensures that young people have access to resources that foster joy, positivity, and hope through artistic expression.

In 2022, **ZHA** co-founded 'Always Choose Yellow,' a creative company committed to creating safer spaces and amplifying marginalised voices. Through this platform, they launched 'Let's Not Hear It For The Boys,' an event series promoting and empowering women and non-binary musicians in Wigan and Manchester. This initiative addresses gender disparities in the local music scene by providing performance opportunities and advocating for equal representation.

ZHA'S dedication to inclusivity and community engagement aligns seamlessly with The Forge's Future Workforce commitments. By fostering equitable employment opportunities and supporting creative freelancers, she contributes to a vibrant, interconnected creative sector. Their work exemplifies how supporting freelance artists not only enriches the cultural fabric of Wigan but also ensures that the arts remain a dynamic and inclusive field for future generations.

Through their music, advocacy, and mentorship, **ZHA OLU** continues to forge new pathways in Wigan's creative community, inspiring others to follow in their footsteps and contribute to a diverse and thriving cultural ecosystem.



EVERY STAGE CREATES COMMUNITYSupporting Progress With Unity Mission 2:

Make all our towns and neighbourhoods flourish

Five years of dedication have strengthened our ambitions, and now we move forward with renewed purpose. What were once sparks of ideas, dreams, and wishes have taken shape as real, tangible opportunities.

This growing momentum fuels our mission: EVERY STAGE CREATES COMMUNITY.

At its heart, this is about creating and holding space for residents to share and celebrate their creative endeavours, through performances, exhibitions, and creative happenings that showcase the talent, passion, and stories of our communities. These opportunities do more than spotlight creativity; they bring people together, shaping communities, strengthening bonds, and building friendships.

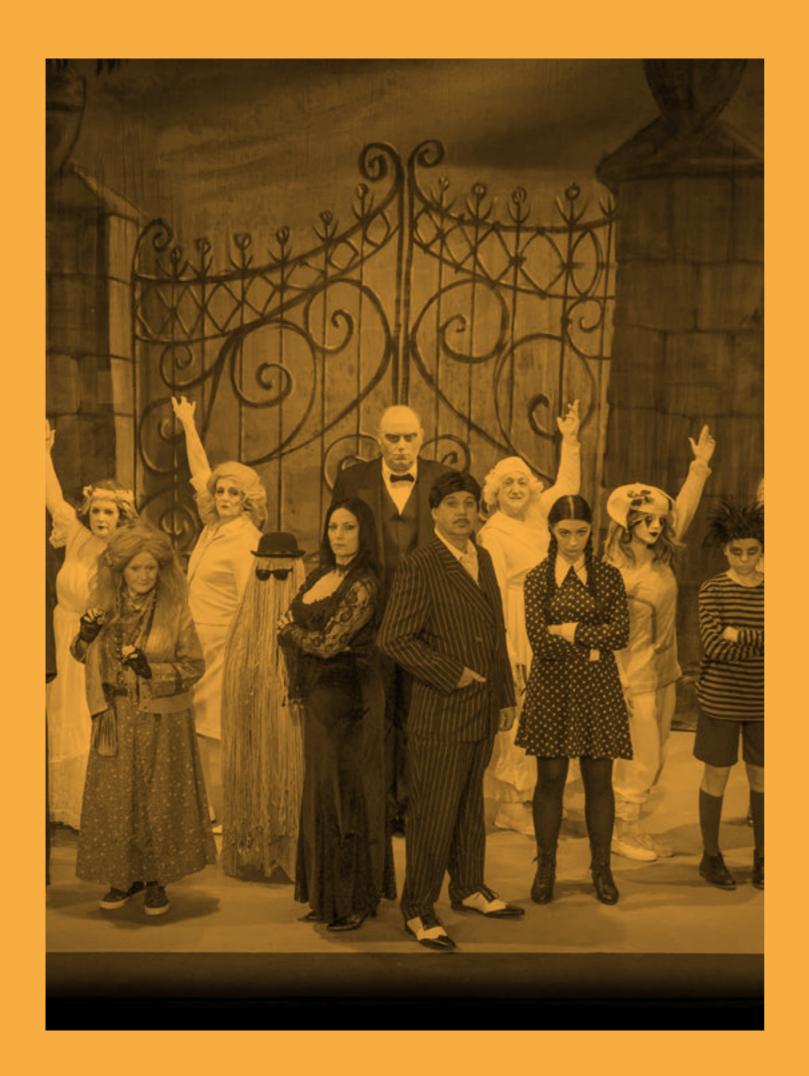
Culture is a shared experience, and through it, we ignite a stronger, more connected borough where creativity thrives and community spirit flourishes.

We envision a future where *Wigan Borough* is a thriving hub of creativity, where culture is shaped by the people who live, work, and create here. Our communities and neighbourhoods are distinctive, coming alive with events and festivals that reflect the way we live. Creativity drives our borough forward, strengthening connections between people, places, and shared experiences.

Our Commitments:

- Empower communities to shape the borough's cultural life, providing the support, resources, and opportunities needed for local people at every stage of life to lead and influence creative initiatives.
- Widen access to cultural opportunities in every neighbourhood, ensuring local projects thrive and contribute to a diverse, inclusive, and vibrant cultural scene that resonates with all members of our community.
- Develop and support the next generation of cultural leaders, equipping them with the skills, networks, and opportunities to drive creativity and innovation in their communities.
- Champion and sustain the vital role of volunteers, creating better pathways for recognition, support, and development to strengthen their impact on cultural life.
- Make cultural experiences more visible, inclusive, and community-led, increasing opportunities for programming cultural events and festivals in both traditional venues and everyday public spaces.
- Recognise, support and champion the communal spaces and creative activities that bring people together both in our town centres and across the borough as essential parts of *Wigan's* cultural life.

Through these commitments, we will build a future where creativity is accessible, participation is meaningful, and culture continues to connect and inspire our communities.



WIGAN LITTLE THEATRE WHERE COMMUNITY TAKES CENTRE STAGE

WIGAN LITTLE THEATRE is one of the borough's most cherished cultural institutions, bringing high-quality theatre to local audiences for almost eight decades. Established and sustained by passionate volunteers, it remains a thriving hub for creativity, learning, and shared experiences. More than just a stage, it is a place where people come together to perform, create, and forge lasting connections.

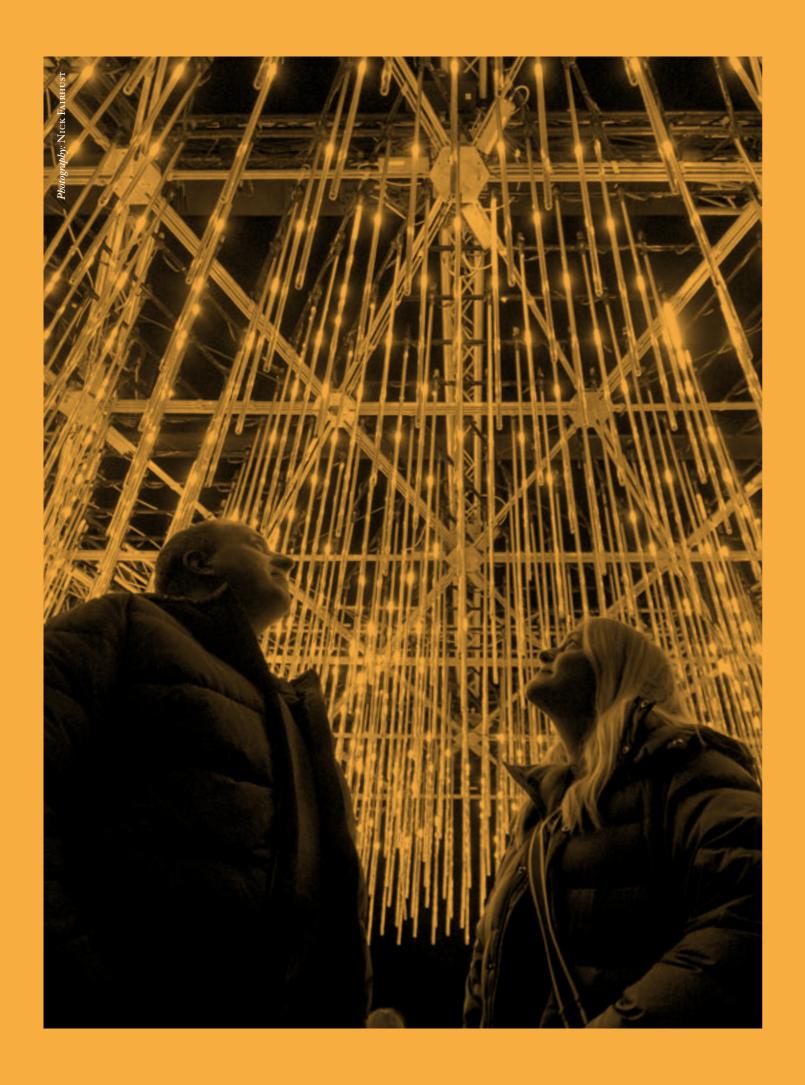
At its core lies something far greater than the productions it brings to life - the dedication of its volunteers, the lifeblood of its success. Every performance, every show, and every experience within its walls is made possible by those who give their time, skills, and passion on stage, behind the scenes, in the lighting and sound gallery, and as part of the welcoming front-of-house team. These volunteers don't just support the theatre; they shape it, sustain it, and drive it forward.

It is through their collective efforts that **WIGAN LITTLE THEATRE** has flourished, forging an enduring legacy of artistic excellence, collaboration, and shared purpose. Their contribution is far more than the roles they play - it is about the friendships formed, the skills developed, and the community strengthened with every production.

The SPIRIT OF EVERY STAGE CREATES

COMMUNITY is brought to life here, where people come together to create, inspire, and connect. WIGAN LITTLE THEATRE is not just a venue - it is a cultural home, a space where talent is nurtured, where creativity thrives, and where volunteers are the heart of something greater than any single performance.

Theatre, like community, is built by those willing to give, and **WIGAN LITTLE THEATRE** stands as proof that the brightest steel is forged in the fire of collective passion and commitment.



LIGHT NIGHT WIGAN A FESTIVAL OF COMMUNITY, CREATIVITY, AND COLLABORATION

Since its launch in Winter 2021,

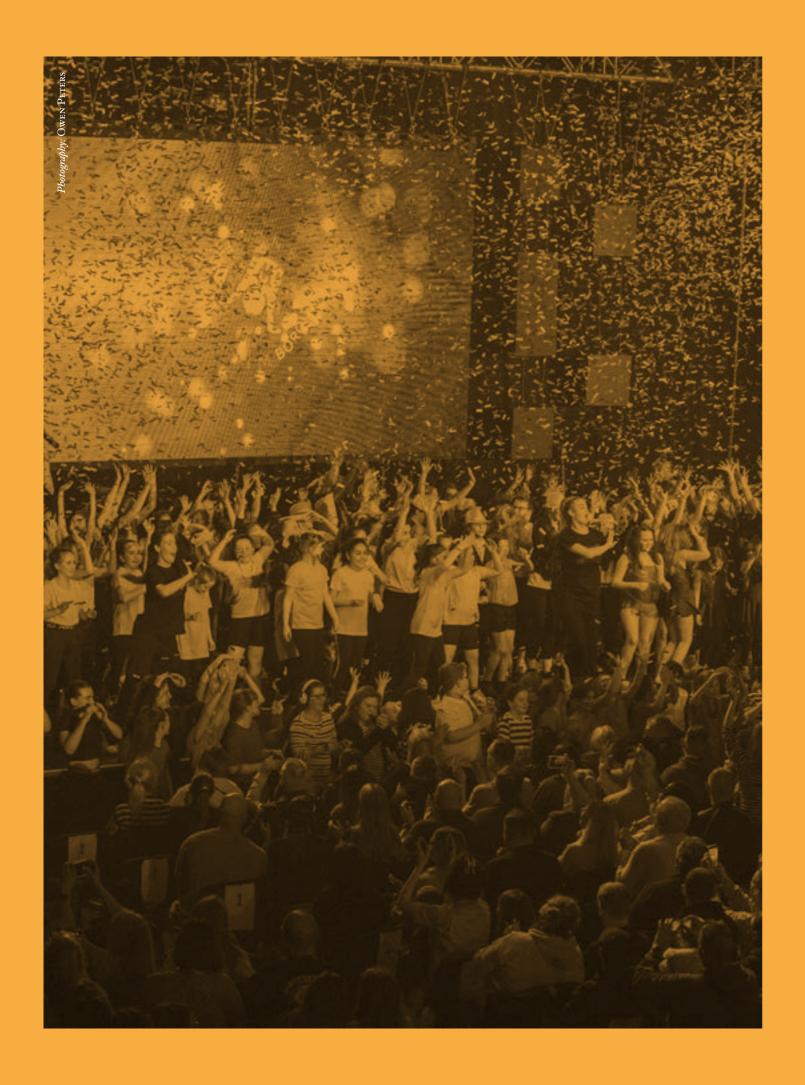
LIGHT NIGHT WIGAN has become a
landmark cultural event, transforming the
borough into a vibrant celebration of art and
community. Inspired by the annual Christmas
lights switch-on, the event set a new standard
for cultural programming, with Wigan Council
and QUAYS CULTURE co-commissioning
internationally renowned artist LUKE JERRAM
to present his breathtaking Floating Earth,
attracting 30,000 visitors.

Expanding in 2022 and 2023, the festival grew in scale and ambition, welcoming local, national, and international artists, and creating more opportunities for schools and community groups to participate. It embodies *EVERT STAGE CREATES*COMMUNITY, ensuring that creativity is accessible and shared.

By 2024, with £100,000 ARTS COUNCIL support, **LIGHT NIGHT** had established itself as a major cultural event, earning a place in the Light Up The North network alongside Lumiere (Durham) and Lightpool (Blackpool). It has also become a vital platform for producers, Things That Go On Things, supported to take ownership of the programme and now working with a multitude of local partners, in addition to nurturing the next generation of light artists in the borough through programmes like LightLab.

At its heart, **LIGHT NIGHT** is powered by people. In 2024 alone, over 60 volunteers played a crucial role - supporting artists, welcoming visitors, and ensuring the festival's success. More than event support, these volunteers are cultural ambassadors, strengthening community ties and making **LIGHT NIGHT** a truly people-powered celebration.

As it continues to evolve, **LIGHT NIGHT** remains a shining example of how creativity, collaboration, and community spirit can illuminate a borough, forge lasting connections, and inspire the next generation of artists, audiences, and cultural leaders.



WIGLE DANCE CIC
WHERE YOUNG PEOPLE
TAKE THE STAGE AND
SHAPE THE FUTURE

At the heart of WIGAN BOROUGH,
WIGLE DANCE CIC is an award-winning
community dance organisation dedicated to
shaping a future where every young person
has the opportunity to move, create, and
belong. Through dance, they forge pathways
for artistic expression, build confidence, and
strengthen community bonds—ensuring that
every stage truly creates community.

Each year, **WIGLE DANCE** sets the stage for transformation with the WIGAN BOROUGH DANCE FESTIVAL - a crucible of creativity where children, young people, teachers, artists, and families come together in a shared celebration of movement and performance. This unique festival breaks down barriers, unites schools and community groups that might not typically collaborate, and introduces dance artistry into new spaces. At its core, it elevates young people's aspirations, nurtures confidence, and ensures that every participant, no matter their stage of experience, has a place in the spotlight.

From Year 3 pupils taking their first steps alongside their teachers and classmates to early career artists refining their craft towards professional performance, the festival is a space where talent is nurtured, connections are forged, and a deep sense of community is strengthened. This people-powered approach makes the Wigan Borough Dance Festival one of the most dynamic and inclusive youth dance platforms in the country.

Beyond the festival stage, **WIGLE DANCE** empowers young people to take pride in their hometown, inspiring them to use creativity as a force for change. Initiatives like LOOKING Up in *Leigh* ignite civic pride by encouraging young dancers to reimagine and transform local spaces - not just celebrating where they come from, but actively shaping its future.

By fusing dance with community activism, **WIGLE DANCE** kindles a movement where artistry meets action, young people find their voice, and the borough's creative heartbeat grows ever stronger.



Over the past five years, we've seen creativity take root and rise in unexpected places - on high streets and in heritage sites, in parks and libraries, in schools and shared spaces. Artists, communities and organisations across Wigan Borough have shown what's possible when imagination is given room to grow. Now, together, we make space for what comes next:

ROOM FOR DREAMING.

At its heart, this is about making space - physical, creative and emotional - for ideas to emerge, evolve and take shape. We will invest in the places that hold potential: from libraries and urban corners, such as the Turnpike Gallery, to green spaces and heritage buildings, transforming them into creative sanctuaries where people can make, perform, collaborate and experiment.

But space isn't only about bricks and mortar. It's also about time, trust and the freedom to imagine differently. We believe creativity needs oxygen - support, opportunity and the permission to take risks. By forging a borough where imagination is valued and creativity is empowered.

Our Commitments:

- Strategically invest in creative spaces, tools, and the people who bring them to life, ensuring that Wigan's cultural infrastructure supports both artistic ambition and creative excellence.
- Develop programmes and opportunities that nurture talent and support creative risk-taking, enabling artists and communities to experiment, collaborate, and innovate.
- Champion artistic fearlessness and remove barriers to participation, ensuring that everyone, regardless of background or experience, has the freedom to express themselves, dream big, and contribute to shaping Wigan's creative future.

Through these commitments, we'll ensure Wigan remains a place where big ideas take flight, artistic ambition is nurtured, and a more connected, sustainable and compassionate future can be imagined - and made real.



THICKSKIN THEATRE COMPANY OPENING DOORS TO FEARLESS CREATIVITY

THICKSKIN THEATRE COMPANY is a driving force in Wigan Borough's growing cultural ecology, working to raise creative ambition and excellence. Established in 2010, THICKSKIN has earned a national reputation for its bold, genre-defying theatre that blends physical performance with cinematic innovation. In 2022, they made the deliberate decision to move to Wigan - a place where their vision could take root and thrive, where creativity is valued, and where they could collaborate with others to shape the borough's future as a hub for artistic excellence.

Determined to challenge traditional theatre-making, **THICKSKIN** is helping to shape a creative future that is fearless, collaborative, and driven by young voices. Their work thrives on throwing open doors, inviting people in, and empowering the next generation of theatre-makers, performers, and creative professionals. This ethos is embodied in Generator, their performance company designed for young creatives aged 16 and over. Through mentorship, professional collaboration, and hands-on experience, Generator equips emerging artists with the tools, confidence, and ambition to carve out careers in the arts; ensuring that talent is not only discovered in Wigan but championed, developed, and retained.

THICKSKIN'S commitment to WIGAN aligns powerfully with the ROOM FOR DREAMING vision. They believe in making space - not just physical stages, but mental and creative space - for young people to think big, take risks, and reimagine what is possible. By transforming traditional spaces into dynamic, inclusive environments for devising, performing, and experimenting with physical theatre, they are helping to forge a future where artistic excellence thrives in the borough.

Through their work, **THICKSKIN** is igniting creativity, raising ambition, and working with the borough's cultural community to ensure that WIGAN is a place where world-class theatre is not just made but where the next generation of bold, fearless creatives can shape the future.



TMP COLLEGE CREATING SPACE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION OF INNOVATORS

As a distinguished Centre of Excellence for Inclusion, **TMP COLLEGE** is more than a place of learning, it is a creative force shaping Wigan Borough's future workforce. As the largest dedicated creative institution in the area, it is committed to removing barriers, unlocking potential, and ensuring that every individual has the space to explore, create, and dream without limits.

Within its expansive Wigan campus, TMP COLLEGE offers state-of-the-art facilities, including an e-sports arena, dance, recording, photography, media, art and SFX studios, rehearsal rooms, and a drama theatre. These spaces are more than classrooms; they are workshops for imagination, laboratories for artistic risk-taking, and launchpads for future careers.

TMP COLLEGE plays a vital role in Wigan's cultural ecology, working alongside local organisations, industry leaders, and creative initiatives to build a borough where talent is nurtured, ambition is encouraged, and innovation thrives. Education here is not just about acquiring skills; it is about crafting futures, forging identities, and shaping the cultural fabric of Wigan and beyond.

The college's ethos reflects the ambitions of ROOM FOR DREAMING - providing physical and mental space for young creatives to push boundaries, challenge conventions, and define their own paths. Through its commitment to inclusion, excellence, and fearless creativity, **TMP COLLEGE** is ensuring that the next generation of artists and innovators have the space and support to realise their boldest dreams.

LEIGH SPINNERS MILL WHERE HERITAGE IGNITES IMAGINATION



When the looms of **LEIGH SPINNERS MILL** fell silent after decades of industrial activity, few could have foreseen the creative transformation that would eventually fill its spacious interiors. This Grade II listed former cotton mill, once the beating heart of local industry, has woven a remarkable new chapter in its storied history.

Visit today and you'll find yourself in a diverse creative ecosystem. The lower floors pulse with activity as film enthusiasts gather at Leigh Film Factory's independent cinema, where the flicker of projectors has replaced the shuttle of looms. Nearby, the whir of 3D printers and the tap of keyboards provide a modern counterpoint at Leigh Hackspace, where digital dreamers turn code into creation. At the North West Computer Museum, children and adults alike stand wide-eyed before vintage machines, their fingers tracing the evolution of technology that changed our world.

On the upper floors, Creative Spin Studios has established a community of 24 artists whose varied practices enrich the building with creativity and skill. Natural light from the mill's large windows illuminates workspaces where artists transform ideas into exhibitions, products, and experiences.

These artists didn't simply move into the mill, they helped shape its destiny. Their collective vision led to the creation of the Horrocks Gallery and Project Space. The Horrocks family, recognising the importance of this vision, lent not just their name but their generous support to create a showcase for contemporary art that draws visitors from across the region. With Wigan Council's support, recent graduates now find their first professional studio space here, mentored by the established artists who remember their own early steps.

Throughout **LEIGH SPINNERS MILL**, industrial heritage and contemporary creativity exist side by side. The building that once housed manufacturing machinery now accommodates gallery visitors, collaborative maker spaces, and cinema audiences.

This is more than preservation, it's transformation. It's a story of renewal where the past actively contributes to the future.

LEIGH SPINNERS MILL represents a new kind of heritage woven from threads of memory and imagination, creating a tapestry that belongs to everyone and enriches the cultural fabric of Wigan Borough for generations to come.



CREATIVE PLACE

Supporting Progress with Unity Mission 2:

Make all our towns and neighbourhoods flourish

Across Wigan Borough, creativity and place are deeply connected; from the legacy of coalfields and cotton mills to the parks, town centres and neighbourhoods where communities continue to gather, make and celebrate. As we reimagine the borough for the future, culture has a vital role to play in how we drive regeneration and unlock local pride.

United by shared purpose, we shape the borough around us: **CREATIVE PLACE**.

This mission is about embedding creativity into the regeneration of our places, and recognising culture as a catalyst for economic renewal, investment and vibrancy. From Wigan and Leigh town centres to our canal sides, high streets and public spaces, we'll activate areas through cultural programming, public art and creative use of buildings, bringing energy and identity to the places people live and visit.

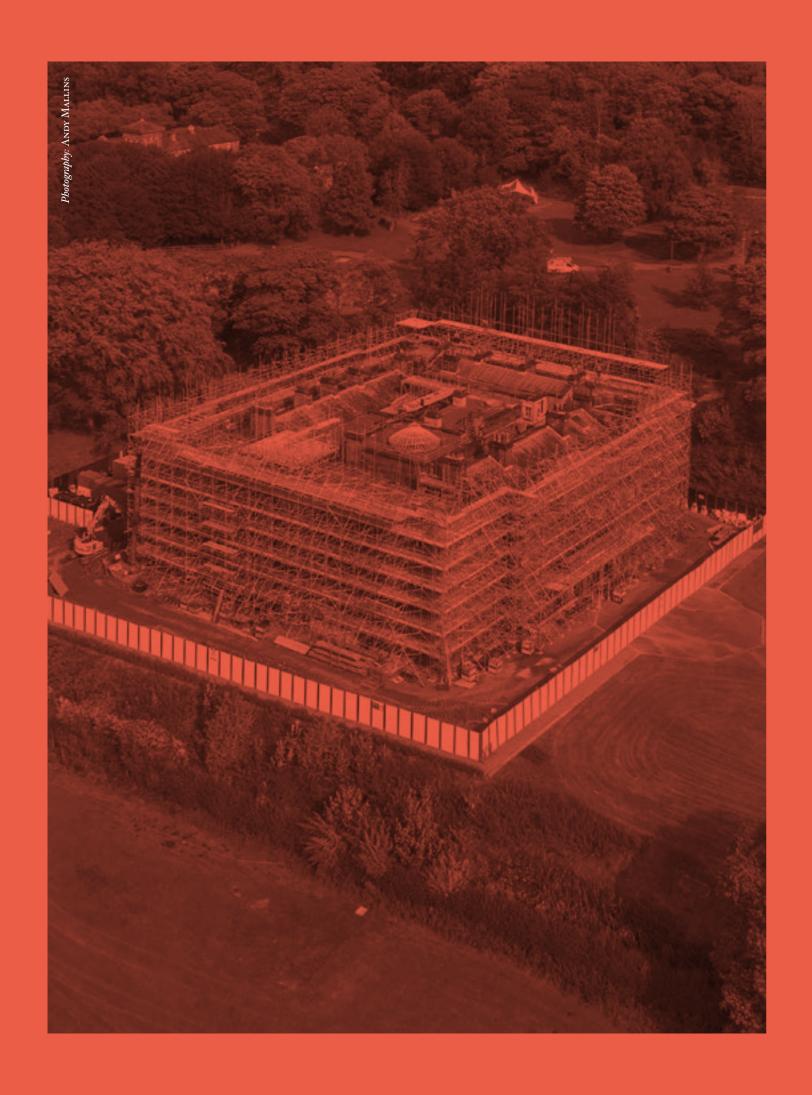
We'll harness the power of cultural activity to support the local economy: boosting footfall, supporting businesses, creating jobs, and attracting strategic investment. Through new cultural hubs, meanwhile uses, and destination venues like *HAIGH HALL*, creative placemaking will contribute directly to *Wigan's* inclusive growth.

As part of Wigan Borough's wider commitment to Community Wealth Building, we'll ensure that cultural investment delivers tangible local benefits by supporting independent businesses, employing local talent, and keeping creative spend within the borough. Through this approach, culture becomes more than expression - it becomes a force for building fairer local economies, where pride, opportunity and prosperity grow together.

OUR COMMITMENTS:

- Accelerate strategic investment to support the development of key capital projects and dynamic marketing campaigns that enhance the borough's creative offer and ensure longterm sustainability.
- Enrich the borough's cultural identity, celebrating its unique heritage, creative spaces, and diverse cultural experiences for both residents and visitors.
- Boost tourism and investment, developing marketing strategies to attract visitors, engage audiences, and expand the economic impact of *Wigan Borough's* creative industries.

Through these commitments, we'll build a borough where creativity and culture drive regeneration, making our places more distinctive, more dynamic, and full of life and opportunity.



HAIGH HALL A CULTURAL LANDMARK FOR A NEW ERA

Together, we are creating a new chapter for Wigan Borough; one that places culture, heritage, and ambition at its heart. The transformation of **HAIGH HALL** is a shining example of this vision, firmly putting the borough on the cultural map. A jewel in Wigan's crown, **HAIGH HALL** holds deep significance for local people, and its ambitious regeneration will ensure it becomes a world-class destination for generations to come.

At the centre of this transformation is a commitment to delivering a cultural and heritage site of international significance, where visitors will experience world-class art while engaging with WIGAN's rich history. Through multi-disciplinary partnerships, the project will bring together artists, historians, and cultural leaders to create a space where creativity, heritage and the natural environment intertwine. Major exhibitions, immersive experiences, and educational programmes will make HAICH HALL a beacon of cultural excellence, strengthening WIGAN's identity as a bold and forward-thinking creative borough.

More than a restoration, this is a reimagining - one that preserves the past while forging a dynamic cultural future. The surrounding landscapes will be brought to life with performances, public art, and new opportunities for communities to engage with the site in meaningful ways. As one of the most ambitious heritage projects in the North West, **HAICH HALL'S** revival is a defining moment in Wigan's journey towards a new, shared cultural strategy.

This project embodies the commitments of The Forge, ensuring that Wigan's cultural infrastructure drives investment, attracts visitors, and enhances the borough's creative landscape. Through this work, **HAIGH HALL** will once again stand as a proud symbol of Wigan's cultural ambition, where history, art, environmentalism and innovation come together to inspire the future.



WIGAN'S CREATIVE INDUSTRIES CAPITAL ASSET STRATEGY A BLUEPRINT FOR GROWTH

In a former textile mill in Leigh, where steam engines once powered looms, a different kind of energy now glows.

Across Wigan Borough, similar sparks of creativity are being kindled as historic buildings find new life as studios, galleries and performance spaces.

Spotting the need to fan these flames, WIGAN COUNCIL teamed up with Arts COUNCIL ENGLAND and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority in March 2024. They brought in We Made That to craft a Creative Industries Capital Asset Strategy that builds on 'The Fire Within' and outlines a blueprint for how WIGAN can cultivate the spaces needed to support and sustain its cultural and creative activities over the next ten years.

The strategy takes a good look at what spaces we already have and what we need, mapping everything from historic buildings to community hubs. It picks out priority developments for the next decade and works out how to measure both community benefits and economic returns.

One exciting ambition is to position WIGAN as a production powerhouse for the region. By creating the right spaces for creative businesses to cluster together, the borough aims to attract investment, create good jobs, and keep homegrown talent from drifting away to bigger cities.

This approach isn't just about helping artists and cultural groups. When an old building gets a new creative purpose, it breathes life back into town centres, brings customers to local shops, and makes the borough a better place to live.

The strategy not only creates a plan for future investment in the facilities the creative sector needs locally, but it will also help strengthen Wigan's role and purpose in the wider region, turning creative potential into lasting value for everyone.



A NEW HERITAGE Supporting Progress with Unity Mission 2:

Make all our towns and neighbourhoods flourish

Across *Wigan Borough*, our past lives on, in the stories we share, the buildings we remember, and the places that continue to shape our communities today. Our rich and complex heritage is a source of pride, identity and belonging - offering both reflection and inspiration for the future.

Through shared endeavour, we look ahead to shape: **A NEW HERITAGE**.

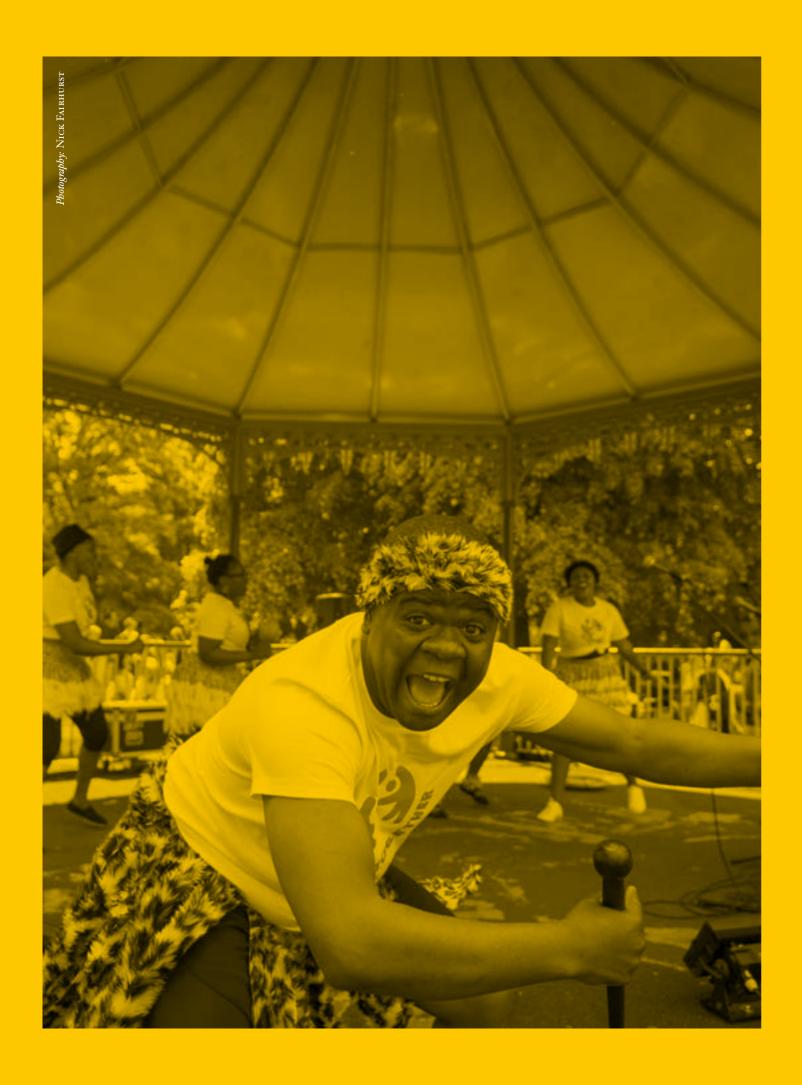
This mission is rooted in pride, memory and possibility, honouring the past while making space for new voices, diverse perspectives and evolving identities. We'll challenge outdated narratives and celebrate the many layers of cultural life that define who we are today.

Through Wigan's Creative Industries Capital Asset Strategy, we'll unlock the potential of heritage spaces; repurposing buildings for cultural use, and supporting their role as creative anchors for community and enterprise. Sites like Haigh Hall, Leigh Spinners Mill, and the Wigan Pier Quarter will continue to grow as vibrant cultural hubsplaces where history, creativity and community come together.

Our Commitments:

- Uncover and illuminate *Wigan Borough's* rich history and diverse heritage through dedicated research and dynamic storytelling, incorporating these narratives into our capital projects and cultural initiatives.
- Ensure our heritage continues to evolve and represents all communities within the Borough.
- Actively celebrate *Wigan's* past and present through programming, events, and dedicated spaces.
- Foster a collective identity that honours our roots while guiding our journey forward together.

Through these commitments, we'll build a new kind of heritage; one that reflects who we are, values every story, and lays the foundations for a future we'll be proud to pass on.



EVERYTHING HUMAN RIGHTSKINDLING CULTURAL CONNECTIONS IN LEIGH

In the heart of Leigh, **EVERYTHING HUMAN RIGHTS** began with a quiet determination that has gradually transformed the cultural landscape of Wigan Borough. Community cohesion stands at the centre of their mission, encouraged through a diverse range of cultural activities.

Where migrant communities previously stood apart, **EVERYTHING HUMAN RIGHTS** has cultivated meaningful collaborations, creating spaces where cultures meet and blend naturally. Their thoughtful approach has gently warmed the boundaries between different traditions, shaping new forms of community cohesion that prove both resilient and adaptable.

Their workshops, events, and celebrations serve as catalysts for cultural exchange, breathing life into Wigan Borough's ambition to become a truly creative place. By tempering differences with respect and understanding, EVERYTHING HUMAN RIGHTS has become an essential contributor to *The Forge's* vision for the future.

Through their efforts, more open exchanges of culture have been facilitated throughout the borough. The group's work demonstrates that fostering understanding and mutual respect across communities isn't possible without such meaningful partnerships.

As Wigan Borough continues to shape its cultural identity, EVERYTHING HUMAN RIGHTS illuminates how grassroots community groups can transform diverse experiences into something beautiful and enduring—a masterpiece of human connection shaped by creativity and compassion.



ARCHIVES WIGAN & LEIGH GUARDIANS OF MEMORY

At the heart of WIGAN BOROUGH'S cultural landscape stands **ARCHIVES**: **WIGAN & LEIGH**, a treasure trove that actively breathes life into the community's collective memory rather than simply preserving the past.

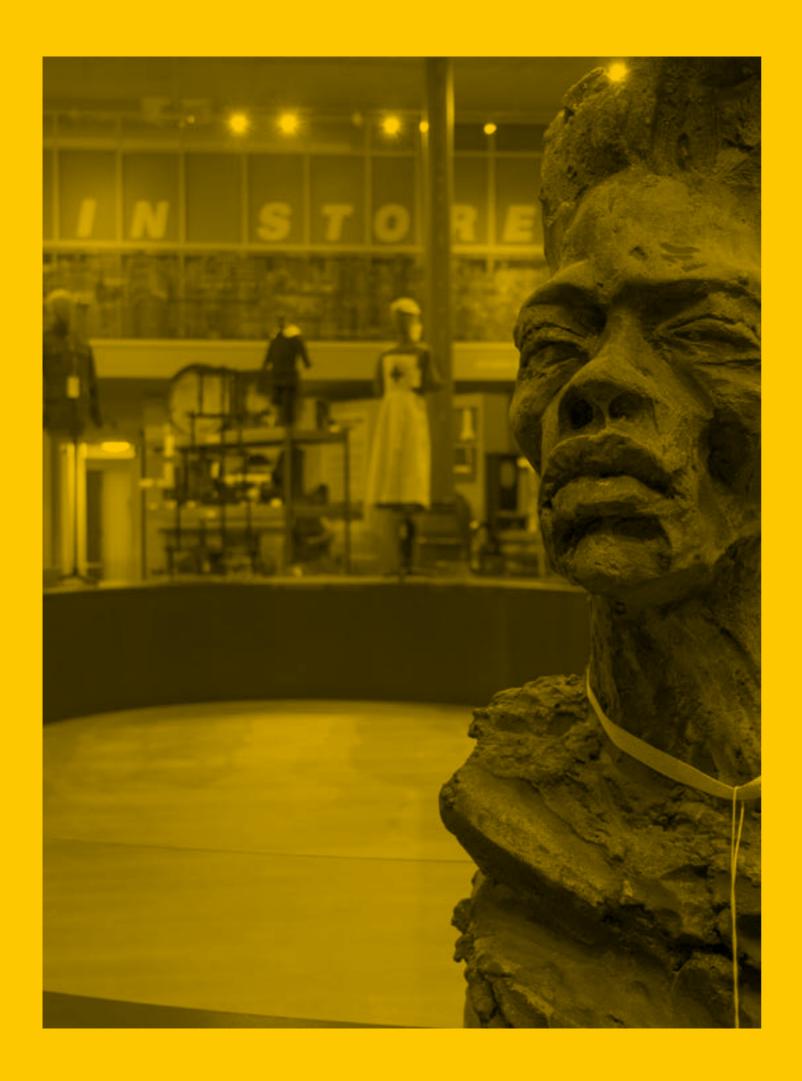
Care home manager LORRAINE HARRIS booked a series of reminiscence workshops for her residents, where they were offered a multi-sensory experience in which they handled replicas of archival documents, played long-forgotten games, and discussed the memories these objects stimulated. 'It's brilliant to get the group together to remember.'

Whilst service users of local autism charity
True Colours investigated the life of
Leigh-born scientist Kathleen Mary
Drew Baker at the archives, and, through
eight digital workshops, created a short film
about her life using stop-motion animation.

This approach exemplifies the **ARCHIVES**' transformation into a dynamic cultural hub. They actively seek out previously underrepresented narratives, ensuring diverse communities see their experiences reflected in the historical record. From *Windrushera* migration stories to the *Wigan Pride* collection, the Archives ensures heritage evolves with the community it serves.

Their work extends beyond their walls through partnerships with local schools, community centres, and cultural hubs. Interactive workshops, travelling exhibitions, and digital initiatives make historical materials accessible to all residents regardless of age, ability, or location.

By preserving yesterday's evidence while creating innovative ways to share these stories today, **ARCHIVES: WIGAN & LEIGH** demonstrates how heritage can honour roots while guiding the journey forward, creating a shared identity that belongs to everyone in WIGAN BOROUGH.



WIGAN MUSEUM IGNITING CONNECTIONS WITH THE PAST

In a beautifully restored Victorian building at the centre of town sits **WIGAN MUSEUM**, a cultural cornerstone approaching its 150th anniversary. Like a well-tended hearth, this museum has warmed generations of visitors with stories that illuminate both the borough's rich heritage and its evolving identity.

The museum's collection, carefully curated artefacts from Roman coins to industrial machinery, serves as kindling for community engagement. Recent exhibitions have sparked conversations between generations with large, themed displays on *Rugby League and music in the borough*. The latest exhibition 'What's in Store' is giving visitors the opportunity to explore the collection and find hidden gems amongst over 850 objects.

At its core, **WIGAN MUSEUM** is guided by the belief that everybody should have the opportunity to learn about their past. With an engaging schools and events programme it strives to be a space where everyone can come together, foster relationships and feel empowered to play an active part in their collective future.

The museum offer extends beyond its building with mini exhibitions and events held in libraries and community centres, ensuring that those who cannot visit in person still connect with their heritage. Digital initiatives such as the *New Perspective* project further extend its reach. This focuses on re-interpreting the collection from the perspective of young people not currently engaging, and translates these new narratives in digital format to further increase the depth, reach and relevance of the museum's work.

By preserving and displaying objects that reflect both WIGAN BOROUGH's history and present day, **WIGAN MUSEUM** plays a vital role in shaping and celebrating a new heritage for our borough.



The Fire Within: The Forge, is a co-owned strategy framework that the Cultural Partnership will use as a delivery model, with distributed leadership making best use of the expertise represented by each sector and partner.

Monitoring and evaluation will also be overseen by the Cultural Partnership, with data collected, analysed, and shared against a number of parameters on a Theory of Change model.

Findings from an evaluation of the original five-year The Fire Within cultural manifesto, undertaken by Counter Culture, have also been fed into future work and include the following key opportunities and priorities:

- I. Maintaining investment through coordinated fundraising activity
- 2. Continued focus on youth voices and cultural opportunities for children and young people
- 3. Continuing to invest in talent locally and providing spaces for it to thrive
- 4. Consolidating and building on existing collaborations and partnerships
- 5. Deep community consultation to hear clearly what residents want from programmes

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

www.thefirewithin.org.uk