



Introduction: Our Journey so Far...

In **2019** we launched the borough's 5-year cultural manifesto **The Fire Within**.

Key aims:

- Attracting external investment into the borough
- Strengthen and grow our artists and cultural organisations
- Increase resident engagement in high quality cultural opportunities, including children and young people, in line with their needs and interests.

The manifesto also supports delivery of key objectives linked to health and wellbeing, economy and tourism.

Despite the impact of the pandemic in 2020 and 2021, work delivered in Years 1-4, have made a significant contribution to our long-term aims.



Attracting External Investment

Over £34.3M external investment secured for the borough:

Year 1

£1.992M

ACE project funds, GMCA, Haigh NLHF

Year 2

£1.939M

Cultural Recovery Fund, ACE, Historic England

Year 3

£1.922M

CPP, ACE, GMCA, WEUROs, Community Ownership Fund, NLHF

Year 4

£175k

UK Shared Prosperity Fund

£3.78M

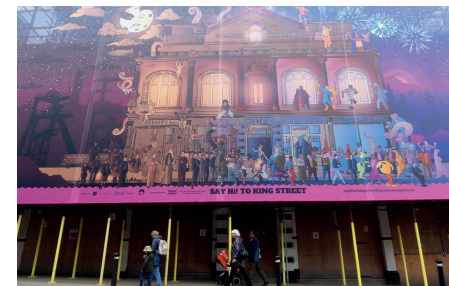
Haigh Woodland Park NLHF

£4.5M

ACE National Portfolio Organisations: Curious Minds, The Old Courts, Thick Skin Theatre and Get it Loud in Libraries.

£20M

Haigh Hall Levelling Up Fund



Strengthen and Grow Cultural Sector

Priority Place

Arts Council England has nominated Wigan Borough as one of only seven 'Priority Places' in the North West, to improve investment and cultural engagement, to see our towns thrive.

As part of their plan for achieving Let's Create, ACE has prioritised working with Wigan (and 53 places nationally) from 2021 to 2024.

National Portfolio Organisations

Four NPOs for Wigan Borough announced in November 2022, bringing £4.5M investment from 2023-26, keeping talented local people in creative jobs.

Infrastructure

Haigh Hall & Woodland Park, Archives: Wigan & Leigh, Heritage Action Zones (Wigan & Tyldesley), Leigh Spinner's Mill, Wigan Pier, Creative People & Places, Future High Street Fund.

Partnerships

Cultural Partnership Steering Group, LCEP (Culture Unlocked), GMCA, MIF (skills development), Consortias for CPP and HAZ (plus funders).



Increasing Engagement – Creative People and Places

Down To Earth is a three-year programme of activities across the borough, prioritising deprived communities.

We will invite residents to shape and create art and culture, focussing on the borough's green spaces and community spaces as sites for cultural engagement by:

- Meeting cultural needs and appetites, no matter the starting point
- Taking people on a journey from observer, to shaper and advocate
- Building new audiences for art and culture in Wigan

The project will consist of 4 strands:

Stepping Stones:

co-created deeply engaging work

Paths of Discovery:

local, light touch and easy to access interventions

Moments of Joy:

large-scale collective celebration

Legacy:

long-term development opportunities



Increasing Engagement

Since the inception of the Cultural Manifesto, there has been opportunities for residents to participate and enjoy exceptional arts and cultural programmes.

Over 3,000 children and young people were involved in **cultural education** projects in Year 1.

Over 80,000 people engaged in 2021 including **Wigan & Leigh Arts Festival** (attracted 6,000 attendees across 60 arts and cultural events and activities) and **Light Night** which brought 30,000 visitors to see Luke Jerram's Floating Earth at Pennington Flash, with a further 4,500 visitors attending the light trail at Wigan Pier.

In 2022 the **Women's EURO** art and heritage programmes saw 3,438 local participants engage with some of the best international artists, including the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. With an audience of 23,000 across events, including fan parties.

Culture team are also supporting the development of a **Visitor Strategy** for Wigan Borough.



Changing Perceptions

Wigan is now on the cultural map...

All of the work to date, has massively increased the profile of Wigan Borough, and changed perceptions. We are a place for the cultural sector to thrive and for residents and visitors to engage in high quality activity.

Positive media coverage for The Fire Within, sector partners and projects.

Next Steps

Year 4

Every Community Needs A Stage, saw a second iteration of the Light Night event, with a free family light festival and innovative new exhibitions at venues across the borough including the Museum of Wigan Life and the Turnpike Gallery.

Year 5

A New Heritage will see a blueprint completed that will plan for development in the next 10 years, repurposing significant heritage sites for cultural use. We will also start work to support our night-time economy, through UK



The Cultural Manifesto is seen as an exemplar of working with the cultural sector to develop and deliver projects.



SPF funding and capitalise on our Northern Soul heritage.

The Cultural Partnership Steering Group has started work to revise The Fire Within manifesto aims and objectives through to 2030.

To find out more about Wigan Borough's
cultural manifesto please visit:
www.thefirewithin.org.uk