

## **Million-pound investment pot up for grabs once again**

A further £1.5m is up for grabs for local people in Wigan Borough as the council bucks the trend and continues to invest in its communities.

The latest investment will bring Wigan Council's total investment in community groups and organisations to £9m since 2013.

From helping to get people into work, to improving their health and reducing social isolation, the Deal for Communities Investment Fund has provided a lifeline to hundreds of residents since it was introduced.

To date more than 180 projects have secured funding, ranging from £400 to £400,000, with the shared goal of making Wigan Borough a better place for its residents and businesses.

On Monday 4<sup>th</sup> September the million-pound pot will open for bids once again and community groups are being urged to submit their ideas for a slice of the money.

The funding forms part of The Deal, the informal contract between the council and residents including a commitment from both sides to work together to make the borough a better place.

The Bridge café in Leigh had £61,348 in funding last year. Frank Bowker from The Bridge said: "We at The Bridge at Leigh really appreciate the massive help and support given to us by Donna Hall and The Deal team at Wigan Council. Enabling us to deliver our mission of re-imagining communities, making a difference to people's lives, helping reduce food poverty and food waste.

"With their support we have been able to deliver our project of a Community Café, food market and charity shop and enable us to develop our project further to create a Recovery Hub for Leigh. We would like to thank all the Wigan Council staff for their personal support, they have been amazing."

Dave Hanbury, Chair of Friends of Haigh Woodland Park, had £37,000 from the fund and said: "We've had money from The Deal for the last few years which has enabled us to put on community events at Haigh Woodland Park such as the brass band concert and this year we'll be doing a bigger and better forties event. It's enabled us to do things with the public that wouldn't have been possible otherwise and it's been great."

Tom Flower, Head of Community for Wigan Community Athletic Trust, said: "We have been very fortunate to benefit from two rounds of the fund. Firstly to run a mentoring project for 120 vulnerable young people to get them involved in sport and education and secondly to fund a health champions project with 90 young people to give them the skills to challenge negative health behaviours amongst their friends and family."

Councillor Chris Ready, cabinet member for communities, said: "We are delighted to be able to support so many of our local groups and organisations. We face many

different social issues and we know local people are best placed with the knowledge and connections to help us tackle them.

“It is overwhelming to hear stories from local groups about the difference this money has made so far.

“It is not a loan but an investment. For every penny we are investing we are seeing real results and in five years we will have made our money back.

“Every year we are inspired by the bids and by how many people want to make our borough a better place. We are so proud of the difference The Deal is making.”

£500,000 from the fund will be allocated to groups that have ideas to get people in Wigan Borough active in their communities.

Cllr Ready continued: “This will support people of all ages to have access to some basic physical activity or activities to get them out and about in the community.

“There are also the added social and mental health benefits of being involved in a club and meeting new people.

“Just doing some gentle physical exercise can have enormous health benefits and we want to make it easier for people to access services.”

To find out more about how to access support and how to apply for the Deal for Communities Investment Fund visit [www.wigan.gov.uk/thedeal](http://www.wigan.gov.uk/thedeal)

Ends

Photo attached: Cllr Chris Ready, Donna Hall and Lord Peter Smith with groups that have been given funding from the Deal for Communities Investment Fund.

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