



#OurFutureAshton

Summer 2026

What's included in this edition?

- Welcome
- Town Centre update
- Made in Makerfield campaign
- Call Out for Your Stories
- Building Grants Scheme
- Public Artwork Update

Welcome

Welcome to the summer edition of the #OurFutureAshton newsletter, which provides updates for residents, businesses and visitors on the exciting work being undertaken in Ashton town centre. We've had a very busy few months since the previous newsletter, with work commencing in February on the Ashton Square and public realm improvement schemes and this is now progressing quickly across the town centre. More of our successful business grants applicants have completed their improvements, with others due to finish over the coming weeks and months. For more information on the Ashton project please visit: www.wigan.gov.uk/OurFutureAshton.

Town Centre Update

The upgrades to Albert Street and Garswood Street car parks have now been completed, and both car parks are open for use. Street lighting is still to be installed on both car parks.



Limited waiting of 3 hours will be introduced on Garswood Street car park later this summer. You will need a ticket to stay for the 3 hours, but the car park will remain free of charge. Works across Gerard Street, Garswood Street and Market Square are progressing well, including improvements to public spaces, pedestrian routes and highway infrastructure. As part of the wider programme, improvements to pedestrian access and safety just outside of the town centre are due to start from 20th July:

- Off-road path improvements between Ashton Bowling Club and Old Road.
- Liverpool Road toucan crossing, outside St Oswald's Church.
- Bolton Road and Bryn Road South pedestrian crossing.

The timing of the works has been scheduled to align with school holidays and term time periods where possible, helping to minimise disruption for pupils, parents, residents, businesses and road users. The ongoing work has inevitably caused some disruption, but this is being kept to a minimum and we thank you for your patience and encourage everyone to continue to support all the businesses in the town centre, as they remain open throughout the work.



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Made in Makerfield – Ashton Square

An all-new brand is being launched for Ashton Square celebrating local pride, heritage and community. As work continues to bring Ashton Square to life, we are pleased to share more about the new brand identity being developed for the square.

The brand has been created by Dave Sedgwick from Studio DBD and has been shaped by

Ashton's history, its people and the stories that make the town special. Rather than creating something generic, the aim has been to develop an identity that feels unmistakably Ashton: proud, down-to-earth, practical, welcoming and full of character.



Dave shared: “The inspiration behind the brand comes from Ashton-in-Makerfield’s strong working-class heritage and its long tradition of making, fixing and getting on with things. From coal mining and metalwork to textiles, markets and local industry, Ashton-in-Makerfield has always been a place shaped by skill, hard work and quiet determination. This has influenced the visual identity in a number of ways. The bold Ashton Square lettering has been designed to feel strong, crafted and confident, with subtle details inspired by mechanical forms, handmade components and the town’s history of hinge-making. It reflects the idea of something built to last, while still feeling open and welcoming. Local traditions have also played an important role. Walking Day, which has been a historic part of Ashton-in-Makerfield’s community life, has inspired ribbon-like elements within the brand. These ribbons reflect movement, celebration, craft and gathering, helping to connect the new square with memories and traditions that are deeply rooted in the town. The colour palette also brings together Ashton-in-Makerfield’s past and future. It draws from coal, metal, brick and industry, while introducing brighter colours that represent positivity, change and celebration. The result is a brand that balances grit with warmth: bold and confident, but also friendly, vibrant and made for people.”



Community involvement has also been central to the process. The Ashton Innovation Board considered the emerging ideas at meetings in November 2025 and February 2026, helping to shape the direction of the brand and make sure it reflected the views, ideas and character of the local community. Feedback from those discussions was clear. People spoke honestly

about the square needing renewal, care and fresh energy, but also about Ashton-in-Makerfield’s friendliness, warmth, independence, local pride and strong sense of community. When asked what Ashton Square should become, the words that came through most strongly were welcoming, safe and vibrant.

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This community input helped define the brand's central idea:

Ashton Square should be a proud, local and vibrant heart for the town. A place where people feel welcome, where something is always happening, and where local stories, events, businesses and everyday moments can be celebrated.

One of the key campaign ideas within the brand is “Made in Makerfield”. This phrase captures both Ashton-in-Makerfield’s making heritage and the role local people will play in shaping Ashton Square’s future. It can be used to celebrate makers, creators, musicians, bakers, traders, community champions and the people whose stories help give Ashton-in-Makerfield’s its identity. The brand is designed to grow over time. It is not just a logo or a set of colours, but a way of telling Ashton-in-Makerfield’s story and inviting people to be part of what happens next. As the Square develops, the identity will help showcase local pride, support events and markets, and create a strong sense of place for residents, businesses and visitors.

Call Out for Your Stories!

As part of the Made in Makerfield campaign we are asking for your help. We want to bring to life the area by showcasing stories and identifying local personalities or characters from the past or present. If you have any stories you want to share or if you want to let us know who you think represents Ashton-in-Makerfield best, please send us your thoughts and ideas to:

info@ashtonsquare.co.uk **using the subject – AIM stories** and we’ll do our best to include as many ideas and people as possible.

Building Grants Scheme Update:

The building grants scheme has moved along swiftly since our last newsletter update, with ten projects either completed or nearing completion. The results have been transformational for several buildings in the town centre. Ten businesses have now completed their shop front



improvements, with more businesses on site or starting on site soon. Key milestones include: the completion of the central corbel block on Hel’s Kitchen which has been missing for years, removing the cladding from the NatWest Building and improving the

shop frontages of Indulge Hair, Pound Plus and Jam Bar amongst others. We hope to move onto our final projects in the next few months.

We have also continued to work with Creative Heritage to launch a bi-monthly blog post that delves into the history and heritage of the buildings in the scheme. If you’re interested in finding out more, about the history of Ashton, please visit our [Building History Blog](#).

To keep up to date with progress on our regeneration proposals and to subscribe to these newsletters, please visit: www.wigan.gov.uk/OurFutureAshton

Public Artwork Update

The Our Future Ashton Public Art Project is progressing well, with five artists now appointed to create new work for key locations across Ashton town centre, launching from this summer. The programme has been shaped in partnership with a local Public Art Panel of residents and creatives, alongside engagement with local schools and a programme of workshops for families. The panel met recently at St Thomas' Church in Ashton where they were able to meet some of the artists and joined in making some pottery pieces that will be incorporated into one of the final art pieces. A pop-up art studio and gallery is also now open in Greensway Indoor Market, where regular drop-in sessions over the next four months will give local residents the chance to get involved and help shape the artwork too.



The pop-up space is called the Art Corner and will be run by Tasha from Outhouse, who we introduced you to in the last newsletter. Tasha has been appointed as the project manager for the upcoming commissions and will be working with Studio DBD to ensure the branding links in nicely with Ashton Square. You will also be able to access further info via the Ashton Square Instagram @ashton.square.

A highlight of the project so far, is a collaborative ceramic mural by artist Carrie Reichardt, celebrating Ashton's heritage and communities – and everyone is invited to take part! Carrie will be working in and with the community of Ashton to create a ceramic mural celebrating Ashton-in-Makerfield's rich heritage and communities.



Together with Outhouse and hosted by the Everyday Wigan team, we invite you to **drop in any time from 11am - 2pm every Saturday from 4th July and Thursdays from 13th July to 5th September** to make your own ceramic tile, like the ones pictured. There is a cut-off date for the community tiles for the mural which is **8th August** and after this it will be an open ceramic space led by Everyday Wigan. No previous pottery experience is necessary; we will guide you through the whole process and all materials will be provided.

You can just turn up or book your slot by emailing:

OurFutureAshton@wigan.gov.uk using the subject **Public Art** and we will email you a link to book on.

Residents are also invited to share artwork they are proud of for display in the Greensway space – please send submissions to Tasha at Outhouse: outhousemcr@gmail.com.

The project team is looking forward to working with the community to help shape the future artwork that will brighten Ashton for years to come.