HIGHFIELD CLEAN & GREEN

Highfield Memorial and Community Garden

Public consultation on unused church land at the end of Foundry Lane, Highfield

Friday 2nd October – Friday 16 October 2026

Prepared by Highfield Clean & Green, with the support of Wigan West PCC

Landowner: Wigan West PCC - St Matthew's Church, Highfield · Billinge Road Wigan WN3 6BL



Artist's impression of proposed Memorial Garden on Foundry Lane/Billinge Road

1. Who we are

Highfield Clean & Green began in June 2026, when Carl and Adele Cowpland started out as a small local litter-picking group on Facebook. As more ideas began to grow, we realised there was an opportunity to do much more for Highfield.

In August 2026 we formally became an Unincorporated Association and invited Kris Clarke to join the team as Treasurer. From the beginning we have wanted this to be a community group shaped by local people. We have plenty of ideas — but just as importantly, we want to hear yours.

On Thursday 24 September 2026 we held our first Meet & Greet, inviting residents to come along, meet us, share their thoughts and tell us what they would like to see happen in Highfield. This written consultation is the next step, so that everyone who could not be there still has a proper chance to comment on this specific project.

2. Why we are consulting now

At the Meet & Greet it was confirmed that this project has been allocated potential funding by Wigan council. The funded works must be completed and paid for by March 2027. That is a tight but achievable timetable, and this consultation is essential to evidence the support of the community and will be required by the council and other funding bodies.

It is important to note that no detailed construction drawings have been signed off, and no faculty petition has been submitted. We are publishing this outline now so that local knowledge, concerns and ideas can still shape the scheme before money is committed.

Sept 2026	**Oct 2-16th-2026**	**Oct 17-31st 2026**	**March 2027**
First public Meet & Greet; funding in principle confirmed	Public consultation and plans discussed with all parties	Plans finalised and budgeting completed	Funded works must be complete and paid for

3. The site

The land sits at the end of Foundry Lane, Highfield. It is owned by the church and managed by Wigan West PCC. It is currently an unused piece of church land. It is not proposed to disturb existing the historic setting of Grade II* listed St Matthew's Church.

The plot is large enough to support two distinct but connected areas, reached by two accessible routes into the garden. The existing iron fence would remain with repairs and restoration needed. The four large trees on the site would remain but require some amount of pruning.

The grass is currently maintained by the council, but weeds and other self-seeding plants have sprung up over time. Along with the unmaintained perimeter fence, the area appears unloved and overgrown.



The land sits at the end of Foundry Lane with Billinge Road along its length.

It is 35m (115ft) long, 18.5m (60ft) wide



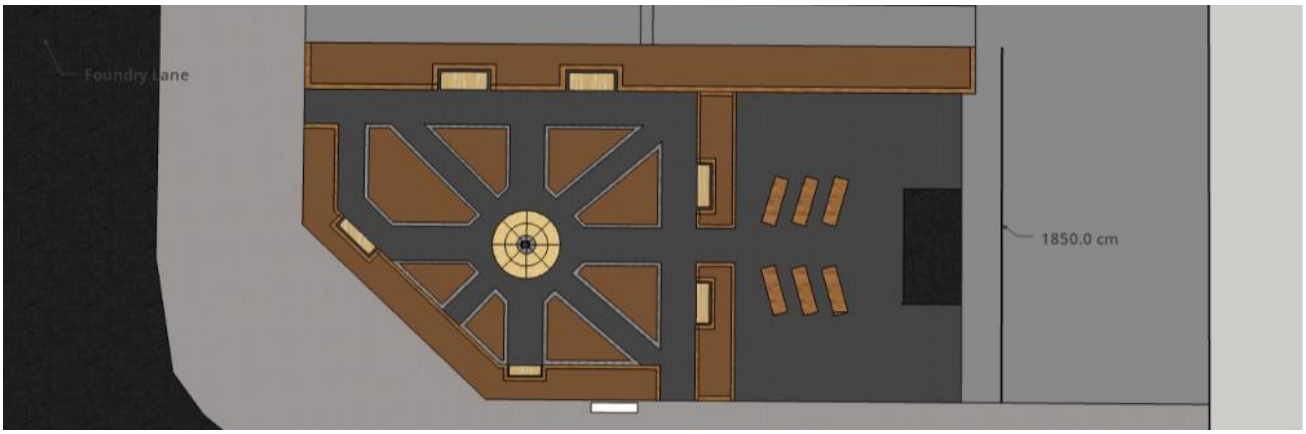
There are 3 large trees on the Billinge Road side and one backing on to Iona (Little Foxes). There are several self-seeded bushes that will be removed.

4. The proposal

The garden and space created will remain under the ownership and control of Wigan West PCC however the stewardship and maintenance of the new space would be assumed by Highfield Clean & Green with the help of the local community.

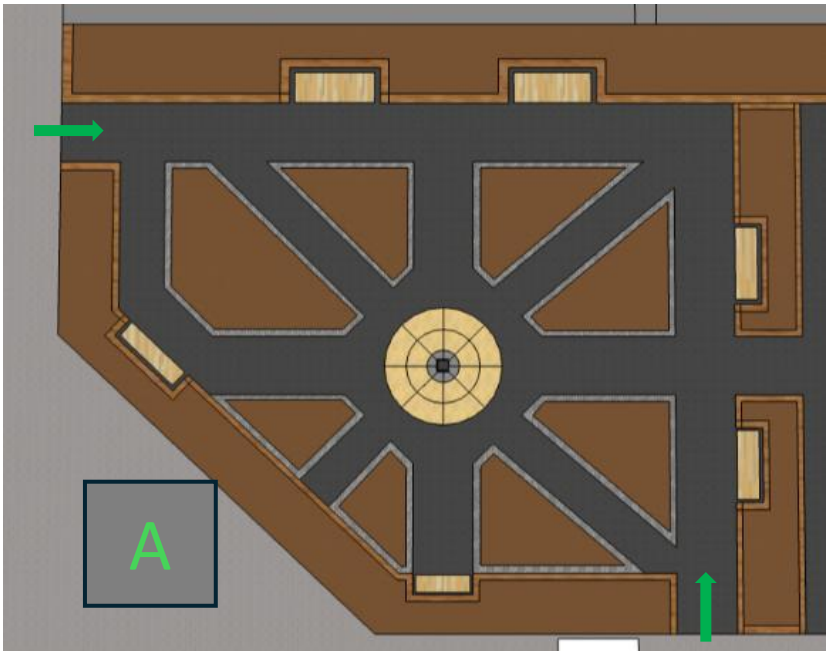
The whole emphasis of this space is to create a respectful connection to our communities: Highfield's deep-rooted history, its current life, and its future links with a wide range of local organisations. The aim is to bring Highfield and the surrounding communities together in a vibrant, multi-purpose and engaging garden.

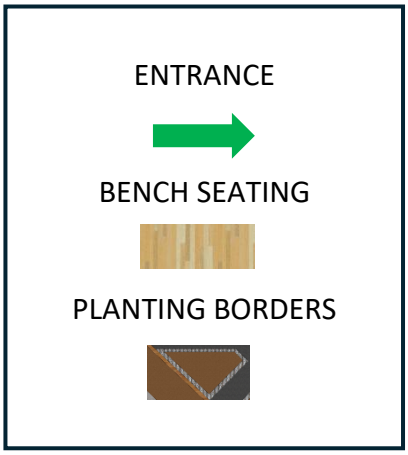
Because the area is quite large, the outline design splits the layout into two key areas.



Area A — Garden of Remembrance & Reflection

- Accessible intersecting pathways to a central focal point: the Ross Shoe Works war memorial mounted on a tiered circular plinth.
- Multiple raised flower borders and planting beds surround the memorial representing local organisations and heritage themes, so that each part of Highfield has a place in the garden.
- Storytelling signage and information boards mounted within the borders telling the story of Highfield
- Several benches facing the central point for people to sit, talk and reflect.



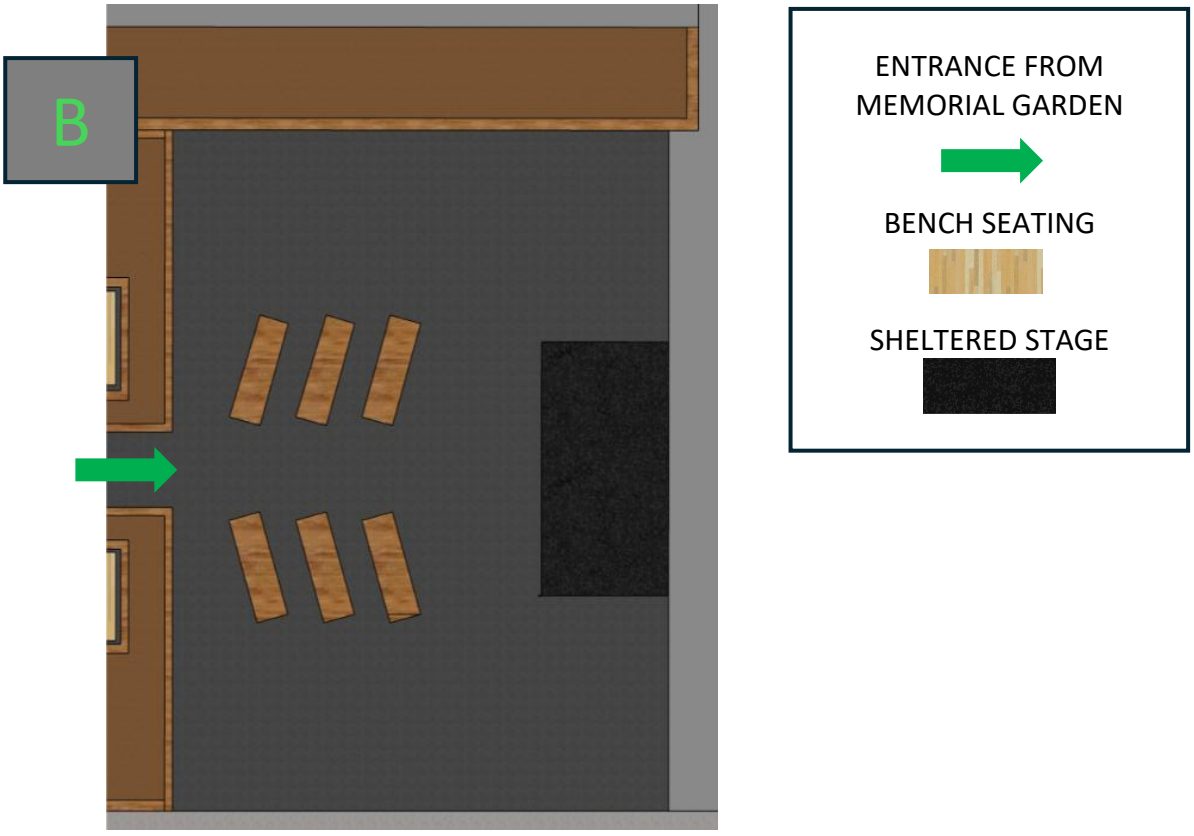


The dedicated borders proposed so far are:

Current Community Organisations	**Legacy & Heritage themes**
St Matthew's Church	The coal mining community and Pemberton Colliery
The Community Hall – Golden Years, Friendship Group	May Mill
Highfield St Matthew's Primary School	The Blundell family, who built St Matthew's
Friends of Pemberton Station	Boys Brigade
Uniformed organisations (Brownies and Guides)	Women's Fellowship
Highfield Cricket Club	Local farmers such as Akers, Kearsleys, and Wadsworths
Highfield Clean & Green	Winstanley Hall links
Volunteer Groups such as the Church Yard Group	

Area B — Community multipurpose outdoor space and a place for nature

- An open space, surrounded by faithful planting, for the community to use as an outdoor space for meeting, learning and group work such as the local art group, school groups, yoga group, the friendship group.
- This space could also be utilised by out of area groups such as Pemberton Brass Band for performances, ceremonial events, and armature dramatics.
- Weather-proof double sided permanent seating would be built and initially guide the users' eye towards the stage area but can be used as face-to-face seating for social interaction.
- A small, covered stage, with a simple roof that could be used for teaching and learning, performing, and ceremonial occasions.
- Multiple safe spaces for nature such as elevated bird boxes and feeders, micro-habitats and wildflower planting for birds, bees, butterflies and other insects.



What we will create, keep, repair or leave out

- Two accessible routes into the garden, keeping the current entrance on the Eastern side from Foundry Lane, while introducing a new second entrance on the Northern side, from Billinge Road.
- The iron fence will remain in place. It will be refurbished and repainted black in-keeping with modern heritage themes.
- The four large trees will remain. They will be carefully pruned for safety and to improve the visual aspect.
- There will be no night-time lighting and no electrical installation however we may look at solar lighting in the future.

5. Matters we need your help with

The outline above is a starting point, not a finished plan. We particularly want to hear about:

- Whether you support this proposal of a two-area layout, and how the balance between remembrance, reflection and community use should feel.
- Which organisations or heritage themes should have a dedicated border — including any we have missed.
- How the covered stage should be used, and any limits you would want on events.
- Access from Foundry Lane and the churchyard, including for wheelchairs, pushchairs and people with limited mobility.
- Privacy for neighbouring homes, parking, and respect for people visiting.
- Who would help look after the garden after March 2027, once the funded works are complete.

6. How this consultation works

This is a community consultation run by Highfield Clean & Green, with the agreement of Wigan West PCC as manager of the land.

We welcome responses from anyone who lives, works, worships, learns or has a family connection with Highfield, Pemberton or the parish of St Matthew's.

Opens	Friday 2nd October 2026
Drop-in session	Thursday 8th October 2026, 10.00am – 12.30pm Community Hall, Billinge Road. Plans will be on display. Tea and coffee served, then a walk down to the area in question to discuss layout and answer any questions.
Closes	Friday 16th October 2026 at 5.00pm
Funding deadline	Funded works must be completed and paid for by March 2027

7. How to give your views

1. **Complete the questionnaire** attached and return it to one of the team. The easiest way is to complete it online at www.highfieldcleanandgreen.co.uk/consultation
2. **Come to the drop-in** on Thursday 8th October 2026, 10.00am – 12.30pm.
3. **Write to Highfield Clean & Green,** marking your envelope or email "Foundry Lane Memorial Garden". To 6 Ripley Drive, Highfield Wigan WN3 6AJ – or email to highfieldcleanandgreen@gmail.com
4. **Speak to a member of Highfield Clean & Green,** after Sunday 10.30am Service on 11th October, we will be at the church café after the service.

You do not have to give your name. If you do, we will only use it to understand the response and, if you ask us to, to keep you informed. We will not publish individual names.

8. What happens after the closing date

1. Every response will be read and summarised for Highfield Clean & Green and Wigan West PCC.
2. A short “findings note” will be displayed online and in church and made available on request.
3. The outline design will then be refined so that funded works can be specified, budgeted and carried out before March 2027.
4. Any faculty application for the physical relocation of the Ross Shoe Works will have their own public notices.

Thank you for taking the time to help shape this garden. Highfield Clean & Green exists because local people wanted to do more than pick litter. This land at the end of Foundry Lane is a chance to put that ambition into the ground — respectfully, together, and in time for the next generation to enjoy.

Highfield Clean & Green · Carl, Adele and Kris

With Wigan West PCC · September 2026

Consultation questionnaire

Highfield Memorial and Community Garden · Please return by Friday 16 November 2026.

Your name (optional)

Your address or street (optional — this helps us know if you are a close neighbour)

Email or telephone if you would like to be kept informed (optional)

1. What is your connection with Highfield? (tick all that apply)

☐	I live nearby	☐	I worship at St Matthew's
☐	I have family buried in the churchyard	☐	I already help Highfield Clean & Green
☐	I am linked to the school, hall, cricket club	☐	Other (please say below)

If 'Other', please tell us

2. Do you support the development of this land into a Memorial and Community Garden?

☐	Yes
☐	No

3. Do you agree that developing two separate areas is the best use of the large space available?

☐	Yes
☐	No

4. Do you support the development of the footpaths as identified on the plan?

☐	Yes
☐	No

5. Do you support the development of the planted borders as illustrated in the plan?

☐	Yes
☐	No

6. Which other features within the plan do you support? (tick all that you support)

Feature	YES
War memorial on a circular plinth	☐
Dedicated organisation / heritage borders	☐

Two accessible routes into the garden	☐
Benches for sitting and reflection	☐
Wildlife-friendly features and planting	☐
Stage area for teaching, performance and ceremony	☐
Refurbishing and repainting the iron fence	☐
Outdoor classroom / meeting space	☐
Storytelling signage and information boards	☐

7. Would you be willing to help create or look after the garden once completed?

☐	Yes — practical gardening	☐	Yes — fundraising or organising
☐	Yes — actively involved when needed	☐	Not at present

8. Do you have concerns we should take into account? (access, privacy, parking, noise, the stage, trees, upkeep after March 2027)

9. Is there anything else you would like to say, or any suggestions, or ideas we should consider?

Thank you

Please return this form to the box labelled Memorial Garden Consultation at the back of St Matthew's Church, or at Highfield Community Hall, by 5.00pm on Friday 16 November 2026.

Highfield Clean & Green is an Unincorporated Association. Personal details are optional and will be used only for this consultation and, if you ask us, to keep you informed. They will not be published. A copy of our privacy notice is available on request at highfieldcleanandgreen@gmail.com