

Put some fun into politics

A WEEK is a long time in politics...

And in Wigan there are hopes to update this oft-used cliché by making a week a “good” time in politics.

Monday October 12 marks the beginning of the borough’s annual Local Democracy Week and there really has never been a better time to get involved and have your say.

Now in its fifth year, Wigan’s Local Democracy Week is part of a national campaign that encourages people from all walks of life to take a more active role in the local decision-making process.

Councils across the country are gearing up for the week-long series of events aimed at making the business of local government more appealing and relevant to people of all ages.

The motto for Local Democracy Week is – Take Part, Take Power and this year the council and its partners are encouraging people to do exactly that.

Kicking off the celebrations will be Wigan Council’s elected members intrepid journey into cyberspace as part of the I’m A Councillor Get Me Out Of Here competition.

Councillors Barry Fagan, Steve Dawber, Robert Bleakley, Judith Atherton, Joe Haley and Gareth Fairhurst are currently engaging with schoolchildren through the internet.

Highlights

One-by-one the young people will take turns in voting one of the councillors out over a two-week period, leaving one eventual winner.

Anyone can log onto www.bigvote.org.uk and look at the Wigan councillors’ contributions.

Other highlights of the week include two young people being elected Mayors for the Day and given the chance to experience the roles and responsibilities of the borough’s first citizen.

The Mayors for a Day will don their robes and chain on Thursday October 15.

There will be a chance for young people and adults alike to pitch any questions they have on the burning issues of the day to a select panel as part of a series of television-style debates taking place during the week.

On Monday October 12, Westleigh High School will hold the first of four Question Time events hosted by North West Tonight Chief Reporter Dave Guest.

Standish High School will host another on Thursday October 15 and St Edmund Arrowsmith will welcome the team on Monday October 19.

The increasingly popular Question Time event for the public will take place at Wigan Town Hall on Wednesday October 21.

On Wednesday October 14 the Boroughwide Community Network will be holding a special meeting to discuss the council’s budget at the Tudor House in Hindley.

Go to www.wigan.gov.uk for more details.



JEANS DAY: Staff at The Galleries, Wigan, took part in Jean for Genes day to raise money for charity

Funds idea is pure gene-ius

WIGANERS of all ages joined an annual charity campaign by wearing their jeans to work and school.

Staff at The Galleries Shopping Centre and children at the Just Learning Nursery were just two of the groups which wore jeans to raise funds for the Jeans for Genes campaign.

The Jeans for Genes campaign

is provided by the national charity which help children and families affected by genetic disorders with the aim of raising at least £3m.

Richard Paxton, centre director of The Galleries, who also turned up in his jeans, said: “This is a fun way to raise funds and something which all staff can join in with.”



DIFFERENT CLOTHES: Staff and children at Just Learning Nursery, Walkden Avenue, Wigan, have worn jeans to nursery. Pictured are: Joseph, Jasmine and Eleanor

VICKI WILL HELP YOU FIND A PAL

BY NATALIE WALKER

A WIGAN woman is spearheading a campaign to help lonely people adapt to life in the capital.

When Vicki Jenkins, 33, moved to London from her home in Appley Bridge, she struggled to make friends in the big city.

She now has a great social life with many friends and has decided to help others who are not as lucky by setting up a friend-finding website for people in London.

FridayNightSucks.com allows anyone to find a friend

Avoid the big city blues

to accompany them on a night out in London and also allows visitors to the capital to hook up with new pals who will show them the sights.

She said: “It’s easy to find yourself a bit thin on friends at different times in your life.

“Friday Night Sucks is about getting people out of the house to socialise and have fun.

“And it isn’t a dating site – it is about making new friends of either sex.”

Vicki moved to the capital

to pursue a TV career after graduating at Guildford School of Acting in Surrey.

But after not being able to find much TV work, she started working for Savills Estate Agent, then went into advertising and is now a PA to a property adviser.

She said: “London can be a big lonely place if you don’t have many friends to go out with.

“In my early days I didn’t know that many people and the few friends I did have

wanted to stay in with their boyfriends all the time.

“I remember feeling sad and lonely and stuck with nothing to do and nobody to go out with.”

Site users create a profile for themselves and are able to search for new friends with similar interests and invite them out.

Vicki said: “I’m so excited about Friday Night Sucks. I really do believe there is a gap in the market for a genuine friend-finding site.”



NEW WEBSITE: Vicki Jenkins