

COURT JAIL THREAT OVER COMPO FAILURE

A Wigan man who failed to pay court-ordered compensation has been back in the dock. Connor Sheridan, 20, of Pennell Drive, Worsley Mesnes, appeared at Wigan Magistrates' Court accused of failing to comply with the requirements of a suspended sentence order by failing to attend appointments on May 11 and May 19, a charge he denied. The case was adjourned for a trial on March 5 and Sheridan was remanded on unconditional bail. But it was then noticed that he owed £3,770 to his uncle and justices had to consider whether to send him to prison for up to 90 days for not paying. Karen Moorfield, defending, said Sheridan had not worked since November and was not receiving benefits, adding he had been "inherently stupid and buried his head in the sand" by not making the payments. She asked magistrates to delay making a decision until the trial, so he could claim benefits and take other steps and they agreed.

EMERGENCY NEW CAR WRECKED BY ELECTRICS FIRE

A new car bought just days ago has been badly damaged in a blaze caused by an electrical fault. The Seat Leon was parked against a house in Beech Hill Avenue, Beech Hill, when the fire started just before midnight on Sunday. Flames were coming from under the vehicle and the engine compartment. Firefighters worked quickly to get between the vehicle and the house to stop the flames spreading.

COURT MAN ACCUSED OF SERIOUS ASSAULT

A Leigh man accused of wounding a man with intent to cause grievous bodily harm has appeared before Wigan magistrates. Sean McKenna, of Westleigh Lane, is charged with wounding Alex Tobin on April 2. The 34-year-old was remanded on bail until he appears before a Bolton judge on March 9.

Suffragette film shown at parish church

Film fans and political campaigners were reminded of the importance of deeds not words at a special event marking 100 years of battles for women's rights.

Leigh Film Society and Leigh Waspi teamed up to screen Suffragette at the town's parish church.

A packed audience watched Carey Mulligan's character drawn into the tumultuous struggle for women to be able to vote in the 1910s, ending in the shocking death of Emily Wilding Davison at the 1913 Derby when she was trying to pin the suffragettes' ribbon on the King's horse.

The event was partly held to mark 100 years since some women were given the vote for the first time as part of the Representation of the People Act 1918.

It also acted as a fund-raiser and awareness event for the borough's campaigns for women to receive equality in state pensions and fair transitional arrangements, a cause now supported by hundreds of people affected by Government decisions in Wigan and Leigh.

The event was opened by Jo Platt MP.



A packed house at Leigh Parish Church prepares to enjoy the film Suffragette and (inset right) campaigners from Leigh Waspi promoting their movement demanding state pension equality. Pictures by Leigh photographer Graham Young

Debate over town hall's new anti-bullying policy

By LIAM SOUTAR
liam.soutar@jpress.co.uk
@LSoutarWIG

A social media debate was sparked among Wiganers after council chiefs published a charter aimed at cracking down on online abuse.

The charter was introduced last week by Wigan Council as part of a campaign to combat online bullying and abuse aimed at its staff.

The guidelines for followers of the council's social media channels prohibit insulting or inciting posts, hate crime and swearing.

But the news generated both support and criticism towards the local authority, with some welcoming the move while others accused officials of shying away from criticism.

In response, town hall chiefs took the unprecedented step of revealing some of the abuse its workers were subjected to on a daily basis.

Posting on Facebook, the council wrote: "We have a duty to protect our staff which is why we reserve the right to ban those who use social media to abuse and threaten others."

Screenshots included alongside the post showcased a range of comments from a range of social media pages, which are aimed at the council but not run by anyone at the town hall.

They contained a range of offensive material, including a series of insults at council officers.

One social media user even made physical threats towards staff.

However, council staff took to social media to personally respond to many of the comments, individually outlining the authority's stance and why they have introduced the policy.

There was a mixed reaction the council's decision to highlight the abuse.

One user wrote: "I've personally witnessed the lan-

Council introduces anti-abuse measures

Wigan Council introduced the social media charter as part of its Believe I'm Only Human cyber bullying campaign.

The council says it was created to show its commitment to protecting residents and staff while surfing the web.

To do so, it asked individuals to "behave responsibly" by treating others with respect, kindness, and an appreciation of others' views and opinions.

Any failure to abide by these new rules will result in:

- Abusive comments being removed and the user reported.
- Users getting a warning when their behaviour falls below these standards..
- More than one incident and they will be banned from the Wigan Council Facebook and Twitter pages.

Anyone who wishes to report inappropriate behaviour online can message the council on its Facebook page.



Council officials have introduced a new social media charter

guage used towards Wigan Council, even when the posts are about incredibly positive subjects, and I see it every day in my current job. Even if we don't all get along, just be civil and work towards solutions."

One Facebook user commented: "No individual should be subjected to direct abuse.

"There is no excuse. "But occasionally the council, as an organisation needs to

beridiculed, but it can be done without abuse."

However, some residents were less sympathetic, saying the council should just "ignore" the abuse.

The debate about online attacks came in the wake of new findings which revealed that 279 council employees were physically attacked over a two year period - the majority of which were school staff.