



Vision



Lancashire
County Council

www.lancashire.gov.uk

Lancashire County Council: Four stars out of four
(*Audit Commission 2005)

January 2006

Providing • schools • highways • trading standards • social services

HAPPY AT HOME

p3

Top stars
join county
parade p4/5

After 40 years in her family home, Annie is staying put



Lancashire County Council wishes all residents a prosperous and successful New Year

YOUR KIDS ARE THE TOPS

English ... UP
maths ... UP
science ... SAME

STAR pupils in Lancashire have widened a primary school gap between themselves and pupils elsewhere in the fundamental skills of English, maths and science.

This year's national "league table" figures show that pupils in the county's schools beat national averages in all three subjects – and did so by a widening margin year on year.

The Key Stage 2 figures for the final primary school year show 81 per cent of children passing in English, 77.49 per cent in maths and 87 per cent in science. Statistics for the nation as a whole are respectively 79, 75 and 86.

County Councillor Alan Whittaker, Cabinet member for Schools, said: "Children in the final primary year are at an absolutely vital stage in their education.

"They will soon be starting high school which is the gateway to success academically and in careers. We read too often of pupils who fail to make the transition from primary to secondary school. In Lancashire, however, we can take pride that we are preparing children as well as is possible.

"These are great results and maintain the momentum we have been building now for a number of years. They are a credit to staff as well as pupils."

This year's figures in Lancashire are an advance on last year, as well as being ahead of schools in other Local Education Authorities.

The county's schools did well in overall pass rates and also featured in lists that focus on improvement and on value-added measures.

The value-added concept compares final achievement levels to



WIDENING gap: Alan Whittaker.

the level of ability shown by pupils when they first start at the school. It recognises that different social circumstances can produce differing academic results.

Councillor Whittaker added: "We have always had good results in Lancashire and this reflects many years of heavy investment by this authority in schools.

"I am particularly pleased at our performance in the value-added tables as they give a truer reflection of achievement than simple raw data."



HAPPY children are successful children at one of Lancashire's top primary schools.

Julie Heath, headteacher at Pool House Community Primary School, says the secret of pupil success is sheer hard work and pure enjoyment.

Her Preston school features in Whitehall's Key Stage 2 tables as one of Lancashire's best

when it comes to "adding value" – a measure of how much children improve over the years and a more accurate reflection of what a school actually does.

Julie, pictured above with pupils, said: "It's very hard to stop children here smiling as we ensure they enjoy their work. That and much hard work on literacy and numeracy is preparing children well for their move to high school."

Council passes 'tougher test'

LANCASHIRE County Council has achieved the top four stars rating from the Audit Commission.

This time the council, which previously gained the coveted 'Excellent' status, faced a new Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) known as 'the Harder Test' – a tougher set of tests to see how well local authorities are performing.

The CPA measures how well local councils are delivering and improving services to local people and communities.



AMBITION: Hazel Harding

County Councillor Hazel Harding, the leader of Lancashire County Council, said: "This is brilliant news for the 1.3million people who receive our services.

"Our hard working and committed staff have helped us gain this rating. Without their tireless efforts we would not be able to give our residents the high quality services they have come to expect.

"The Audit Commission also rated us as 'improving well'. This means that as well as achieving the top star rating we are also seen as ambitious and capable of even more."

This test also looks at a council's potential to continue improving – known as their 'direction of travel'. Lancashire County Council has been rated as 'improving well' – an important achievement as the authority has prided itself on continual development and setting higher standards.

Confident Carole's lesson in life



ADULT studies really worked for busy mum Carole Hart.
Carole (32) found her life

changed for the better after signing up to learning at a Skelmersdale school – she is a mum of three boys and her course was in Parenting Pleasures.

The Lancashire Adult Learning coursework included guidance on behaviour. It worked a treat on her boys – and on other adults too!

She said: "I didn't know what to expect. I thought the tutors would tell me what to do and I'd decided not to go back if I didn't like it.

"But it was really informal and everyone was chatting about their practical experience. I'd recommend adult education to anyone."

Courses exist across Lancashire, ranging from basic literacy and numeracy to skills for life and even mobile phone use. More than 700

venues are used across the county so everyone can get along.

A leaflet at her sons' school started Carole thinking about returning to the classroom for the Lancashire College course.

She said: "The tutors gave great advice and tips and helped me produce a plan to try out at home.

"It worked with dramatic results – not only on the children, but on the other adult in the family!"

"I'd tried everything with my boys and nothing worked as well as this.

"They are better behaved and have more responsibility around the home.

"I now have so much more confidence. I can't believe what a difference a simple course can make."

You too can get on in life

CAROLE'S course was one of more than 6,000 run each year by Lancashire Adult Learning. There's bound to be one suited to you.

**It's simple to check ...
Lancaster, Fylde, Wyre
01524 60141**

**Preston, South Ribble, Chorley,
West Lancashire
01257 276719**

**Burnley, Hyndburn, Pendle,
Ribble Valley, Rossendale
01772 799120**

www.lal.lancashire.gov.uk

Drivers pass 50,000 milestone with care

ROAD safety is to pass another milestone in Lancashire with the number of drivers attending the county's speed awareness course nearing 50,000.

The sessions are offered to certain drivers who have marginally broken the speed limit as an alternative to penalty points on their licence.

However the course, which is run by highly qualified driving instructors, is not an easy option.

Motorists are taught to be more aware of the dangers caused by excessive speed and the consequences of breaking limits.

Neil Cunliffe, Lancashire County Council Road Safety Group manager, said: "Driving too fast was the main cause of 1,200 deaths and more than 20,000 serious injuries in the UK last year.

"The fact that 50,000 people have been on the speed awareness course since 2001 means that more people have become safer drivers."

Advertising feature

Goodbye and thankyou!



Sadly, this will be my last message as Chairman of the Lancashire Children's Fund.

I shall be moving away from Lancashire and although I am very much looking forward to the excitement and challenge of fresh pastures, I shall go with some regrets at leaving a place and people I have come to know and love.

My association with the Lancashire Children's Fund has been a most rewarding experience. There have been times when the stories of the hardships faced by children and parents have been difficult to comprehend.

But there have been wonderful moments of pure joy – when children have allowed me to share their happiness; and when I have seen families come through adversity to become much closer and stronger.

I send my very best wishes to the Lancashire Children's Fund and the agencies, organisations and partners who work alongside them. Long may your valuable work continue.

And I wish the children and families of Lancashire a very Happy New Year!

Getting to GRIP with crime



GRIP is a short-term intervention programme for children and young people on the threshold of becoming involved in crime or anti social behaviour, and aims to divert them from developing patterns of persistent or more serious offending.

GRIP is a crime reduction initiative for children and young people. There are six panels throughout Lancashire comprised of representatives from the Police, PCTs, Social Services and Education, joined by members of Connexions, Youth & Community Service and sports development organisations.

Children are referred to GRIP by professionals or parents through a widely available referral form which identifies recognised risk factors that may increase the chances of a child, or young person becoming an offender. These risks may include living in a deprived neighbourhood, poor attendance or achievement at school, associating with offenders, non-constructive use of time.

Its success is best summed up in the extracts from two letters received by GRIP – one from a child who received help and support – the other from the child's family.

A mum's story

At first I wasn't sure what to expect – would they think I was an unfit mother or that ours was a dysfunctional family?

I needn't have worried. Jackie who was assigned to help us was great. She worked with the whole family. She spoke to our daughter on a one-to-one level and inspired her to behave better, listen more, and think before doing something naughty. Now I have my sweet little girl back.

I won't pretend she is always an angel, but she is a

better child. As a family unit this has brought us much closer and improved our understanding of one another.

I am very grateful to Jackie and the GRIP team and I know I can ring if she gets into any trouble (which is unlikely) and someone from the team will talk to me.

It was a good experience and one that will stay with us for a long time.

So from me and the whole family, a huge thank you for making our family happy again.

A child's story

Dear Grip Team

It made me think about what I did in the past. I feel that if I carried on I will be in very big trouble and then I would have been took away from my mum and dad.

But Jackie helped me to prove I can be good and not be naughty.

Thank you Jackie and the GRIP team for helping me and my family. x

Protecting children from alcohol

The young person's Alcohol Project is funded by Lancashire Children's Fund and Lancashire County Council's Crime & Disorder budget. The aim is to provide a county-wide approach to tackling alcohol related issues in local communities.

The project involves all the key agencies within Lancashire and is managed by a steering group with representatives from:

- Social Services
- Trading Standards
- Youth & Community Service
- Schools' Advisory Service
- Voluntary Sector
- Lancashire Constabulary
- Primary Care Trusts



- Lancashire Youth Offending Team
- Lancashire Children's Fund
- LCC Policy Unit
- Lancashire Drug Action Team

The project aims are:

- To raise awareness of alcohol issues
- To develop best practice to tackle local issues
- To improve cross-agency co-ordination

All of these are geared towards promoting the development of services for young people and the local communities of Lancashire.



Age Check is an interactive CD Rom produced in partnership by the Alcohol Project, Trading Standards, Lancashire Constabulary and the Lancashire Drug Action Team. It is a guide to retailers involved in the sale of products such as alcohol, tobacco, solvents and fireworks.

Funded through the Home Office Blueprint Initiative's Health Policy Component, it aims to reduce sales of age-restricted products to minors and is unique in that it incorporates a language choice facility including: English, Urdu, Punjabi, Gujarati and Hindi.

Earlier in the year, the Age Check CD ROM was distributed free of charge to retailers in Lancashire. It has since been recognised by the Trading Standards Institute

as an example of good practice and is being promoted throughout the country.

Anyone interested in Age Check can contact the Alcohol Project Officer, Catherine Westwell by email Catherine.westwell@ts.lancscc.gov.uk, or on 01772 532228.

Lancashire



Children's Fund

the children's charity



Lancashire Children's Fund is administered by NCH - The Children's Charity (registered charity number 1097940).

If you are considering seeking funds from LCF please note that all Children's Fund monies are now allocated until March 2008. Any future announcements will be posted on our website.

www.lancashirechildrensfund.org.uk

Lancashire Children's Fund helps Lancashire's families to make a positive contribution

The Lancashire Children's Fund is a partnership of statutory, voluntary and community sector agencies that is responsible for the strategic direction of the Children's Fund programme in the county council area.

Home is where the heart is for Annie

Care offers fuller life

WITH stunning views over the Lune Valley, it's not hard to see why 88-year-old Annie Shuttleworth doesn't want to move from her Warton home.

Annie has lived here for over 40 years and thanks to the help of Lancashire County Council's social services, she can lead a relatively independent life.

The former cook suffers from arthritis and has undergone two knee replacement operations, but she is eager to stay in her house and enlists the help of domiciliary carers.

She said: "It's better to stay in your home. I'm really settled but I do need some help throughout the day as I cannot stay stood up for long periods."

"I've lived in this area for a long time and I like being here. The house has served me well."

Carers pop round to visit Annie twice a day - once in the morning and once at night - seven days a week to help her get up, wash her, do the washing up and other domestic tasks.

"I don't know what I would do without them. It's a very good service. All the girls are really friendly, we have some good chats and some of them live nearby," she said.

"They stay for an hour each time they visit but they stay longer on two days to do my shopping."

Even though she receives this help, Annie tries to do as much as she can herself without doing too much.

"I get my meals prepared for me and I can

heat them up in the microwave. I used to use meals on wheels but I prefer to cook.

"A physiotherapist is coming to visit me soon to look at installing a pulley system so that I can get my exercise."

Years ago, Annie's frailties would have meant that she would have been likely to have been placed in a residential care home, but the county council wants to promote independence and help people live at home whenever appropriate.

She said: "I never wanted to go into a care home. I hear they're nice but it's not for me - I prefer living at home."

"I'm happy that the service is allowing me to stay here and long may it continue."

But the county council does not just offer domiciliary and residential care.

Intermediate care is available to help older people get back on their feet following illness or a spell in hospital.

A range of day care options are also available and sheltered housing accommodation is there for people who cannot live at home yet do not need 24-hour care.

County Councillor Chris Cheetham, Cabinet member for Adult and Community Services, said: "We are delivering what the majority of service users want."

We have had a refiguration of support to allow people to continue living at home or receive more intensive help if needed."

For further information on services for older people, please visit www.lancashire.gov.uk/social-services/adults/older-people



ANIE Shuttleworth, 88, lives a full and independent life at her home thanks to domiciliary care.



ASSISTANCE is there for any circumstances.

Help is always there

FAMILY members or friends who need help to look after older or disabled people can get support from Lancashire County Council's social services.

Once a person has fulfilled the carers' criteria, they will be eligible for further support in accessing training and information.

These services are free to carers as their care is recognised formally and allows them to have a short break or help in receiving financial support.

County Councillor Chris Cheetham, Cabinet member for Adult and

Community Services, said: "There are over 124,000 people in Lancashire who provide a caring role for relatives or friends who are frail, disabled or ill."

"Many people don't view themselves as a carer and may not necessarily know what benefits they are entitled to and what support is available."

"We have a long-standing commitment to working with carers. It is important to ensure that carers, young and old, have access to essential information."

For more information contact your local social services office or go online at www.lancashire.gov.uk/social-services/carers

NEWS IN BRIEF

Kids get their say

LANCASHIRE'S Youth Council urged young people in Preston to enter the political world by having their say in issues that affect them.

The county council's Youth and Community Service allowed the city's year 10 and 11 pupils to discuss issues such as education, health, leisure and the environment with the Youth Council.

County Councillor Clive Grunshaw, Cabinet member for Children and Young People, said: "This was a great opportunity for young people to discuss important issues, highlight problems and work together to develop solutions."

Grab prizes

HOUSEHOLDERS are reminded that they still have three months to win a safari break, a Center Parcs holiday or one of 450,000 other prizes.

Only Lancashire householders who recycle will be given scratch-cards with their returned bins. Each card may be a winner.

Prizes are expected to add up to almost £1.5m but the scheme will end in March. Get recycling now to be in with a chance!

Sound work

SINGING children have had their work recorded on a nursery rhyme CD by a Sure Start team in Preston.

Singing with children is a well-recognised way of helping language development - so teachers secured help from a musician to record the children's work.

Parents have now been given a copy of the CD.

Making a song and dance



PUPILS from St Augustine's RC High School in Billington wow the crowds with their performance entitled "All Around the World".

YOUNG dancers from schools across the county showed their fine footwork at the Lancashire Schools Dance Festival 2005.

The annual event was hosted at Preston's Charter Theatre and fea-

tured children and young adults from 19 schools and colleges.

Pupils and staff devised their own performances and this year's inspiration was One World - with young people interpreting cohesion and understanding through dance.

Susan Cooke, the county council's

consultant for PE and sport, said: "This year's event was fantastic and everybody worked hard behind the scenes to make it a roaring success."

"A lot of effort went into producing an entertaining yet fascinating show and it was well received by the audience."

Hooray Sissay

CELEBRITY poet Lemn Sissay has worked with 17 young people in care across the county to produce an anthology of their poetry work entitled "A Sense of Place: The past does not equal the future".

Lemn was brought up in care and, following months of hard work with him, the young people have produced a book and audio CD of cutting-edge poetry based on their experiences of living in care.

Jean Wolstenholme, from the county council's Library and Information Service, said: "The young people have worked hard supporting each other and deserve recognition for their talent and creativity."

The project is part of the "NE1 4 Reading" scheme which aims to encourage reading among young people in residential care and give them access to good quality literature.

NEW Year, NEW Start, NEW Adventures

Lancashire County Council

Begin the New Year with a new and exciting challenge

Volunteer Services are inviting you to join our team

As part of our team you will be able to MOVE adults forward by:-

Making a difference to people's lives - companionship/ befriending/supporting carers

Opportunities across the whole of Lancashire - a diverse County
Valuable link for local people irrespective of their difficulties - assisting adults to take part in local activities e.g. attending a local group, bowling, leisure, coffee/meal

Enhancing your life and that of other people
e.g. friendship is a powerful tool when shared with someone.

Join our fun and exciting team of volunteers. Don't worry we will skill you up and provide any necessary training and out of pocket expenses.

For an information pack call us on (01257) 248118 or email volunteer.services@ssd.lancscc.gov.uk

www.openingdoors.lancashire.gov.uk

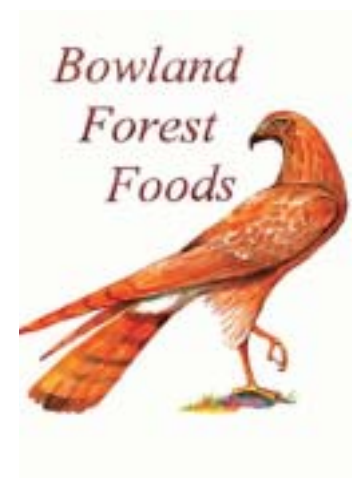


OPENING DOORS



2005-2008
Supporting the Local Economy
2004-2008
Opening the Doors to the Future

WIN a tasty hamper of Lancashire goodies



IN the last edition of *Vision* we reported on how local farming is being marketed through the Made in Lancashire initiative. Now *Vision* readers can win a fantastic prize from one of the companies who are keeping the county's traditional farming industry alive. The farmers, who have joined together under the Bowland Forest Foods banner, strive to produce their meat in environmentally friendly ways in a part of the county which is recognised as an area of outstanding natural beauty. They have provided a hamper of premium quality, Lancashire-reared, beef, lamb and pork. The meat comes from farms around the county and finds its way, through Bowland Forest

Pickwick night launch for adult centre

A NEW adult learning centre has been launched with an open evening to let staff meet the public. Whalley now boasts the county's newest Adult Centre and it opened by taking part in the village's Pickwick Night celebrations. The former Whalley Grammar School building was founded in 1549 and is now run in partnership between Lancashire Adult Learning and Accrington and Rossendale College. The centre offers courses in subjects such as languages, crafts, general studies and holistic therapies. Tel 0845 0561886 for more details.



* WHALLEY launch: from left, helpers Bob Tidman, Karen Swainston-Thomas, Janet Scott and Tracy Driscoll.

Send your letters to:
The Editor, *Vision*, Corporate Communications Group,
County Hall, Preston PR1 8XJ.
neil.graham@css.lancscc.gov.uk

Love thy neighbour

I AM heartened to note that the two letters *Vision* published from Muslims (You're Telling Us, December) were conciliatory and expressed tolerance and understanding of other faiths. We must avoid the dogmatic and fundamentalist attitudes we see in society. What happened to the Angel's message of "Peace on Earth and good-will to all men"? Or Christ's injunction to "Love thy neighbour as thyself"? If, as Muslims, Christians and Jews purport to believe, we are all children of the Almighty God is it not about time that we started to act like brothers, and not like Cain and Abel? These three religions are based on creationism and monotheism. Therefore they cannot say, "My God is not your God", because that negates the concept of monotheism. JR BURDIN Longton

which any Christian can hold. The religions do not and can not share the same God. Christianity holds the deity and atoning death of Jesus - Islam denies this. Christianity reveals a Trinitarian God with God as Father, Son and Holy Ghost. This is also denied by Islam. Islam teaches that God is far removed from humanity. Christianity reveals that God is love and that we can have a personal relationship with Him. Neither Christians nor Muslims can accept that we worship the same God. Christians can live side by side with those of other cultures and faiths. However, as a Christian we seek to share the good news that Jesus is Lord, Saviour and God. He can never be just a prophet or a good man. D WOODWARD Coppull

THERE is only one creator God (You're Telling Us, December). He is known as Yahweh to the Jews, Jehovah to the Christians and Allah to the Muslims. Judaism, Christianity and Islam are known as monotheistic faiths because they acknowledge one God. Every culture is different. If there is ever to be harmony among the faiths, a more tolerant approach will be needed from fundamentalists. D BALSHAW Leyland

Let off steam - tell *Vision* what you think

Letters containing a name and address will be given priority. Letters may be edited. We can not provide individual replies.

County's crown for unsung heroes



HEALTH WORKER: Steve Mannion

Steve Mannion, pictured here with his children and comedian Dave Spikey, is an orthopaedic surgeon at Blackpool Victoria Hospital. Earlier this year he flew out to Sri Lanka to work alongside local medics on the most severely injured patients following the tsunami tragedy. He also joined a team which spent two weeks in Malawi training clinicians to treat children with cerebral palsy.



COMMUNITY TEAM: Brunshaw Action Group

The Brunshaw Action Group was set up in 2000 to try to cut the amount of juvenile nuisance and crime in the Burnley area. The group regularly organises mini-breaks, puts on shows and young people's talent contests for up to 6,000 people every year. BBC presenter Peter Holland, centre, is pictured presenting members with their award.



COMMUNITY CHAMPION: Colin Makinson

Colin (pictured centre with two Preston North End players), a community warden on Preston's Callon estate, has spent the last four years building a fantastic community spirit among people young and old with a series of projects and clubs. Crime has since fallen by 50 per cent.

Brave teen saves mum in M6 crash

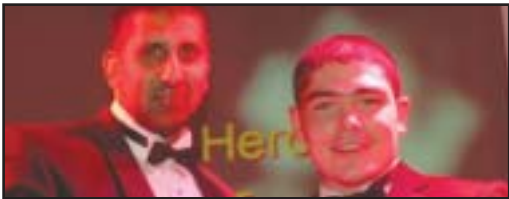


PAUL Woodhouse from Lancaster saved his mum's life as a lorry smashed into their car following a pile-up on the M6. The 15-year-old, who won Lancashire's Red Rose Young Person of the Year Award, was dragging his injured mum Carol out of the window of their wrecked Rover after the first accident on the motorway when the wagon hit. The impact shunted the car down the carriageway and crushed the side where his mum had been sitting - but Paul did not let go. If it had not been for his bravery in clinging onto his mum the consequences could have been much worse. Speaking to *Vision* after receiving his award from R'n'B star Lemar, Paul said: "My mum only told me I had been nominated a couple of weeks before and I was very happy to be invited to the awards night. "But I had no idea I was going to win. I was shocked and had butterflies in my stomach when my name was announced. "My sister was also in the crash and came along to the awards. She's a big fan of Lemar so I think she was even more excited than I was." Paul's mum Carol added: "I'm very proud of Paul and grateful to him for saving my life. "He's my hero. If it wasn't for what he did that night I'm sure I wouldn't be here today."



BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR: Stephen Ashworth

In the last 10 years Stephen Ashworth, from



LANCASHIRE HERO: Ishaq Ahmed

Ishaq confronted a masked raider after hearing screams from the chemist next door to his business in Preston. Despite attempts to stab him, Ishaq tackled the man, pinning him to the floor until police arrived. Ishaq is pictured here with boxer Michael Jennings.

Rossendale, has built the Hurstwood Group into one of the North West's leading property firms. It now has a nationwide construction arm and an expanding motor dealership interest. He has raised over £50,000 for charity in his spare time.

ENTERTAINMENT AWARD: Ted Robbins



Presenter of Radio Lancashire's morning show, Rossendale-based Ted has become a public favourite for his screen roles in TV hit shows "Calendar Girls", "The League of Gentlemen", "Little Britain" and "Phoenix Nights".

Ted is an adopted Lancastrian, originally being from Liverpool, and is a keen amateur rugby player in the Rossendale area. Ted also presents the programme "Boot Sale Challenge".

Win gifts from Darren and Lemar

WIN a copy of chart topper Lemar's fantastic new CD, courtesy of *Vision* and our friends at Rock FM. Lemar also found time to sign posters for our lucky winners when he dropped into the Red Rose Awards. We've also got two CDs from Aussie singer Darren Hayes, formerly with Savage Garden. Two lucky winners win a copy of each CD and a signed poster.

To be in with a chance, answer our simple question: On which television talent show did Lemar spring to fame? a) Fame Academy b) Pop Idol c) The X Factor Send your answers to: *Vision* Music Competition, Corporate Communications Group, County Hall, Preston, PR1 8XJ. Competition closing date is 23 January.



LANCASTRIAN OF THE YEAR: Andrew Flintoff

Professional Sports Person of the Year (by public vote) On his return to Lancashire he was made a Freeman of his hometown, Preston. Colin and Susan are pictured here at the awards ceremony with former Preston North End and England footballer Sir Tom Finney and County Councillor Hazel Harding, Lancashire County Council leader.

Karate girl's world rating



HAILING from Penwortham, 17-year-old Beverley Sturzaker became Amateur Sportsperson Red Rose Award winner for her success in karate. Beverley has been representing Great Britain on the world stage since she was 11. In that time she's won four world championships, four world cup titles and is a five times World Karate Association (WKA) Great Britain title winner. When she is not competing Beverley dedicates large parts of her spare time to training beginners. She said: "I'm very happy to have won a Red Rose Award although I don't know who nominated me - they're not allowed to tell you that. "I train every day and when I'm not training I'm helping beginners. I've been instructing since I got my black belt when I was 11 years old. "I like seeing what I'm giving to other people by being their instructor - you can see the satisfaction they get from improving their technique. It's also good to see younger children getting involved in something they enjoy." Beverley's success has seen her compete all over the world from the US and Canada to Austria and Ireland. She is currently studying at Preston College and is hoping to become a full-time fitness instructor.



WATCHDOGS at County Hall are friends of the public in ensuring that money is wisely spent and that services are tailored to public need. The "overview and scrutiny" investigations into public services can be requested by YOUR county councillor.

Health worries

WARD closures being carried out by Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre NHS Hospitals Trust will have a serious impact on the county's services for older people, according to a report to the Health Equalities Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Managers report that the decision to temporarily close wards providing day care for older people, post-operative care and rehabilitation facilities will put extra pressure on the council's services which support older people in their homes. The closures are being put in place at Lytham Hospital, Fleetwood Hospital, Rossall Day Hospital and Rossall Hospital Rehabilitation Unit to reduce the Trust's financial overspend. County Councillor Tim Ormrod, committee chairman, said: "We have made representations to the Trust in the light of concerns and asked them to reconsider the proposal to close the wards."

Check on drugs

SERVICES for young people who misuse drugs and alcohol will soon be under the spotlight at a meeting of the External Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Councillors are concerned that complicated central government bureaucracy, uncertain funding and a lack of joint working between local agencies could be hampering efforts to tackle drug and alcohol problems in the county. A task group set up in 2003 came up with a series of recommendations for the many council functions which provide services. Now councillors on the External O&S committee are to quiz their colleagues in the council's Cabinet on what progress has been made to improve the situation.

LCDL update

Brief Encounter Anniversary At Carnforth

Special screenings to mark the 60th anniversary of the filming of Brief Encounter in 1945 brought back one of the cast members to Carnforth in November.

Brief Encounter was filmed in 1945 and actress Margaret Barton who played the character of Beryl Walters returned to the town in 2005 for the occasion.

The special screenings of the film, held at the The Furness & Midland Hall at Carnforth Station Visitor Centre also included a chance to see the classic 1936 documentary Night Mail, featuring the Royal Mail overnight steam train from London to Scotland via the West Coast line.

LCDL joined forces with North West Vision (the Regional film and TV commission), Carnforth Station Trust and Mitchell's Hotels of Lancaster to stage the special event which was well attended by local people and visitors.



Buddys – Bouncing with Rosebud

Lancashire County Developments Ltds Rosebud scheme has helped mums and dads in the Leyland area solve the problem of keeping youngsters entertained!

The Buddys Play and Party Centre on King Street offers a superb children's play area with four themed party rooms. Opened this year by Clare Gore creating 15 local jobs, the centre is attracting youngsters from the Leyland area and gives mums and dads somewhere to meet as well.

Rosebud, offered by Lancashire County Developments Ltd, allows new and existing companies in Lancashire access to loan and equity funding at competitive rates and is designed to encourage new business set up and expansion in the county.

Chair of LCDL, County Councillor Niki Penney, called in to see for herself this Rosebud investment and meet Buddy the baby dragon and tried out the facilities!

For more information on Business Finance through Rosebud contact us on 01772 538989

Lancashire County Developments Ltd.



Learning the value of Woodland Management

Young people in Burnley have been down to the woods – but not for a picnic.

They were taking part in a special Woodland Training Day organised by the Lancashire Woodlands Project, the Forest of Burnley and Offshoots Permaculture Project and supported by Lancashire County Developments Ltd.

Their day at Towneley Hall in Burnley started with learning about the importance of basic woodland management techniques including thinning and pruning and how these skills can be used to produce good quality timbers free from knots.

Later they went on to work with an experienced mobile sawmill operator, converting round logs into useful timber and finding out how to stack the timber so that it air dries.

Towneley Hall and its surrounding park play an important role in the exciting five year Forest of Burnley scheme being carried out by Burnley Borough Council and are also receiving support from the Heritage Lottery for restoration works. The conservation and creation of woodland areas is vital to the sustainability of Lancashire and this £3.2 million scheme is a major commitment by the Borough to enhancing the work of the County Council in other areas of Lancashire. The scheme looks set to bring Burnley to the forefront of Woodland Management and will be a great benefit for everyone in Burnley.

Local member of the Lancashire County Council board joined the young people to find out more. County Councillor Terry Burns who is also Vice Chair of the County Council said:

"What a thrill to be able to see first hand how the Lancashire Woodlands Project is working with the Borough Council to help these young people gain skills that could help them into employment

"We have a rich woodland heritage in Lancashire and by working in partnership on schemes like this we can make sure that it is not only maintained, but that we leave a richer heritage for the future."

The young people taking part all received a certificate of achievement and were encouraged to consider future employment in the forestry, arboriculture and conservation sector through Modern Apprenticeship schemes run by Myerscough and Newton Rigg Colleges.



Quieter driving on the county's roads

SCIENCE boffins at Lancashire County Council have devised a new road surface that produces less road noise and is faster to lay – causing less congestion while roads are being improved.

Experts say the public will love the thinner-than-usual surfaces as smaller aggregate within the tarmacadam mean less vibration and that means less noise.

The county council's development programme involved laboratory experts and Lancashire County Engineering Services (LCES) in months of testing ways of improving existing materials.

Dave Beaton, LCES highways gen-

eral manager, said: "In a nutshell, we have a way of using smaller aggregate within a thinner surface to create a smoother surface and less noise.

"It also means resurfacing can be done faster, which means less disruption and congestion.

"The new process is suitable for resurfacing where the underlying road is structurally sound."

Inadequate road "foundations" will continue to be replaced as normal but many will now include the new surfacing.

Dave added: "It's highly beneficial for the public – especially in urban areas where people are sensitive to sound and vibration."

Young people building a future in construction



' LEARNING the tricks of the trade: County Councillor Sean Serridge, Jamie-Lee Kirwan and Jay Pearce (students at Building Futures) and Colette Taylor, LCDL project officer.

A NEW scheme in Skelmersdale is helping young people get the skills they need to enter the construction trade.

Building Futures, Construction Skills Vocational Training Programme, based at Westgate - Interactive in West Gillibrands, Skelmersdale has 10,000 sq ft of dedicated workshop space and has been designed to cater for the needs of young people.

The workshops were officially opened recently by Una Utley, the Chairman of West Lancashire District Council and County Councillor Sean Serridge.

Building Futures is based on a

successful model run by Central Schools Training in Liverpool and has been developed by Westgate - Interactive as a social enterprise.

Time-served tradesmen deliver training in bricklaying, plastering, stone-masonry, block paving, joinery, wall tiling, roof maintenance, plumbing, basic electrics and general DIY as taster courses.

The Skelmersdale programme, which is supported by Lancashire County Council, helps young people get to grips with the tools of their trade and hopefully find long-term careers.

Students attend from half-day sessions up to a full week with many finding a natural aptitude for a particular trade.

LCDL sees Building Futures as a complementary service to its own Apprenticeship Scheme.

Councillor Sean Serridge, a member of the LCDL board, said: "I am delighted to be able to represent both LCDL and Lancashire County Council at this celebration of Building Futures.

"The project is aimed at helping young people who are not high achievers in an academic sense, but have skills and talents that are invaluable to the local community.

"I see this project as a pilot that could be spread across other areas of the county and as a major boost for Skelmersdale.

"I am sure the scheme will be a great success."

Audit survey praises the council for school support

HEADTEACHERS in Lancashire say the support offered to children, young people and schools is getting better, according to a new survey.

The Audit Commission quizzed schools nationwide about the support offered by their local authorities – and Lancashire schools said nine out of 10 service areas had improved in the last 12 months.

Action to tackle bullying was rated particularly highly in the county, as was effectiveness in getting schools to work together and partnership working between different departments and other agencies.

A minority of service areas were not

rated so highly. Staff are already looking for improvements.

Sue Mulvany, Lancashire County Council executive director of children's services, said: "The survey reflects very well on the support we give to children.

"Most measurements are better, especially the support for good behaviour – a vital concern for many people.

"We now know that schools are working together well and that support for children with special educational needs is rated more highly.

"Stopping bullying behaviour was thought to be particularly good."

The survey was also conducted in other local authorities beyond Lancashire's borders – Lancashire's

ratings were ahead of most neighbouring authorities.

Eighty questions about services for children and young people were asked.

Where comparable with the same questions last year, almost nine out of 10 service areas showed an improved performance.

All services for children and young people within Lancashire County Council were brought together to form one directorate earlier this year – they were previously spread across several departments.

Already there are signs that the creation of the new directorate is leading to improved services for all children and young people, especially the most vulnerable.



A full job description
of all vacancies is available
on our website

www.lancashire.gov.uk/vacancies



Cash in and beat your New Year blues

THE turkey has been eaten and the tinsel taken down for another year. But the financial headache from Christmas can still be causing pain months down the line if you've got little cash to spare.

Knowing who to turn to when you're struggling to pay the bills is often difficult and getting lost in the benefits maze can be quite distressing.

However Lancashire County Council's Welfare Rights staff are here to help you find your way again with free and confidential help on claiming any benefits you may be entitled to.

Last year alone the service gained extra benefits worth £24m for Lancashire customers and has won several awards including three consecutive Charter Marks for excellent customer service.

You can either get advice over the telephone, arrange an appointment to see an advisor or visit a drop-in advice session. It's that easy. Staff can also visit you at home if you are elderly, sick or disabled, or care for children or a person with disabilities.

If the festive season has left you with little to celebrate you can get details of your local welfare rights advice team by writing to: Lancashire Welfare Rights Service, Freepost, Preston PR1 8BR, or at their website www.lanc-swelfarerights.com or by phoning (01772) 533504.



Help us to list-en

DO you know of an organisation or group that helps or supports people aged 16 or over in the community?

Lancashire County Council is setting up a comprehensive list of services that help adults and older people with practical tasks, daily living skills, access to learning or by providing emotional support.

These are things like befriending schemes, support groups, faith groups, gardening services and information services.

But we need your help in compiling the list that will be used to ensure there are minimal gaps in service provision.

If you know of a group or organisation that provides this type of help, ask them to contact the county council on 01772 530822.

It does not matter if you think we already know of them as we need to make sure.

KNOW your rights: advisors
Pam Johnson, left, and
Joanne Barker.

Libraries now open ALL hours

BOOKS, newspapers, family trees and business news are now easily available without leaving your armchair, thanks to Lancashire's Library and Information Service.

A world of learning has always been available at the county's reference libraries. That will remain the case – but some services are now also available online as well.

They include dictionaries, encyclopedias, newspapers, business information, local and family history – as well links to debates on social issues such as animal rights, drugs, crime and terrorism.

David Lightfoot, county library manager, said: "We are always looking for ways to make our services more accessible. This new development should be a real help to the people of Lancashire."

The Online Reference Library is free, although you may need to be a library member to reach some areas. Joining a library is free.

Services now online include:

Xrefer – access to 100 encyclopedias, atlases

Online info is just a click away

and dictionaries.

The dictionary section even has a crossword and anagram solver.

The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography – illustrated collection of more than 50,000 biographies.

Issues Online – contemporary social issues, including hot topics such as crime and terrorism. Ideal for homework projects.

Lancashire Lantern – more than 200,000 records, including local societies and indexes to newspapers, censuses, obituaries and parish registers.

Web Sites Gateway – a searchable database providing access to over 500 websites checked and recommended by professional librarians.

Simply click the link at:
www.lancashire.gov.uk/libraries

**Let us
know**

What do you think of our online library service? Did it, for example, help you trace your family tree? Do you use it for

homework? We want to know. Write to: The Editor, Vision, Corporate Communications, County Hall, Preston PR1 8XJ.

Woodlands in safe hands

LANCASHIRE'S woodlands are being promoted as a place to be enjoyed by all by the Lancashire Woodlands Project (LWP).

The county is home to many woods and forests which provide excellent opportunities to get out and about and learn about the local environment.

And groups of deaf and visually impaired people have been working together with LWP to learn the skills necessary to help the woods grow properly and become havens for wildlife.

The county council's countryside and woodlands officers have teamed up with United Utilities and Galloway's Society for the Blind to use local wood to build bird boxes at Beacon Fell Country Park and to



clear trees to help wildlife at the Anderton Centre near Chorley.

Paul Bullimore, the Woodlands Project Officer, said: "These events have been a great success. The people involved have shown immense interest and enthusiasm and have been able to make a really positive contribution to looking after our valuable woodlands."

"It's great to get people out and about and show them how to manage natural resources and improve conditions for animal and plant life."

Work on waste

HOUSEHOLDERS in Lancashire are now recycling more than a third of their waste, Whitehall assessors have been told.

The assessors were visiting Lancashire to see the recycling initiatives that have led to Lancashire County Council being one of the best in the nation when it comes to recycling.

By March it will be known if the authority has been awarded Beacon Council status for recycling. Latest figures show that 35 per cent of waste is recycled – up from 11.7 per cent five years ago.

The assessment panel heard that 23 household waste recycling centres across Lancashire receive three million visitors per year – and that 99 per cent of people are

happy with the centres.

Separate bins for different kinds of waste are now supplied to nine in 10 Lancashire homes.

The judges also heard that the county council, in partnership with district councils, aims to see 56 per cent of all waste being recycled by 2015.

County Councillor Hazel Harding, Lancashire County Council leader, said: "Lancashire has been at the forefront of waste management for almost a decade and we recognise the benefits that can be gained through this."

"We are all aware of the challenges ahead of us: we must drive our recycling rates and reduce the amount of rubbish produced and make sure that every household in Lancashire works with us."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Get on the hotel skill trail

STAFF at a Ribbles Valley hotel have been studying hard to gain a qualification in Basic Food Hygiene.

County Councillor Niki Penney, chairman of Lancashire County Developments Ltd (LCDL), called in at the Clarion Hotel and Foxfields Restaurant to present the five members of staff with their certificates.

LCDL has been working with Connexions to allow staff from tourism and leisure businesses the opportunity to raise their skills. The Basic Food Hygiene Certificate is essential for all staff working in a food orientated environment.

Sponsorship from LCDL and support and mentoring from Connexions has allowed the staff to study for the qualification.

Staff gaining the certificates were: Aimee Lee Clarkson, Gerrard Morino Olive, Philip Smith, Michael Gumm, Matthew Yates.

Child's play

A NEW play centre is keeping youngsters in Leyland entertained thanks to the council's economic development agency.

Lancashire County Developments Ltd's Rosebud scheme offers companies competitive loan and equity funding to encourage businesses.

The Buddy's Play and Party Centre on King Street has created 15 new jobs and offers a superb children's play area with four themed party rooms.

Honesty check

PUPILS in Burnley passed a tough travel test with flying colours after a sweep was carried out to catch fraudulent travellers.

Lancashire County Council's Safer Travel Unit teamed up with local police and transport inspectors to respond to worries from the bus operator, who had reported instances of disruption and non-payment of fares.

A "gateway check" was staged to check that pupils were paying the correct fares.

Around 180 pupils' passes and tickets were checked and all were found to be valid.