



Sikh birthday party

Nation's historic pals celebrate their time in Lancashire

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Straight talk

70,000 of you have used our new easy-to-use customer service centre

See centre pages

Family's full house

290 children and counting. You too could foster children

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ORDER ON THE BUSES

Undercover enforcers keep the peace as incidents fall by a forecast 48 per cent

TRANSPORT troublemakers are being warned they will be brought to book by plain-clothes "enforcers" if they continue their anti-social ways.

The enforcers embark on a bus a few stops before the police also climb aboard – and then point the finger at the troublemakers who strike fear in other passengers.

Lancashire County Council's Safer Travel Unit has worked with bus companies and police for several years to reduce misbehaviour on the buses.

New methods and new technology may mean that nuisance travellers will become a thing of the past.

One recent operation saw police board a bus in east Lancashire – and then have a Safer Travel Unit informer point out the unruly.

Rick Wilson, Safer Travel Unit manager, said: "Many buses have video cameras recording everything that goes on. You would be amazed at some of the things people think they can get away with."

Rick said: "We will tackle any route where there appears to be a problem."

"That includes normal commercial services that are used by all members of the public."

"Travelling easily and feeling safe are key objectives of Lancashire County Council and we are determined to uphold those values."

Closed-circuit television cameras have been installed on some buses for a number of years. They are hidden so that passengers do not always know they are being filmed.

Those caught threatening other passengers or damaging property will face the full force of the law.

Some schools are studying the "right to travel safely" as a key concept in their good citizenship classes.

Rick added: "No-one should think they can behave intolerably on buses and get away with it."

"In 2004/5 incidents of anti-social behaviour on buses dropped 21 per cent on the previous year."

"It is expected that this year will see a further 27 per cent fall."

For more information on the work of the Safer Travel Unit visit: www.safertravelunit.co.uk



●HARMONY on the buses: a variety of measures drove down anti-social incidents by 21 per cent last year and figures are expected to drop another 27 per cent this year. Pictured here are Joe Hegarty and Pauline Thompson of the Safer Travel Unit.

Cafe wins Balmoral crown

THE queen is to enjoy a slap-up Lancashire feast at her birthday bash.

This month's celebrations will see food travelling to Balmoral castle from north Lancashire where a company backed by the county council's economic development company has

landed the regal honour.

Waterslack Farm Shop, Café and Garden Centre, in Silverdale, is one of Lancashire's newest businesses.

It has been helped to expand with the help of a Rural Small Business Grant from Lancashire County Developments Ltd.

It is not only the queen who can enjoy such a tasty treat – first-class cuisine is available to all in the licensed café. The premises are located in a 16th century farmhouse and the site can offer plants, fish, water features, garden furniture and an animal and bird park.

Red Rose pride returns

ORDINARY people with extraordinary achievements are to be honoured this year in the third annual Red Rose Awards.

Winners of the awards, backed by the county council and partners, may have made a mark on the world stage – like cricket ace Andrew Flintoff, one of last year's winners – or they may simply have shone in their work, in the community or as a parent.

Nominations, which

Categories

- Lancastrian of the Year
- Parent of the Year
- Community Team – for voluntary groups.
- Community Champion – for building community spirit.
- Young Person of the Year
- Amateur Sportsperson
- Professional Sportsperson
- Businessman/woman of the Year
- Teacher of the Year
- Entertainment Award
- Lancashire Hero

Nominations will open next month. Watch Vision for further details.

must be made by a third party, open next month and judging is in November.

County Councillor Dorothy Westell said: "A new category this year is the Parent of the Year."

"That reflects what these awards are about – they are about honouring ordinary people who make their mark in their own family or workplace, for example, as much as being about the famous."

"Nearly everyone can think of one of these unsung heroes."

"Our winners will be an example to everyone."

Previous winners have included ex-England soccer ace Sir Tom Finney.

Partners include the Lancashire Evening Post, Radio Lancashire, Magic 999 and Rock FM



Ask Shirley

Are you having difficulties knowing who to contact when you need help? Are you baffled when you open the phone book to ring for help? Then this new section is for you.

If you are having problems getting hold of someone to help, Lancashire County Council has many staff trained and willing to assist.

Sometimes you just can't think who to ask - and this is where Vision's Shirley can help.

Shirley answers all the letters she receives and some will feature on this page. Others may take a while as Shirley will seek responses from other council teams.

Shirley is not able to offer legal advice.

Safer cycling

Mrs D from Longridge writes:

My 10-year-old daughter loves going out with my husband and I at the weekends for long bike rides.

I have taught her basic road safety skills but I would like to know if there are any training programmes that she could attend?

Lancashire County Council operates a free Passport to Safer Cycling training programme delivered mainly through schools.

You should contact your child's school to see if it takes part. Your daughter is at the correct age to participate as the programme is only available to children who are in their final year at primary school (Year 6) and they must be 10 years of age or over.

You may volunteer to be a trainer yourself!

School dinner swap

Mrs P from Burnley writes:

My son receives free school meals as I am in receipt of Income Support. He is in his final year at high school and is planning to continue his education at his school's sixth form.

Will he still qualify?

Yes, your son will continue to qualify.

Students aged 16-plus whose parents are in receipt of Income Support, Jobseekers' Allowance (income-based) or who get Income Support in their own right will get free school meals if they are attending a school sixth form or special school but not if they attend a sixth-form college or further education college.

For further information contact your local Area Education Office: Lancaster, Wyre, Fylde, 01524 581207; Preston, South Ribble, West Lancashire, Chorley, 01772 531812; Ribbles Valley, Hyndburn, Burnley, Pendle, Rossendale, 01254 220711. There is also a section about education benefits on: www.lancashire.gov.uk

Speed awareness

Miss D from Preston writes:

I recently received a notice from my local constabulary informing me that I have been speeding.

The notice informed me that instead of being issued with three



●SCHOOL meals are more balanced than ever and can be enjoyed by everyone.

penalty points I have the option of attending a speed awareness course.

Could you provide me with further information regarding this course?

The scheme is based on referrals from the Lancashire Constabulary, which is the referring authority on behalf of the Lancashire Partnership for Road Safety.

The scheme provides an alternative to prosecution involving the payment of a fee and the completion of a Speed Awareness Course.

If the course is not completed prosecution should normally follow. A fine and the possibility of prosecution should provide the necessary incentive for the driver to make a success of the re-training.

Not all offenders are eligible to attend a speed awareness course.

Further information can be obtained by calling the speed awareness team on 0800 3281635.

These days are our nappy days

Mrs R from Balderstone:

I am the mother of twins aged eight months and as you can imagine I go through an enormous amount of nappies each month.

I recently heard that Lancashire County Council has people offering advice on various issues including the changes that have been made to cotton nappies to encourage parents like me to convert from disposables to cotton.

I am keen to help create a better environment but at the same time disposables are convenient. Do you have any tips on how I can get information on the modern-day cotton nappy please?

Last year Lancashire County Council launched the "Bottom Line Nappy Project". Over the last year the team has had the task of dispelling the myths surrounding cotton nappies and has been offering parents all over Lancashire the opportunity to try the modern-day cotton nappy for

themselves.

The Bottom Line has converted 785 babies out of disposables meaning that approximately 785 fewer tonnes have been sent to landfill sites around the county.

For more information regarding this project please contact the Waste Helpline on 0845 0500 957.

School league tables

Mrs D from Chorley writes:

I have just moved into the Chorley area and at present I am looking into schools that my daughter could attend when she starts school in September.

I would like to know how I can access information on School League Tables before applying to a specific school for my daughter to attend.

School Performance Tables can be viewed on the Department for Education and Skills website: www.dfes.gov.uk

If you do not have access to the internet or have more questions please contact Lancashire County Council Professional Support Team on 01772 531555. Members will be happy to help you further.

Sheltered housing

Mrs C writes:

I am 83-years-old and live alone and would like to put my name down for sheltered housing.

Please could you give me some details of how I apply. I would really like to move back to the Burnley area as my grandson lives there and I would be able to see him more?

All sheltered housing issues in Burnley have been taken over by private companies.

If you give them a call on any of the contact numbers listed below they will register you and send you details of available properties in the Burnley area: Anchor Housing - 08457 758595, Calico Housing - 01282 686500.

Life is grand when help is at hand



●VOLUNTEER fun for Kirsten, left, and Janet.

LIFE has been transformed for supermarket worker Kirsten Greaves - thanks to a volunteer helper.

Volunteering means a lot for hundreds of people across Lancashire. For Kirsten (25), from Haslingden, help from volunteer Janet Melling means many chances to shop, go to the cinema, swim and even go to the pub.

Janet is only one of 400 volunteers across the county who give time through Lancashire County Council's Volunteer Service. A DVD offering guidance to effective volunteering is now available to mark Volunteers' Week.

Outgoing Kirsten was 12 when diagnosed with cerebral palsy. Her lively personality ensures she lives life to the full - and she works at Morrison's supermarket with help from Lancashire County Council's Employment Placement Service.

Student Janet's efforts pay off after work when the two get together for a good chat.

At a special event to mark this summer's Volunteers' Week Richard Jones, executive director of the county council's Adult and Community Services, said: "Good community care relies upon a caring community."

"It relies upon people of all ages and backgrounds who give a little time because they want to make a difference to other people's lives."

"All our volunteers and organisations that selflessly give up valuable time

LANCASHIRE'S Volunteer Service has launched a promotional DVD entitled "A Volunteer's Guide to Lancashire".

It tells real-life stories of volunteering in the county. Volunteering can range from helping people with washing or cooking to going for a walk or a bike ride.

The Volunteer Service offers training and education opportunities. For more details call the helpline on 01257 248118 or visit: www.openingdoors.lancashire.gov.uk

New look for weddings

ACCRINGTON Register Office is back in its permanent home following extensive re-modelling.

Normal services have resumed at the Willow Street office, part of the Mechanics' Institute building.

The investment has provided modern, light offices with improved privacy for local couples attending to give notice of their intention to marry.



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

www.lancashire.gov.uk/vacancies



Happy families

With 290 children - and still counting - Bill and Joan lead one of county's largest foster families



●PHOTO album of happy memories for Bill and Joan, pictured with adopted children Emma and Daryl. Lancashire's super-parents still send birthday cards to all the children they have fostered.

TWO children are enough of a handful for most parents – but Joan and Bill Robinson are mum and dad to 290.

The Burnley couple started with five children of their own and then adopted five others. Even then they did not want to stop – so they fostered 280 more.

Fostering is rarely easy but Bill and Joan, who started fostering children 41 years ago, say their efforts are repaid ten-fold when they see a distressed and fearful waif blossom into a cheerful and confident child.

"Children all need stability and lots of love", said Joan. "They can be difficult at first but they usually settle in within three weeks."

"You have to love children and be very patient to do this job and be prepared to treat them as you do your own."

For Joan and Bill that means taking their foster children for family holidays in their caravan – and remembering hundreds of birthdays.

Contrary to popular belief you do not need a massive house to be foster parents. Bill, Joan and their children live in a typical terraced house.

Neither do you need a massive income as financial help is provided.

"You need love and time", said Joan. "Some come here unable to talk and some just stand and stare because their natural parents have not given them any attention."

"They need the attention and you soon see them turning

EVERYONE MATTERS

Our objectives are to ensure that Lancashire is a place where people can:

- **Feel safe** ■ **Lead healthy lives** ■ **Get help if they need it** ■ **Learn and develop** ■
- Work and prosper** ■ **Enjoy a high-quality environment** ■ **Travel easily and safely**

into well-adjusted and loveable youngsters.

"They need simple things like regular mealtimes – and to know that someone cares and that there will be a nice, warm bed and clean clothes for them."

"Our own children have also benefited by seeing a different side of life."

Whereas most families boast a handful of family photos in their homes, Joan and Bill have 40 in their living room.

Typical foster placements last for less than a year, but the duo remember each child and still send them all birthday cards.

Joan added: "They are never forgotten by us and many have remained in touch well into adulthood. I now see them with their own children and one has become a TV producer."

"Everyone with patience and a love of children should consider doing it."

Adopted daughter Emma (15) added: "She is just a great



●IRENE wears Lancashire's T-shirt at Everest base camp.

Parent plea goes to Himalayas

SOCIAL workers will go to any lengths to get children into happy homes – even to Mount Everest.

Burnley-based Irene Milnes was so keen to spread the message of fostering in Lancashire that she took county council T-shirts on a walking holiday in the Himalayas.

Irene took four shirts – one for her and one for each of three sherpas who accompanied her party in the Everest section.

Could you be a super parent?

AT any one time about 1,200 children and young people are looked after by Lancashire County Council. More than half are placed in foster care.

About 50 more foster carers are needed – so Lancashire County Council has set up a freefone telephone line and a website to explain fostering to people.

Foster parents are needed for all types of situations, but the biggest need just now is for people who can look after children from the same family and also look after children long term.

County Councillor Clive Grunshaw, Cabinet member for Children and Young People, said: "We want to increase our pool of foster carers so we can best match children to foster homes."

"The people we want are very special people – people who can give the same life chances to foster children as they would give to their own."

For further details, ring 0800 1951183 or visit: www.fosteringinlancashire.co.uk

Free Nursery Education places in Lancashire for all 3 and 4 year olds

If you have a child born on or between **1 April 2001 and 31 March 2003** your child is entitled to a free part-time pre-school nursery education place from the start of the **Summer Term 2006** commencing in April.

A free place consists of a maximum of five sessions per week and no more than sixty five sessions for the Summer term. A free session is for a period of 2.5 hours in length. There are three terms in the year, covering a total of 38 weeks per year.

Places are available from any of Lancashire County Council's eligible providers of pre-school nursery education.

These can be Local Authority (LA) maintained nursery schools and nursery classes, providers in the independent, private and voluntary sectors or accredited childminders on an approved National Childminding Association (NCMA) Children Come First Network.

Further information including a parent guide and lists of eligible providers within your area may be obtained from the Childcare Information Service on Freephone 0800 195 0137.



SureStart



Public opera in Cosi castle

MUSIC fans have an opportunity to see a classic opera performed in one of Lancashire's most historic venues this month.

The Shire Hall at Lancaster Castle will host the Heritage Opera's production of *Così fan Tutte* on June 9 and 10.

Tickets (£15 adults, £12.50 concessions) are on sale at the Shire Hall on **01524 64998**.

Share your car to beat traffic - and save cash

LIFE is getting easier for commuters with a new car-share scheme that promises to cut congestion and costs.

Congestion is the bane of more and more lives – while no one likes paying thousands of pounds each year to keep even a small car on the road.

Lancashire County Council has now teamed up with partner organisations to put drivers in touch with would-be passengers.

Lancashire County Council's Jane Heath said: "This simply co-ordinates a list of people who make the same or similar journeys. At no cost, people can



now get in touch with each other.

"As well as petrol costs it will avoid congestion and parking fees."

"Not everyone wants to use the bus to cut congestion, yet everyone wants to save money. Our SharedWheels project will get them well on their way."

The scheme will be launched offi-

cially later this month but actually started working last week.

Officials are now working on the next step which they expect will involve free parking spaces for SharedWheels vehicles.

The project simply requires people to register – all aspects of the scheme are free – at the SharedWheels website with details of their journeys.

Jane added: "We know many people want to reduce their use of the car. This way allows them to save money and beat congestion."

To start saving cash almost immediately, register at: www.sharedwheels.co.uk



HELP WHEN YOU NEED IT - special report on our new customer service plans

THE OLD WAY - ageing and unsuitable buildings. They will be disposed of



●FORMER office space in Lea, near Preston.

We answer when you need us

Four-stage plan will aid public access to services. Easier phone contact is step on road that includes county-wide walk-in 'gateways'



●WALK-IN Gateway centres in which staff help customers find their way to the services they need are planned for across Lancashire. This one is in Rawtenstall library.

PUTTING people first is the main message behind a new set of customer-access initiatives from Lancashire County Council.

The authority has put in place major initiatives to enable residents to access the 700-plus services it provides with the minimum of fuss.

County Councillor Hazel Harding, Lancashire County Council leader, said: "We have always worked to ensure the people of Lancashire receive the services they need."

"Our new customer-access plans will strengthen this and provide people with quick and easy access to our services."

"It is the way forward for us, to show that Lancashire is a place where everyone matters and that we always endeavour to provide the best services we can deliver."

The initiatives are split into four parts: putting the customer first, telephone contact, face-to-face contact and self-service. Each phase is designed to put customers first.

The Customer Service Centre, based at The Red Rose

...an authority that delivers cost-effective services at a local level

- deputy leader

Office review aims to save public cash

LANCASHIRE County Council is reviewing all its office accommodation at the moment with the aim of cutting costs.

With staff presently based in scores of different locations across the county, the recently opened Red Rose Hub is a golden opportunity to relocate staff to better premises and save money at the same time.

The Hub is already providing a new home for employees who were recently based in ageing and expensive-to-maintain buildings.

Staff from a number of departments have made the move - saving Council Tax cash by ending leases while generating a gain from sale of unused sites.

Staff from Emergency Planning, Adult Services, Children's Services and Information Technology now have staff at the Hub.

Employees previously working in one department but actually based in different buildings can now work more efficiently and enjoy a much improved working environment.

Hub, Fulwood, is just one strand of the initiative that will improve how we interact with people.

The centre went live in February and has already dealt with over 70,000 calls from the public.

It is designed to enable people to phone one number and receive a first point of contact answer to their service enquiry.

Should they need further information they will swiftly be put through to the relevant department.

The centre is also part of the Shared Customer Service Centre Partnership.

The partnership involves six district authorities - Ribbles Valley, Chorley, Burnley, Rossendale, Pendle and Hyndburn, and we are working together to enable the public to phone customer service centres in any of the districts and receive information on county and district services.

The next initiative is face-to-face and will see a series of Gateways to council services available throughout Lancashire where people will be able to gain access to the authority's services.

Already sites at Accrington library and Rawtenstall library have started pilots of this initiative.

In the future information and resolution of enquiries from other public and voluntary organisations will be possible through the Gateways.

The final initiative is utilising the authority's website to enable people to get fast and convenient access to services electronically.

Access will be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

County Councillor Doreen Pollitt, deputy leader, said: "These initiatives set the scene for the future in showing Lancashire County Council as an authority that can deliver services that are cost-effective and delivered at a local level."

"The days of one-size-fits-all services are well behind us in this day and age."

THE MODERN WAY - purpose-built Red Rose Hub improves service access for you



If you need Lancashire County Council help, tel 0845 0530000

Conference facilities are now available

AS one of the largest councils in the country, many county council meetings and conferences need to take place during an average week.

Suitable conference and training facilities, such as The Red Rose Hub in Preston and Woodlands in Chorley, are therefore important tools for conducting council business.

In older buildings, access to meeting rooms can be a problem for wheelchair users and people with reduced mobility.

Lancashire County Council believes that access should be available for all. Modern conference facilities ensure that everyone can attend.

A range of high-quality, audio-visual equipment ensures that everyone can participate in presentations and conferences.

Creative presentations hold the attention of the audience and allow meetings to be more effective.

With first-class conference facilities, the costs of running the building are



reduced by allowing other groups and organisations to hire the space and access the facilities.

This benefits groups which don't have their own facilities.

External customers to The Red Rose Hub provided 20 per cent of the centre's income between September 2005 and March 2006. In the same period, the centre welcomed 25,500 visitors.

In addition, it is also possible to attract regional and national events to



Lancashire, boosting the local economy and raising the county's national profile.

The needs and desires of Lancashire's residents can then be heard by a wider audience.

Easily adaptable rooms and settings are available for various meetings and different-sized groups.

For details about arranging conferences contact: Lesley Ord on 01772 537 102 or Emily Swift on 01772 537103.

Join us and pedal to happiness and health

CYCLISTS of all abilities are being urged to oil their sprockets for a series of guided rides.

Pendle, Lancaster, Rossendale, Ribbles Valley, Burnley, Wyre and Fylde are all included in the next four weeks. The guided ride programme runs until October.

The fun starts at 10am on Wednesday 7 June when cyclists will meet at Spring Wood information centre car park in Whalley before setting off on a 22-mile ride through Sabden, Barley and Downham.

The famous Clarion House tearooms in Roughlee are the destination for bikers departing Oakhill College, Whalley, at 9am

on Sunday 11 June. The Pendleside meeting room has long been a haven for trade unionists, walkers, cyclists and politicians.

Also on 11 June, departing at 10am from the community centre car park on Garstang's High Street, is a 38-mile ride to Glasson Dock and then to Lancaster's Millennium Bridge.

Mountain bikers should enjoy a 10am eight-mile ride round the hilly Clowbridge area between Burnley and Rawtenstall on Saturday 17 June. Led by ranger Bill Brady, the ride should take up to four hours.

Details of rides are available by ringing 01772 534609 or visit: www.lancashire.gov.uk - click on cycling routes.

'The Magic of Mozart'

LANCASHIRE Sinfonietta

Friday 23rd
June at 19.30

Marine Hall, Fleetwood

Saturday 24th
June at 19.30

St. Peter's Church, Burnley

THE PROGRAMME FOR THE EVENING IS:

Mozart Overture - Don Giovanni K.527
Mozart Ah! lo previdi - Ah, fuvola - Deh, non vacar K.272
Bella mia fiamma - Resta, oh cara, K.528
(Amanda Roccroft - Soprano)
CBMP Christopher Brooks Memorial Prize -
Lancashire's Young Composer of the Year
Schnittke Moz-Art à la Haydn
Mozart Symphony No.40 in G minor, K.550

Guest Director - Lyn Fletcher

** Pre-Concert Event - 18.45 (FREE to ticket holders) **

Tickets are available from:

Sinfonietta box office tel: 01772 531794. Open Monday - Friday 9.00 - 17.00

Telephone payment by credit/debit card

Tickets are also available on the door on the night of the concert.

Prices: £7.50 (£4.50 Concessions)

Adult and Community Services



School Admissions in Lancashire

September 2007

From September 2006 apply on-line at www.lancashire.gov.uk/e-admissions

Primary Schools

If your child has a 5th birthday on or between 01/09/07 and 31/08/08 then he/she will start primary school in September 2007. You must obtain and complete Lancashire's common admission application form if you want a place for your child at a Lancashire primary school.

The closing date for applications is 24 November 2006

Secondary Schools

If your child is currently in his/her final year at primary school (Year 6) then you must apply for a secondary school place for September 2007 during September and early October 2006.

If you live in Lancashire you must complete Lancashire's common admission application form (even if you want a secondary school situated in another authority)

The closing date for applications is 20 October 2006

LATE APPLICATIONS MAY NOT BE INCLUDED IN THE INITIAL ALLOCATION PROCESS FOR SCHOOL PLACES.



If you do not receive information about primary or secondary admissions for September 2007 during early September 2006, you must urgently contact the primary school which you are interested (or which your child is attending)

You may also contact your local Education Office:

Primary

North Lancashire.....01524 581112
South Lancashire.....01772 532191
East Lancashire.....01254 220742

Secondary

North Lancashire.....01524 581163
South Lancashire.....01772 531613/531819
East Lancashire.....01254 220708



Education and Cultural Services

e Admissions
LANCASHIRE

ON-LINE SCHOOL ADMISSIONS IN LANCASHIRE

www.lancashire.gov.uk/e-admissions

For parents/carers who have a child or children due to start primary or secondary school in September 2007, Lancashire County Council will offer a convenient and time saving process for applying for school places on-line. This will provide:



• A quick and easy way of completing the common admission application form on a secure system



• School information that is easily accessible and up-to-date to assist parents/carers in identifying school preferences



• The opportunity to amend your application right up to the deadline date

• E-mail acknowledgement of all submitted on-line applications

• The opportunity for parents/carers to print a hard copy of on-line admission applications

• No risk that a paper application will be lost

• No need to deliver a common admission application form back to a school/office

• On-line notification of the outcome of all on-line applications

The on-line system will go live from September 2006 for parents and carers to apply for primary and secondary school places for September 2007.

www.lancashire.gov.uk/e-admissions

Directorate for Children and Young People



LOOK LIVELY

School Report



Andrea Gray, head,
Knuzden St Oswald's
CE Primary School

□ The best job in the world □

SUMMER in primary school is a really lovely time. Fine weather provides opportunities for outdoor learning and a chance to use the grounds for all aspects of the curriculum in a much more creative way.

In winter, the field is too icy or too wet. It's blowing a gale in the playground and the wind whips round your legs. In summer, the breeze is light and the field is full of daisies. Perfect.

This term we have been experimenting with creative ways of helping our children learn. Trying to make school a little out of the ordinary to inspire and fuel our children's imaginations.

Our school is part of the Creative Partnerships' East Lancashire Programme enabling us to invite actors, musicians, poets, dancers, sculptors - you name it - into school to work with pupils towards an educational objective.

We also have the opportunity to network with other schools on different projects and receive funding to help us to do this.

We are right at the beginning of this journey in creativity and have undertaken one project with Creative Partnerships so far.

This involved turning our school into "other worlds". Each classroom was transformed into a different place. We had a storyteller inside a tent, complete with campfire and darkness.

We had a cloud room where children were able to discuss their dreams and hang them on a dream tree. A mime artist "lost her baby" and the children were engaged to help her find it without speaking. Definitely a challenge for some!

We recently started to do five minutes of aerobics each morning to energise children, and five minutes ER (Exercises for Relaxation) in the afternoon, to prepare them for learning after a busy lunchtime playing football. The children love it (so do staff!).

I have the best job because I can choose a different class each day to join in with. It's wonderful to see happy, smiling faces in the morning and shouts of "See you tomorrow!" at half past three. This is what makes my job the best in the world.

I think I'll come back tomorrow too!

To find out more about Creative Partnerships East Lancashire look at www.creative-partnerships.com

Activities for long hols

AN unprecedented nine weeks of excitement and fun is planned for the lucky children of Burnley and Pendle.

Every child's dream is coming true this summer when changes in the school year mean that pupils will enjoy an extra-long summer holiday.

Delight for children can mean hard times for parents trying to keep them entertained - so Lancashire County Council and partner organisations are teaming up to offer a massive range of activities.

Literally hundreds of activity sessions ranging from football to swimming, painting to trampolining, canoeing to scarecrow-making, and pond-dipping to crafts are planned to make this a summer

that children will never forget.

About 35,000 summer guides are being sent home with pupils and a website and helpline have been established to assist parents.

County Councillor Alan Whittaker, Lancashire County Council Cabinet member for Schools, said: "The activities we have worked on with Burnley and Pendle councils mean that young people in the area will have more to do over the long summer holidays.

"Even now we are still developing ideas. It is already looking very exciting."

Telephone information lines are 0800 1950137 for primary school age and 0800 511111 for secondary age. The website is at:

www.Lancashire.gov.uk/schoolholidays2006



●CRAFTY: Madelaine Aspin (5) makes a birdbox helped by, left, dad Lee and voluntary ranger Ian Fairnie.

Plenty to do in the country in summer

A HOST of fun activities has been organised for country-lovers this month.

Literature and rural beauty will be mixed at Wycoller Country park, near Colne, on **Saturday 10 June** when there will be a Bronte Country Discovery Walk led by Lancashire County Council's Countryside Service.

Wycoller Hall is better known as Thrushcross Grange in *Wuthering Heights* - the hall which Heathcliff and Cathy dreamed of and which, to Heathcliff's sorrow, later became home to Cathy and Edgar Linton. A ghost on a horse reputedly gallops past on some dark nights.

Cyclists will enjoy a four-hour mountain bike ride around the Clowbridge area - between Burnley and Rawtenstall - from 10am on **Saturday 17 June**. The route is off-road and helmets must be worn.

The aisled barn in Wycoller will be the venue for a "world of wool" day between 1.30 to 4pm on **Sunday 18 June**. Activities will include demonstrations of wool spinning, sheep shearing, walking-stick craftsmanship and associated arts and crafts.

Other activities - all organised by the county council's Countryside Service - include a 50-mile **21 June** cycle ride on the Mary Towneley Loop between Rawtenstall and Burnley, a Clowbridge orienteering cycle ride on **24 June** and a "flower power" day on **25 June** at Scorton picnic site.

Telephone 01995 640557 for further details of any events.

Your chance to give councillors a hot time

MEMBERS of the public will get the chance to grill decision-makers when the county council's Cabinet Question Time rolls into Burnley and Hyndburn.

The question-and-answer open forums move around the county so that people everywhere can put councillors on the spot.

The Burnley evening will start at 7.15pm on **Tuesday 13 June** in the George Bray suite at Turf Moor. County councillors include Hazel Harding, Anne Brown, Marcus Johnstone, Tony Martin and Alan Whittaker.

The Sparth House Hotel in Clayton le Moors is the venue in Hyndburn when county councillors will include Hazel Harding, Doreen Pollitt, Jean Battle, Tony Martin and Alan Whittaker. Starting time is 7.15pm on **Wednesday 28 June**.

Further information on Question Time can be seen at: www.lancashire.gov.uk/corporate/cabinetquestiontime



●DRUMMER Jotinder Singh with Bob Wilkinson, Lancashire County Council chairman until May, both front, with Deepak Singh and Monica Rai.

Sikhs on mission to explain

THE historic ties between Britain and Sikhs were demonstrated when the county's Sikhs held anniversary celebrations.

Lancashire's Sikhs, mainly living in Preston, took the opportunity to launch a series of exhibitions detailing their role in the two world wars, Anglo-Sikh heritage, modern-day Bhangra music and their religious faith.

The culture week was organised by Preston Sikh Cultural Society, celebrating its 20th year, and members of Preston's Guru Nanak Cultural and Recreation Centre.

Not many people realise that the British Army has recruited Sikhs for 150 years. More than 83,000 Sikhs have been killed fighting with the British.

More recently the worldwide growth of Bhangra music has brought Sikh culture to a wider audience.

Performers at the celebrations included Bhangra band Apna Sangeet, Bhangra dancers Nachda Sansar, Dhol (drum) group the PR Dholies and a martial art display by Gatka.



●CHILDREN and headteacher Karen Cartwright (left) and teacher Carol Knowles sit where the new classroom and hall will be built.

Schools share £22.4m

STAFF and pupils at Burscough Bridge St John's CE Primary School are celebrating after receiving vital cash to help build new facilities.

The school is set to build a brand new hall and create a new classroom after receiving £688,212 through the county council's 2006-2008 modernisation programme.

They are also putting a further £60,000 of their own money towards the scheme which headteacher Karen Cartwright says is much needed.

She said: "At the moment we are teaching some children in a room in the local parish hall. Although the room itself is OK we really want all the school facilities together in one place. "We are delighted with the

money we have received from the county council and have been working hard to raise the 'match funding' we needed to make the project a success."

Vision reported last month on the funds allocated to schools around the county through the council's Capital Strategy. We will be telling you more about some of the exciting projects in the coming months.



Lancashire Local for:
waste recycling

Responsibility for location of recycling centres.



Lancashire Local for:
lollipop patrols

Power to run the school crossing patrol service.



Lancashire Local for:
Local safety schemes

●ACCIDENT hotspot - but safety hopes are rising at the fatal junction.

THERE was cross-party agreement that something had to be done after a number of accidents at an Oswaldtwistle blackspot.

Members of Lancashire Local (Hyndburn) voted to build a £700,000

roundabout at Britannia crossroads. Work is expected to start later this year. ●Pictured, above, at the crossroads are, from left, County Councillor Doreen Pollitt, Lancashire County Council deputy leader, Hyndburn MP Greg Pope and County Councillor Dorothy Westell.

Local deals yield swift advance

A NEW form of local government is now in operation to hand control and influence of many local services down to the 12 districts of Lancashire.

Operating on a cross-party basis, the county's 12 Lancashire Locals have authority to spend part of Lancashire County Council's £600m annual budget in areas such as car parking, bus shelters, 20mph zones, pedestrian crossings, "lollipop" staff, special maintenance of streetlights and local safety schemes on roads.

Library and museum opening hours and location of recycling centres are also now devolved to committees formed of county councillors and district councillors across the county.

County Councillor Hazel Harding, county council leader, said: "Much of this is unique nationally."

"It will put locally elected members in charge of decisions in their area - no matter what party they are members of or which council they represent."

"No-one will be able to claim that decisions are being made by people who are not familiar with the area."

"This is a genuine attempt to share real power. It is about more than mere 'consulta-

tion' - this is real power and real money."

Lancashire Locals now work right across the county.

In addition to the "delegated decision-making" in spending outlined above, Lancashire Local members from county council and district council will be able to "shape and influence" policies such as safety cameras, public transport provision, proposed sites for waste facilities and aspects of social services and adult education.

Equal numbers of representatives from the district council and county council serve on each Lancashire Local - so the majority party at county council level may or may not be the majority party at local level.

County Councillor Bernard Whittle, a Conservative member of Lancashire Local (Fylde) where the Labour Party has no elected members in the area, said: "We have to deliver."

"We are asking a district council representative to be vice-chair of each Lancashire Local precisely so we are seen to be transparent and accountable."

"For me, the Lancashire Local on Fylde will bring together the aspirations of local people as expressed by Fylde Council and the county council."

Case studies

■Lancashire Local members in **South Ribble** were concerned that very young children were not using libraries enough. Closer links are now in place between nurseries and libraries.

■Revised parking restrictions were introduced in Wolverton, **West Lancashire**, after Lancashire Local members heard of parking difficulties.

■Staff from the county council, **South Ribble** Council, the NHS and other agencies have teamed up through Lancashire Local (South Ribble) to ensure that services for older people are actually what older people want.

■Plans for a waste transfer station in Stacksteads, **Rossendale**, were dropped after Lancashire Local (Rossendale) expressed concerns about traffic levels.



Lancashire Local for:
Bus shelters

Real power for passengers.



Lancashire Local for:
Streetlights

Streetlight special maintenance.



Lancashire Local for:
Museums

Power over opening hours.

LCDL update

Lancashire County Developments Ltd

The County Council's economic development department



Gateway 2

Rosebud - Flexible Finance For Lancashire Business

The Rosebud scheme, offered by Lancashire County Developments Ltd, the County Council's economic development department, 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.

Recent recruits to the growing list of companies helped by Rosebud include:



Works With Water Nutraceuticals Ltd in the Ribble Valley.

Based in Grindleton, this exciting new company is working in partnership with others to launch a special range of fortified and functional waters that are bottled in controlled conditions to ensure they are preservative free.

The range of water available covers three key health benefits - fibre enrichment, probiotic that enhance friendly bacteria and improved and increased calcium absorption.

The WWW (Works With Water) products are the first in the UK to carry the Beneo symbol, recognised across Europe as a sign of quality.

Directors Julie Birch and Bob Davey are planning to make these beneficial drinks available through major supermarkets.

Making Learning Fun - Gateway 2

Cyber-culture has come to Rossendale, thanks to Rosebud, Lancashire's unique source of finance for growing businesses.

Newly established Gateway 2 has opened its doors at 16 Bury Road, Rawtenstall offering an Internet Gaming and Learning centre. Parent company Cybergames.org has been set up with a special mission - to integrate ICT, entertainment and education, giving access for all to the fascinating world of computers and cyber space. The company, which has been set up on a not-for-profit basis, also offers mobile ICT training.

The Chair and Vice Chair of LCDL, County Councillors Niki Penney and Hazel Harding stepped into this exciting new world when they visited the premises and met the people behind this exciting development. Sara Jayne Pelling and Sandra Harrison bring a wealth of knowledge and training skills to the business, but more importantly really believe in the benefits they can bring to local people.

County Councillor Harding said:

"Gateway 2 is a unique way of delivering education in a fun way."

"Computer games are the ideal way of engaging with young people, but Gateway 2 is bringing in people of all ages to take part in the play - learn experience. I am delighted to see this company basing itself in Rawtenstall and I am sure it will be a huge success, bringing benefits to many local people."

As a social enterprise company Gateway 2 has also benefited from LCDL's Grants For Growth scheme which offers grants up to £6000 to help move people into or towards work.

For a free Rosebud or Grants for Growth information pack contact LCDL on 01772 551888.

Lancashire County Developments Ltd.



Bake to Basics

Dinner ladies are dishing up top treats.

Visitors to school kitchens across the county are being met with bustling activity as catering staff prepare fresh delights for pupils.

"Home cooking" is back on the menu as catering staff in Lancashire bring back the fondly-remembered traditional skills associated with our grandparents.

Pre-packaged foods are on the way out, replaced instead with freshly prepared lunches, "homemade" soup with a crusty roll and plenty of fruit and vegetables to provide a balanced diet.

Skills that used to be passed from generation to generation are being brought back, in a bid to encourage pupils to swap crisps for carrots and fizzy drinks for fruit drinks.

Training sessions are also helping staff update the skills they need to have to make food look and taste more appealing. They are also being taught how to use the new blenders which are used to produce fresh soups.

Despite often having many years experience in school kitchens, this cooking revolution has been widely welcomed by catering staff eager to have a more "hands on" approach.

“Pre-packed lunches are on the way out...”

When the courses have finished, Training Officers continue to offer support and advice to staff.

Whilst it's important that the skills and knowledge are put into action following training, school catering staff usually need little encouragement.

Roger Eakhurst, assistant director of Lancashire County Commercial Services (LCCS) - the county's school meals service - explained:

"Our staff are delighted to return to cooking the food themselves. They're all passionate about their work and want to make the best possible meals for the pupils"

"Although the skills have never totally disappeared from our kitchens, we're providing updated advice and even introducing new technology to help our teams."

"Our customers have been really supportive and have seen the benefits of moving back to basics and we look forward to rolling out more training programmes in the new academic year"

For more information about LCCS and school meals visit <http://www.servinglancashire.org.uk> or contact your local school.



Janette Mason Training and development manager, LCCS

A typical day for me involves meeting up with the Training Officers, who are always busy preparing for training sessions and discussing ways to improve our work.

I have a lot of regular contact with schools, local colleges, the Healthy Schools team and of course operations staff.

We have to change our menus according to people's tastes and appeal in new ways whilst keeping good nutrition in mind.

We want to inspire our staff to encourage and persuade children to try new dishes. We also

want to use our training sessions to get feed back from the front line staff. I'm here to help deliver the new school meal standards and training is a major part of my role. I've worked for the county council for 30 years and my heart has always been with training, it's a passion of mine.

I have to develop material for our own training courses including presentations, handouts and lesson plans. From time to time, I also organise formal training through external bodies.

I've been involved in training for most of my career. I was a part time lecturer at a college for 12 years, and now I'm keen to see that all our staff have the skills that they will need in the future.

It's wonderful to see our staff members become motivated to develop themselves even further and "catch the learning bug".

Brenda and Amanda, two of our staff members, have enrolled on their NVQ Level 2 in Food Preparation and Cooking. They've also

completed a Health and Nutrition course and achieved their Advanced Food Hygiene Diplomas. Brenda has also just completed the Team Leadership Course, that I organised in partnership with Edge Hill College, near Ormskirk.

The best advice I offer to our own staff and would offer to any aspiring cooks and chefs is "try to be creative".

Think about presentation, colour, variety, and flavour. Most of all, enjoy your job!

When I was at school, I remember sitting at very long tables and enjoying Butter Pie and red cabbage, which I am pleased to say is still featured on our menus and enjoyed by pupils today.

We find it frustrating that our service is so highly regulated and has to compete with packed lunches - an option that is not usually regulated. However, by working closely with staff, we can still find some very creative and exciting ways to excite our hungry customers!



Primary school lunches remain excellent value at around £1.65 per day

Commercial services

Lancashire
County Council