



Vision



Lancashire
County Council

www.lancashire.gov.uk A 4-star council Awarded top marks by the Audit Commission July 2006

Providing • schools • highways • trading standards • social services



Museum fun

So much for families in summer activity programme

Page 7

Congestion busters

Five workers joined a 'commuter challenge' with surprising results

Page 3

Cheers

Don't drink and drive - use our bus

Page 6



●WORLD Cup fever: County Councillor Hazel Harding holds St James' winning Japanese information pack while fellow judges Richard Jones, left, and Peter Evans hold the Mexican and Ecuadorian packs from Ribby-with-Wrea CE Primary School and Goosnargh's St Francis RC Primary School.

England expects every pupil...

ENGLAND will always be the favourite team for Lancashire schoolchildren – but a recent David Beckham-backed contest showed massive enthusiasm for other teams.

In fact, anyone looking at the entries to the County Information Centre World Cup competition could find out all they wanted about each World Cup country's weather, history, cuisine and geography.

David Beckham himself sent shirts from his football academy for schools in the competition that was organised by County Information Centre Network, part of Lancashire Library and Information Service.

More than 200 schools were asked to prepare an information pack on each World Cup country.

Children at St James' Lanehead CE Primary School, Burnley, won with a pack about Japan that contained a Rising Sun flag, handpainted chopsticks, a tiny handmade football kit and finger puppets.

County Councillor Hazel Harding, one of the judges, said: "Schools have clearly taken the World Cup very seriously – both in a sporting sense and as an opportunity for education.

"Each school researched the country they were given – and that included geography, religion, culture and weather.

"I was absolutely astounded at the quality of the work."

St James' pupils won the Beckham shirt, World Cup goodie bags, bike racks



IT was not only schools and the County Information Centres that caught World Cup fever.

Staff at Lancashire Care Services celebrated Carers' Week with World Cup food tasting days across the county. Pictured above are, from left, Sally Lee, Kath Hunt and Tom Stirkaker sampling German food at Clitheroe's Mearley Fold Day Centre.

and a trip to the National Football Museum in Preston.

The Football Museum's Peter Evans was one of the judges while the third judge was Richard Jones, Lancashire County Council's executive director of Adult Social Services.

Runners-up were pupils from St Francis RC Primary School in Goosnargh and Ribby-with-Wrea CE Primary School who produced, respectively, impressive information packs on Ecuador and Mexico.

FARE'S FARE ON SCHOOL BUSES

LANCASHIRE County Council is proposing to save 48 school bus routes that had been threatened with soaring fuel and insurance costs.

The buses were soaking up Council Tax subsidies of up to £3.78 per pupil for every single journey – leaving council budgets £1.7m in the red.

Parents spoke and Lancashire County Council listened. It is now proposed, subject to a final round of consultation, to save the services by raising fares to narrow the deficit.

The 48 routes, each of under three miles, are out of 464 routes running each day. Revenue on each of the 48 totals less than 40 per cent of running costs – meaning Council Tax payers were picking up the deficit.

County Councillor Tony Martin, Cabinet member for Sustainable Development, said: "Our consultations are absolutely genuine and,

Parents' request bears fruit in battle for buses

when we can help people, we are pleased to do so.

"We are absolutely committed to the bus service – but we also have a commitment to the Council Tax payer who, on some routes, is paying more than £35 per week per pupil on routes of less than three miles.

"Some parents said they would be willing to pay more to save the services, so that is what we are proposing.

"There will still be subsidies going



●TONY Martin: new deal to save buses.

into these routes and they will continue.

Transport costs, which are kept as low as possible by going to public tender, are rising faster than inflation because of soaring fuel and insurance bills.

Discounted season tickets for termly or annual travel will still be available.

Councillor Martin added: "We are consulting once again on this proposal to save the buses and, if the responses are positive, a final decision will be made in July.

"The key thing is that people must use the services or lose them.

"We will also be working closely with schools to encourage additional bus use and to market local bus services."

It's so simple to make a fuss

COMPLAINING about Lancashire County Council services has just got easier with publication of a new booklet.

The county council always aims to provide top-quality services. But things sometimes go wrong and "Do

You Have a Complaint?" is designed to help you tell us – loud and clear!

County Councillor Doreen Pollitt, deputy leader, said: "We have had a complaints procedure for some time – but the new version makes matters simpler. People should not have to spend months making a complaint

and authorities shouldn't resent complaining – we can't improve if we don't know where we are going wrong."

Copies of the booklet are available from Paul Smith on 01772 533425 while a step-by-step guide can also be seen at: www.lancashire.gov.uk



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 assistance? 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 comes in.

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.

We've got a ticket to ride

Mrs B from Chorley writes:

I am 87 and I use my Nowcard regularly to travel into town to do my shopping. However I am now struggling to get to the bus stop as walking is getting more difficult. Is there any help available for people in my situation?

Dial-a-bus and Dial-a-ride services provide door-to-door facilities using a minibus equipped with low steps and lifts so that people who live too far away from a bus stop, or who find it difficult to use steps or are wheelchair-bound can get in and out easily.

To use a Dial-a-bus service, all you need to do is telephone your local community transport provider and book your journey. Fares are kept as low as possible, similar to ordinary bus fares for the same distance. Just as on any other bus service Nowcards can be used to travel within Lancashire.

To find the contact details for your local community transport provider please telephone Traveline on 0870 608 2608.

A little help from my friends

Mrs H from Padiham writes:

Please help. My husband is 83 and is generally in good health for his age. However, recently he has been finding general day-to-day activities increasingly difficult due to his mobility - for example, climbing the stairs. Is there any help available in these circumstances from Lancashire County Council?

We can provide a range of services to promote independent living.

You will need to contact your local adult and community office. Details can be found in the phone book under Social Services or alternatively you can visit the adult and community website on www.lancashire.gov.uk/social-services/

Staff there will be able to advise you of what options are available and a social worker will need to assess your husband's needs to find out what services he may



●ASK the queen (see below, Diamonds Are Forever). Joseph and Margery Eatough, from Great Harwood, married 60 years ago this September after meeting at a church

social event.

Six happy decades and three children, three grandchildren and two great-grandchildren later, Joseph (84) and Margery are hoping to hear from

the queen... with a little help from Lancashire County Council.

The secret of a happy marriage? Joseph says: "Kissing does not last - but cooking does."

require.

If you experience any difficulties in finding your local office, contact Lancashire County Council's Customer Service Centre on 08450 530 000.

Child out of time

Mrs S from Poulton writes:

My daughter is 13 and interested in getting a part-time job in one of the local shops.

Please could you tell me the minimum age at which a child can work and are there any regulations in place about the hours they can work? Who should I contact to find out more about this?

Generally the minimum age for children working is 14. However, in some circumstances 13-year-old children can also apply for a work permit.

You will need to contact your local Education Welfare Office to ascertain whether your child is eligible to work.

There are very strict regulations concerning working hours dependent on your child's age and whether it's a school day or a weekend.

For more details please contact the Wyre and Fylde Education Welfare office on 01253 887745.

You'll never walk alone

Mrs R from Longridge writes:

As summer is now well on its way, my husband and I would like to get out and enjoy some of the Lancashire countryside.

Please could you tell me where I can

get information on planned walking routes and maybe some walking clubs in the area?

You can find information about walking routes on the Lancashire County Council website: www.lancashire.gov.uk

There are routes included with different degrees of difficulty and safe ways to plan your walk.

Also on this website have a look at our events programme where there are lots of guided walks that have been organised throughout the year.

If you do not have access to the internet please contact the Countryside Service on 01772 534709.

Diamonds are forever

Mrs E from Great Harwood writes:

My husband and I are celebrating our diamond wedding anniversary later this year.

Could you explain the procedure for getting recognition from Buckingham Palace after 60 years of marriage?

Congratulations on your diamond wedding.

To receive a telegram from the queen for 60 years of marriage, you need to send the marriage certificate to this address:

Anniversaries Office, Buckingham Palace, London, SW1A 1AA

The word ANNIVERSARY needs to be written on the bottom left corner of the envelope.

Email: enquiries@css.lancsc.gov.uk or write to: Ask Shirley, Customer Service Centre, The Red Rose Hub, Bluebell Way, Preston PR2 5PZ. Telephone 0845 0530000.

£600,000 to ease school access

SCHOOLS in Lancashire are to benefit from almost £600,000 that will go towards making them more accessible to children with disabilities.

County Councillor Alan Whittaker, Cabinet Member for Schools, has approved funding for 37 schools across Lancashire to do work ranging from disabled toilets to "soundfield" systems for pupils with hearing difficulties.

He explained: "This is all about making mainstream schools better for young people who have disabilities."

"Schools are keen to provide the best learning environments for their pupils and these plans, which have been drawn up by the schools themselves with the support of officers, show their commitment to high standards."

The funding, which has been allocated to the county through the Department for Education and Skills, is the second major investment in schools to be announced in recent months.

The county council has also announced a programme of investment that totals £22.4m with money coming from the council and schools in the form of "matched funding".

Celebrations at new class



●NEW class at Mayfield: County Councillors Alan Whittaker (front) and Pat Case with headteacher Pete Monk and pupils.

LIFE is getting easier for pupils and teachers at a Chorley school.

Schools across Lancashire have benefited from scores of new and refurbished buildings in recent years.

The latest is Mayfield Special School in Chorley where a new classroom has been built and one refurbished to accommodate increasing pupil numbers.

Headteacher Pete Monk said: "We had been struggling to accommodate children properly for some time."

"It benefits pupils and makes life better for the teachers to have properly equipped new classrooms."

Older pupils from the school's further education unit served food at the opening ceremony.

Councillors in spotlight

SENIOR decision-makers will be put on the spot in Lancaster and Fylde in July.

Members of the public get a chance to grill senior county councillors on any subject of their choosing at the regular question-and-answer Cabinet Question Times held across the county.

First is at 7.15pm on Wednesday 19 July at Carnforth High School when councillors present will be Hazel Harding, Jean Battle, Chris Cheetham, Marcus Johnstone and Vali Patel.

St Annes YMCA in Fylde is the venue for a question time at 7.15pm on Wednesday 26 July. Councillors will be Hazel Harding, Jean Battle, Chris Cheetham, Clive Grunshaw and Tony Martin.

Don't forget - your county councillor can help. Contact details are available on 0845 0530000 or at: www.lancashire.gov.uk



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

www.lancashire.gov.uk/vacancies

Lancashire
County Council

NEWS IN
BRIEFFamily
activities in
the country

THERE is something for everyone in Lancashire's countryside this month.

A series of activities, organised by Lancashire County Council's Countryside Service, includes:

Sunday 2 July, 1pm – nature of Preston Junction, a three-hour walk exploring birds, wildflower and trees near Preston centre. Starts Gujarat Community Centre, South Meadow Lane, Preston.

Saturday 8 July – map and compass workshop, Beacon Fell Country Park. Telephone 01995 640557 for details. Booking essential.

Saturday 15 July, 1pm – Trumper trek through Preston Junction. All-terrain electric buggies provide access through nature reserve for EVERYONE. Buggies are free but must be booked in advance. Walkers welcome. Telephone 01995 640557. Meet Gujarat Centre, South Meadow Lane, Preston.

Sunday 23 July, 1pm – Beacon Fell Country Park, two-hour wildflower walk.

Friday 28 July, 1pm – Beacon Fell Country Park, "brisk walking" for up to three hours.

Saturday 29 July, 11am – Beacon Fell Country Park, family furry animal walk. Nice walk and picnic on top of the fell – adults, teens, teddies, dolls, pets etc.

Details of all events on 01995 640557.

Fair deal at
the pump

MOTORISTS can be confident they're getting a Fair Measure on the Forecourt thanks to a scheme run by Lancashire Trading Standards.

Garages receive regular checks from Trading Standards to ensure they display the correct price for fuel and their



●FAIR measure: County Councillor Jean Battle checks out the petrol pump scheme.

pumps are dispensing an accurate measure.

A national survey showed that 99 per cent of drivers thought such checks important.

Fair Measure on the Forecourt is a scheme developed by Lancashire County Council Trading Standards Service to promote these checks and garages are now being urged to join the initiative to boost consumer confidence.

A highly visible sticker placed on the pumps indicates that the garage receives a regular visit by trading standards officers.

Commuter surprise
in race against time

Winner: bike



DEPART: 8am
ARRIVE: 8.14am

DAVE CRONSHAW: "The advantage for me was that I could get on a near-by cycle route which cut more than a mile off the journey!"

"It meant I didn't come across any cars or traffic lights."

"There was only one hill. I'm a keen cyclist anyway as it keeps me fit and saves me time."

2nd: car



DEPART: 8am
ARRIVE: 8.24am

ANN QUINLAN: "A kind gentleman got me off to a good start by waving me out onto Leyland Road - but I was instantly stopped by a red light."

"I know that traffic would have been far busier had I been 20 minutes later and, overall, I was lucky with traffic lights."

"I arrived at work feeling relaxed."

3rd: bus



DEPART: 8am
ARRIVE: 8.26am

JOANNE RISHTON: "Twenty six minutes wasn't a bad time, but I could have taken an alternative route for this particular trip - a route that might have been faster."

"I almost always get the bus to work as it is cheaper than the car and almost as fast. The walk at either end also keeps me fit."

4th: train



DEPART: 8am
ARRIVE: 8.42am

JACQUELINE DAY: "I had to walk only a short distance to the train station and my time should have been competitive."

"The train, however, was 16 minutes late. The train is not usually late - I often use it four times per week."

"I enjoy using the train because, as a general rule, it saves me time."

5th: walking



DEPART: 8am
ARRIVE: 8.46am

CAROL MORLEY: "I walk the route every day and suppose that 46 minutes is a fairly typical time."

"I like the way it keeps me fit. It means I don't have to go to a gym and I arrive at work in a good mental frame of mind."

"That more than makes up for taking longer."

Challenge highlights easier way to work

IT was a case of the hare and the tortoise when five workers set off on a "commuter challenge" to find the best way to work.

The five travelled the near-four miles from Lostock Hall to Preston centre - and while they were expected to do their best, no one was allowed to race.

Starting time on the busy commuter route was 8am on a Monday morning and each commuter chose their own form of transport from a car, a bike, the train, walking or the bus.

And it was cyclist Dave Cronshaw who won, taking only 14 minutes - a full 10 minutes ahead of Ann Quinlan in her sports Peugeot.

County Councillor Tony Martin, Lancashire County Council Cabinet member for Sustainable Development, said: "It was Lancashire County

Council's own "wacky races" - but no dirty tricks were allowed.

"Many of we drivers have suspected that traffic jams waste more time than we save. We now know that on the busiest routes that is true."

"Different means of transport will be faster and more efficient on different routes - even good cyclists will be slowed down by hills."

"I fully suspect that walkers or public transport users would win on some routes and, obviously, the car would be fastest for many trips."



●TONY Martin: There are many good ways to travel.

"What the experiment did show, however, was that commuters could gain by doing their own 'commuter challenge'. Trying different forms of transport can save time as well as money."

The five - Dave Cronshaw, bus passenger Joanne Rishton, train passenger Jacqueline Day, motorist Ann Quinlan and walker Carol Morley - were timed from when they left the same place in Lostock Hall until they arrived at their place of work.

The clock kept ticking on while walking to and from the bus and train and while parking the car and walking the rest of the way to work.

Councillor Martin added: "Dave had an advantage by having a cycle shed at work so he didn't have too far to walk once he arrived in Preston."

"Even so it was a surprise to many of us that he beat the train."

Ask 'Bob' for help
to beat bus trouble

A ROBUST new offensive is being launched to aid public safety on the buses and at bus stops.

Last month's Vision announced the use of undercover council staff to travel on the buses and catch out troublemakers.

This month will see the launch of an ASBOB (Anti-Social Behaviour on Buses) telephone hotline which will allow drivers and members of the public to report poor behaviour.

The county council's Safer Travel Unit is also targeting youthful miscreants at bus stops - bad behaviour will result in Acceptable Behaviour Contracts.

Rick Wilson, Lancashire County Council's Safer Travel Unit Manager, said: "Feeling safe is everyone's right."

"Drivers and members of the public can now report loutishness within minutes, whereas it often used to take up to a week for an incident to be reported and recorded."

"In the case of school buses, the new reporting system will mean poor behaviour being reported to the school before the child even arrives at the school gates."

"Images from CCTV cameras will also be sent to the school before the end of the day."

The new ASBOB number is 0845 0530040.

Advice at your fingertips

ADVICE and information on the support available to carers is now available on a new county council website.

Support includes short breaks, residential breaks,

day care, home care, community support and a voucher scheme that pays for respite care.

The site, launched as part of national Carers' Week, also contains information with information and minutes from the

Lancashire Carers' Forum and the Asian Carers' Forum - meetings of which give people the chance to meet with county council officers and members.

The site is at: www.lancashire.gov.uk/carers

Oil your gears and
get out on our
guided bike trips

MORE guided bike rides have been organised to give cyclists of all abilities the chance to get out into Lancashire's beautiful countryside.

Minor roads through flat Fylde should provide safe cycling fun on **Saturday 1 July** when author Mike Hutchinson will lead a five-hour ride through the Garstang and Preesall areas. The ride departs from Garstang car park at 9.30am.

Sunday 2 July will see an 11am ride from Broughton to Elswick.

Preston Flag market is the starting point for a five-hour ride through Salwick, Treales, Wharles, Elswick and Cottam. The ride, led by Jack Stokes and Syd Thorpe departs at 10am on **Sunday 9 July**.

There are other guided rides, across Lancashire, on **14 July** and **16 July**. All rides are free.

More details from 01772 534609 or by clicking on the "cycling route" option at: www.lancashire.gov.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.



children first
partnership
SureStart

Lancashire
County Council

Children's centres put families first

Park Children's Centre, Skelmersdale



● **LEARNING** is fun for Benjamin Mussell, pictured with mum Michelle.

Children's centres exist in every part of Lancashire and 31 more are planned by 2008

PARENTS have never had more support in bringing up children than they do in modern Lancashire.

The county now has 6 children's centres – and 31 more are planned by 2008.

It means support and education for children aged 0-5 while support for parents includes vocational training, health sessions, help with nutrition, toy and book libraries and learning practical skills.

"The wellbeing of children cannot be seen separately from that of their parents," said Dot Tinsley, acting manager of Skelmersdale's Park Children's Centre.

"The idea of the centres is that they are a one-stop shop for children and families in the hub of the community.

"Very few of the services in the centres are entirely new. The centres, however, bring them together under one roof – services such as education, social care, child care, healthy eating and even courses on stopping smoking."

Services available at Park, formerly an empty primary school, also include breastfeeding support, baby massage and play sessions. There is a similar range of services available at all the county's children's centres.

An OFSTED-registered nursery is to open in the centre this month, complete with an indoor "play street", soft-surface play areas, fully qualified staff and a "key worker" system in which each child's needs and development is monitored.

The nursery will have 3 full-time day care places.

Dot added: "Children's centres have almost everything a

Park Children's Centre, Skelmersdale



● **MESSY:** Vicky and Emma Collins.

family could need. Where we can't help directly we will point them in the right direction.

"This building has always been a focal point for the community, and we are very proud to have maintained its character while giving it a new use."

Another children's centre will open in the Skelmersdale area in autumn while Tanhouse and Dignum Sure Start Children's Centre, also in the Skelmersdale area, is already open.

For more details on Park, telephone 01695 554535.

£600,000 boost for schools

SCHOOLS in Lancashire are to benefit from almost £600,000 that will go towards making them more accessible to children and young people with disabilities.

County Councillor Alan Whittaker, Cabinet Member for Schools, has approved funding for 3 schools across

Lancashire to carry out work ranging from installing disabled toilets to "soundfield" systems for pupils with hearing difficulties.

He explained: "This is all about making mainstream schools better for young people who have disabilities.

"Schools are keen to provide the best learning environments for their pupils and these plans, which have been drawn up by the schools themselves

with the support of officers, show their commitment to high standards.

"I'm delighted to be able to allocate this money and help more of our schools improve standards and promote inclusion."

The funding is the second major investment in schools to be announced in recent weeks. The county council has also announced a £2.4m programme of investment.

You're telling us!

Send your letters to:

The Editor, Vision, Corporate Communications Group, County Hall, Preston PR1 8XJ. neil.graham@css.lancscs.gov.uk

Veteran support

MANY Vision readers will either be services veterans or know of such veterans.

Some veterans will be of the generation that served so magnificently in WW2 while others will have served entirely as bravely elsewhere and at other times. You are defined as a veteran even if you served just one day in the navy, army or air force – and the Veterans' Agency can now help you access a vast network of support and guidance.

The agency is the focal point within the Ministry of Defence for providing free information and advice on a range of issues.

It may be accessing service records, War Pension entitlement, health concerns, compensation – the Veterans' Agency is here to help.

Wherever you live, one of our dedicated welfare managers can visit you in your home for face-to-face help on issues such as statutory benefits, health, training, employment and housing. Each works with a network of other groups to provide sound practical assistance.

Our helpline number, for all inquiries, is freephone 0800 69277 while written inquiries should be addressed to: Veterans' Agency, Tomlinson House, Norcross, Thornton-Cleveleys, Lancashire FY5 3P.

MRS J COOPER
Veterans' Agency

No point in saving

MY husband and I have worked all our lives, paid our taxes and National Insurance (Stop Right Now, Vision, May) We bought our house in 94 and raised a family of three children.

Yes, we have had hard times and struggled to pay the bills. We managed without being a burden on the state.

Now as we are getting older and I have health problems, I have realised that without my husband caring for me I would need care in a residential home. It would mean I would have to sell my home to pay for it.

I find this very unfair as I have paid my way through life only to be penalised when I need help, while some members of our society who have never contributed to the system continue to get everything for free.

It makes me wonder whether it is worth the effort to be an honest working member of society or to say, "Blow it, let the state keep me," and receive a host of magical benefits.

MRS D BRIERLEY
Longridge

Spotlight on parents

NRLINNESS in children surely has only one cause – bad parenting.

At last, someone is doing something about the rash of poor behaviour we see on the streets.

That is why I have been so pleased to read about the children's centres now being established across Lancashire.

Wherever you see a bad child you often know an off-the-rails parent is in the background.

Yet no one is beyond redemption in any way.

Dare I suggest that the first step back towards the straight and narrow starts with getting back into work – so it is great that the children's centres offer help with training and job applications for parents.

No one in work hangs around street corners until midnight, nor tolerates their children doing the same.

If the centres prove successful everyone will gain from a decrease in anti-social behaviour.

IRONSIDES

Letters containing a name and address will be given priority in publication. Letters may be edited. We are unable to provide individual replies.

A *Vision* competition with **Virgin trains**

The return of the train



VISION readers can enjoy a great day out in Scotland by winning our quick and easy competition.

We have first-class tickets to Edinburgh and Glasgow.

Go for a day or longer providing you arrange your own midweek accommodation.

Edinburgh and Glasgow are world-famous for shopping, sightseeing and entertainment. You are sure to find whatever interests you most in either city.

Your journey begins in style and comfort from a choice of Lancashire mainline stations. Meals or snacks, depending on the time of day, are included.

There's a choice of radio stations at your seat and a free newspaper/in-house magazine. The award-winning compact shop offers a range of useful merchandise.

Friendly rail staff are there to help you during your journey and on arrival at your destination.

We have two pairs of first-class tickets and are offering a family (up to two adults and two children) one of the prizes.

LET US KNOW IF YOU PREFER A FAMILY TICKET WITH YOUR ENTRY.

To be in with a chance, simply answer the following and send us your entry before the closing date of Tuesday 18 July.

Which are Scotland's two world-famous cities?

Send your entries, stating whether you wish to be considered for the family ticket or the pair of first-class tickets, to:

Virgin competition, Vision, County Hall, Preston PR1 8XJ.

For Virgin Train information and bookings, including special offers, visit virgin.com/trains or ring 08457 222 333. Lines open 8am-10pm.

Usual competition rules apply and the editor's decision is final. Accommodation is not included. Transport to/from mainline stations is the responsibility of the winners.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Libraries go live

HOURS of browsing heavy books has been changed to the click of a button following the launch of Lancashire County Council's Online Reference Library.

Shelf-loads of dictionaries, encyclopaedias and archives are now available digitally making it easier than ever for visitors to find what they want.

Library members don't even have to visit their local branch to use it as most of the website's services can be accessed from any internet PC.

Well-known titles available include the Oxford English Dictionary, Encyclopaedia Britannica, the Dictionary of National Biography and the Grove music and art dictionaries.

It also contains photos, postcards and information from local archives.

Anyone researching their family tree can access specialist website Ancestry to access to census data on births, deaths and marriages. This service is only available on library computers.

To use the online library you need to be a Lancashire Library member. Membership is free.

Details and access to the online library from: www.lancashire.gov.uk/libraries or your local branch.

From the horse's mouth

MEMBERS of the British Horse Society have presented an award to Lancashire County Council and its partners for work in opening up the countryside.

The county council's Countryside Service teamed up with Groundwork and Pendle Council to upgrade a bridleway in Colne's Alkincoats Park area.

The £20,000 project has converted existing boggy bridleway into a path suitable for disabled people, horse riders, walkers and bikers.

New look for centre

A REFURBISHED youth centre has been officially reopened for young people and other members of the community.

A new kitchen, toilet and lift, all suitable for disabled people, have been installed at Lostock Hall's Double Bridge Centre for Young People and the Community.

The public can use the Watkin Lane centre's computer-learning facilities. More details from Loz Lomax on 01772 313421.

Class act

INFORMATION and advice on adult education classes and sensible dog ownership will be available every 4th Friday in the month at Whitworth Library.

Roman visit

SCENES from Roman life are to be re-enacted at Ribchester Museum on 9 and 10 July. Telephone 01254 878261 for details.



Awards return to honour public spirit

Join our hunt for the hero on your street



●FLASHBACK to Red Rose 2005: Andrew Flintoff's parents, Colin (right) and Susan (left) are pictured with Sir Tom Finney and County Councillor Hazel Harding. Andrew had been awarded "Lancastrian of the Year".

NOMINATIONS are now open in the Red Rose Awards to find Lancashire's most public-spirited people.

Ten categories offer ordinary people the chance to shine in the annual ceremony that recognises achievement in everything from bravery, selflessness, teaching and helping your community to being a good parent.

There is something for everyone in the Lancashire County Council-backed awards.

But it is up to you to get nominating the people you think deserve the honour of winning.

County Councillor Dorothy Westell, one of the judges, said: "The emphasis this year is on ordinary people doing extraordinary things."

"When you think of it you realise that Lancashire has thousands of such people – we all see good parents on a daily basis, we have all heard of young people being very selfless in giving their time to help others."

"Lancashire should be very proud of such people – they put the heart into what is a great part of the country. Lancashire County Council is proud to recognise these people."

Category winners in previous years have included Burnley's Brunshaw Action Group for its voluntary work with young people and health worker

Categories

- **Teacher of the Year**
- **Parent of the Year**
- **Community team** – for voluntary groups
- **Community champion** – for building community spirit
- **Young Person of the Year**
- **Amateur Sports person**
- **Businessperson of the year**
- **Lancashire Hero**
- **Celebrity of the Year** (to be decided by public vote from list nominated by judges)
- **Lancastrian of the Year** (named by judging panel and not open to public nomination or vote)

Steve Mannion who joined other medics in helping tsunami victims.

A particularly heroic winner from last year was Paul Woodhouse who saved his mum's life in a car/lorry smash on the M6.

Councillor Westell added: "Paul was hugely brave – but not all categories require braveness."

"What all categories require is just people who think of others and the wider community as much as themselves."

"Red Rose is about businesspeople who create jobs, it is about teachers who prepare people for the future, it can even be about someone who pops to the shops on behalf of an infirm neighbour."

"They all add in their own way to our great Lancashire community."

A new category will be celebrity of the year. Judges will put forward their own nominations and then members of the public will vote on who should win.

Judges will include ordinary people from across Lancashire as well as county councillors and media personalities.

Nomination forms are now available in libraries, county information centres and in the county council mobile information unit that regularly visits every part of the county.

They are also available at the reception desks of our partners at the Lancashire Evening Post, Rock FM, Radio Lancashire, Magic 999 and on the Rock FM "ThunderTruck".

Nominations close on 22 September and the award ceremony will take place on Lancashire Day – 27 November.



●ROAD rescue: Paul Woodhouse won Lancashire's Young Person of the Year Award for pulling his mum from a car crash.

Everyone has a chance of honour in fair-play award

LAST year's "Lancastrian of the Year" was cricket ace Andrew Flintoff.

But not every winner needs to be as famous. Good work is done at all levels.

Take, for example, the brave actions of teenager Paul Woodhouse who pulled mum Carol out of their car window after a collision on the M6.

Paul, from Lancaster, was pulling his mum from the wreckage when a second collision occurred and shunted the car further down the road.

Teacher of the Year was Julie Morrow, whose determination made massive improvements at her nursery school.

Businessperson of the Year was Rossendale builder and developer Stephen Ashworth. His company is now expanding nationwide, spreading jobs and prosperity to many.

Agencies team up to put children first

EXTRA protection for children is now in place after the formation of the Lancashire Safeguarding Children Board.

The new body is intended to ensure that children's welfare does not fall "between the cracks" of different organisations – as was revealed elsewhere in the infamous Victoria Climbié case.

The work of all agencies, voluntary and statutory, in Lancashire will now be co-ordinated on a range of issues including:

- Accidental injury and death
- Maltreatment, neglect, violence and sexual exploitation
- Bullying and discrimination
- Crime and anti-social behaviour and
- Child security and stability.

Gill Rigg, Lancashire County Council's director of Children's Integrated Services, said: "Partnership working is fundamental to safeguarding the well-being of children and young people."

"We will work as a board and as member agencies to develop effective measures to keep Lancashire's children safe."

Also represented are NHS trusts, police, district councils, schools and the NSPCC.

Five sub-groups will be established across Lancashire to focus on local priorities. They will be in Preston; Chorley, South Ribble and West Lancashire; Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale; Hyndburn and Ribbles Valley; Lancaster, Fylde and Wyre.

High-tech boost for future libraries?

SHOPPING Channel-style techniques could be adopted by Lancashire's top-rated libraries in a bid to boost reading in the future.

Keen readers may soon be ordering books over the internet – and receiving them at home or other local outlets the following day – after county library chiefs requested a long-term probe into the strategic direction of Lancashire Library and Information Service.

Other avenues to be explored include use of latest supermarket

techniques such as uncluttered displays and lively marketing.

County Councillor Chris Cheetham, Lancashire's library boss, will guide the service into the future with help from a task group established by the county council's independent and multi-party Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Cheetham said: "The core activity of libraries is about books and will remain about books. This group will take a medium- and long-term view on what people want."

"There is still the same thirst for knowledge as ever there was.

The question is how best we can satisfy that."

"We have to look at what modern users want. We will remain a customer-focused service but will be using techniques that are proven to work elsewhere. It may involve retail techniques to encourage people to visit and it may mean taking space for books and computers in supermarkets in areas where there isn't a library."

"One thing may be computers. We already have the People's Network computers which allow access to the internet. We could introduce separate computers for

people to order books – which could then be delivered next day."

"We want a vibrant library and information service and that means we must look at what people want in this modern age. The Libraries and Information Services Task Group is in an ideal position to see what works elsewhere."

Task group members will spend the summer exploring how to modernise libraries before reporting to Councillor Cheetham in September.

One of the council's senior officers has already visited Cumbria where new library "outlets" have

been established in supermarkets in remote areas.

Councillor Cheetham added: "More and more people these days shop online and our online reference library is already popular with over 48,000 monthly visits."

"Our whole objective is to improve services."

The task group, led by County Councillor Kevin Ellard, is also to seek the views of groups including Lancashire Local committees across the county, parish councils, Galloway's Society for the Blind, Lancashire Youth Council and local MPs.

LOOK LIVELY

School report



Andrew Bateman, head, Moorhead High School, Accrington

We need a long break!

I WRITE this looking out of my office early one evening, taking in the smell of newly cut grass on the lawns outside. Oh, how I wish it was the lawn at home - which really does need cutting but it will have to wait.

It is summer and like most years, or so it seems, we have been enjoying a heatwave.

All very well for those who can enjoy it but at this time of year it's really tough on our Year 11 students who are in the middle of what perhaps are the most important exams they will take.

Five years of hard work at high school and despite taking a number of modular exams during Years 10 and 11, so much depends on a few examination hours in June.

The pull of the World Cup is also a distraction for many. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could really get things organised so that the good weather and the World Cup coincided with the end of the exam season - or even the end of term?

While preparing to say goodbye and good luck to our Year 11 leavers, we are also in the middle of preparing for another school year.

This morning I had the privilege of announcing to students who will act as senior students ("prefects" to some) and who will be the head boy/girl and their deputies.

Our students have to apply for these positions and go through a rigorous interview. Those who were successful take on the responsibility of organising many events in school - a tremendous opportunity for developing leadership skills for the future.

At the other end of our school we are well on with our plans for our new students who are all eager to start with us in September. Staff and students have been to visit them in their primary schools and they will spend a day with us at the start of July to get used to "big" school. It's an exciting time for students.

We soon have the long holiday! Oh, how lucky we are to have such a break along with everyone else - crowded beaches and attractions and high season prices - but at least we don't have to take our children out of school in term time!

Holidays in term time always result in a dip in performance. Come to think of it though, what's all this about a long holiday? Our site supervisors find it increasingly difficult to get cleaning and maintenance work completed during the break because teaching staff and students are involved in activities during most weeks.

Fun pack - for parents!

HELP is available for Burnley and Pendle parents who need to find things to occupy their children in this year's nine-week summer holiday.

Thousands of copies of Summer Fun, a 44-page booklet, have been sent to parents by schools and a website and telephone helplines are being constantly updated.

The move to a standard school year has led to this year's extended holiday. Lancashire County Council has teamed up with a number of partners to provide a bumper range of activities at more than 100 centres.

County Councillor Alan Whittaker, Lancashire County Council Cabinet member for Schools, said: "This will be a holiday that children will remember for ever. Most will never again have the same chance for fun in their lives."

"Our booklet details activities from football to swimming, from trampolining to scarecrow-making. There are literally hundreds of sessions for everyone."

The website - updated daily - can be seen at: www.lancashire.gov.uk/summerholidays2006 while telephone helplines are 0800 1950137 (primary children) and 0800 511111 (secondary).

Youth take Spanish steps

BARCELONA could soon be inspiring the future of east Lancashire towns after youngsters went to the Mediterranean to study urban transformation.

Elevate, the massive housing renewal scheme, is already pumping tens of millions of pounds into the area and housing bosses want to know what young people want for their area.

Elevate teamed up with Eavesbrook Housing Association and youth workers to send a small group of east Lancashire teenagers to see how an injection of public money transformed Barcelona.

The Catalan city was formerly a rundown industrial area until the Olympics brought the chance to improve transport, the environment and job opportunities.

Climb aboard for a safe night on the tiles

REAL ale enthusiasts raised a glass to celebrate the return of a bus service which is just the ticket for folks wishing to sample some of Pendle's best beer.

Lancashire County Council's Pendle Wayfarer Cask Ale Trail has resumed service, running hourly services from Nelson bus station on Thursday nights starting at 7pm with the last service departing at 10pm.

Tom Noon, Bar Manager of the Bay Horse Inn, Roughlee welcomed cask ale drinkers last week as the popular service dropped off visitors keen to sample some local brews.

Susan Buckley, Lancashire County Council special projects manager, said: "Summer nights are ideal to make use of the Cask Ale Trail to enjoy some of our wonderful local pubs."

"The bus made 50 passenger

journeys within the space of three hours in its first week of operation."

"Travellers can choose to stay at one pub or switch between different outlets and eating establishments whilst sampling the traditional, mystical fine Pendle cask ales."

The bus takes a picturesque route through Pendleside villages, calling at Barrowford, Blacko, Roughlee, Barley, Fence and Higham.

The service will operate as demand dictates until 29 December 2006. Passengers buy one ticket costing £2.50 which allows them to get on and off the bus whenever they like on a round-trip. Child tickets cost £1.55.

Timetable details are available from six pubs on the route, tourist information points and online at <http://www.transportforlancashire.com/services/pendle-wayfarer/docs/Ale.pdf>



●ALE Trail enthusiasts toast the bus outside one of the pubs visited.

WE all see the work of Lancashire County Council's countryside officers whether we realise it or not.

They ensure paths remain open, they organise country walks and make sure that fences and walls are repaired. As well as helping wildlife flourish they work to help the public appreciate Lancashire's beauty.

What does your job involve?

We are the first point of contact for members of the public, landowners and community organisations. If we cannot help people with a project we will point them in the direction of someone who can.

What sort of projects?

It could be a landowner wanting to plant trees, a school wanting to start a wildlife area or a parish council, for example, wanting to improve local access.

A large area of my work is improving access to the countryside for disabled people and members of ethnic minorities.

Many ethnic minority groups have traditionally not had the leisure time or the cultural tradition of getting out into the countryside. That is changing. Part of this is family background - many people first get into the country because their parents took them and they carry on as they grow up.

How can you tackle that?

Disabled people face man-made barriers such as stiles and steps. Lancashire County Council provided £200,000 a few years ago to work with landowners and district authorities to

remove these physical barriers.

There are some sites, such as Beacon Fell, where it is difficult to make physical alterations - so we have bought a small number of electric "tramper" vehicles. These vehicles can go over quite rough terrain.

The Trampers are popular and, using an Aggregates Levy Fund grant, we have bought more and a carrier so we can take them across Lancashire.

There is quite a section of the populace that rarely, if ever, gets into the countryside. We have to change that.

How did you become a countryside officer?

I have always had an interest in the countryside and wildlife, going back to watching deer and badgers as a child.

A warden got tired of throwing me off his nature reserve so he asked me to get involved as a volunteer.

I have since gained a degree in environmental science and an MSc in environmental planning. I have had many jobs since, including running a safari camp in Botswana.

Countryside officers also help oversee Green Partnership Awards which are available for small environmental projects planned by groups such as schools, parish councils and community groups. The grants are typically £4-500 and more information is available at: www.lancashire.gov.uk/environment/grants/gpa/index.asp

Voice of Vision



Tony Lund - countryside officer

How has the job changed over the years?

I have worked for Lancashire County Council for five years now and the main change I have seen is more of a focus on opening up the countryside to groups that haven't traditionally used it.

What do you like about your job?

The variety of work and being able to work in some of Lancashire's best countryside. I get to meet many interesting people.

The management also gives me a lot of freedom to develop my role.

What do you do in the winter?

Pretty much the same as in the summer. We just put on an extra layer of clothing and keep the waterproofs handy.

What do you dislike about the job?

The paperwork can get annoying.

What gives you the most satisfaction?

I just like seeing people enjoying themselves in the countryside. For the future I would really like to see people do more walking near their homes.

Many people drive many miles to go on a walk which makes little environmental sense when there are very nice walks on their doorstep.

Trampers are free of charge and anyone interested in using them should ring the Beacon Fell ranger on 01995 640557.



●CHILDREN explore a wartime "discovery box" at one of our museums.

Go back to the future for summer fun

MUSEUMS are ideal as places to entertain the children this summer.

Whether you fancy a day by the sea, a trip to the countryside or want to add some fun and culture to your city shopping trip, Lancashire Museums have some wonderful locations to choose from.

Today's museums are places where you can explore, touch, learn, discover, enjoy and most of all have fun! They can bring out the child in all of us.

For younger visitors in particular a trip to a museum can be a magical experience that will stay with them forever.

And at 11 venues throughout Lancashire accompanied children go absolutely free (apart from Lancaster Castle).

Our new Lancashire Museums' Explorer tickets mean you can visit your local museum for a full year for just £6.

All museums have a programme of events for the summer, from live performances and trails to fun art and craft activities. Check out website: www.lancsmuseums.gov.uk to find out what's going on near you.

Here are a few ideas to get you started:

■Experience the atmosphere that inspires television at Queen Street Mill Textile Museum, Burnley.

Walk in the footsteps of the stars of the BBC's recent 1970's drama "Life on Mars". Take a trip back in time at the world's last working 19th century steam-powered weaving mill.

Experience the sight and sounds of three hundred looms weaving and feel the heat from the fires of the huge Lancashire boiler, PEACE.

■Visit **Turton Tower**, near Bolton, a distinctive Tudor house close to the beautiful West Pennine Moors and Jumbles Country Park.

Children large and small will enjoy the "Bug Safari and Woodland Trail" or, for younger ones, there's traditional storytelling with Tales from the Tower.

Turton Tower has lots of free parking and a tea room with a patio area for sunny days.

■For a breath of seaside air, try **Fleetwood Museum** where you can follow the story of the town's famous

Visit a museum to keep your child amused



fishing industry, visit the hi-tech "netting the bay" gallery or relax in our bright and breezy Galley café.

Bring the children along to the "Seashore Safari" beach walk or to the fun craft days, making masks and puppets.

■The City museums in **Preston** or **Lancaster** always have lots going on over the summer. Look out for "A Soldier's Life", "Medieval Madness" and "Sample Saturday" activity days each month at the Museum of Lancashire in Preston.

Located in the heart of Lancaster is the City Museum. Discover more about the city's colourful past and make your own "Scrap Book" of Lancaster's history.

Just a short walk away is the

Judges' Lodgings, **Lancaster's** oldest town house.

Children of all ages can enjoy making toys in our "Childhood" craft days throughout the summer.

Or how about the Maritime Museum, also in **Lancaster**, where you can re-live the days of the "Viking Invasion", making shields, jewellery and discovering more about life as a Viking.

This is just a small selection of what's happening over the summer season.

For a copy of the "Family Friendly" leaflet please telephone 01772 790833, e-mail museums.information@mus.lancscc.gov.uk or visit the website: www.lancsmuseums.gov.uk

Bargain ticket saves you cash

JUST £6 buys a step back in time with Lancashire Museums' 12-month Explorer pass.

The bargain ticket gives you a year's entry to your favourite museum while £10 buys a Multipass and the £18 Family and Friends' Multipass allows entire families to visit all Lancashire's 12 museums.

Just think, that can represent hundreds of hours of historic fun at magnificent Lancaster Castle, atmospheric textile mills, grand country houses, maritime museums and the marvellous Museum of Lancashire.

For further information visit www.lancsmuseums.gov.uk or talk to any museum staff.

LCDL update

Lancashire County Developments Ltd
The County Council's economic development department



Number Fun



Playing for Success



Clitheroe Royal Grammar

Maths Matters!

Lancashire County Developments Ltd, the County Council's economic development department, teamed up with Lancashire's Maths Advisers to support Lancashire Maths Week in June.

Pupils across the county from primary, secondary and special schools took part in events and competitions with a mathematical basis during this special week which included the final of the Lancashire Maths Challenge.

Held for the first time last year, Lancashire Maths Week is thought to be unique across the UK and started with a lively event in Burnley. 'Number Fun' presented by consultant and entertainer Dave Godfrey gave primary school pupils the opportunity to enhance their number skills through song and rhyme.

Lancashire's two football clubs also got in on the act with 'Playing for Success' particularly apt this year with the World

cup capturing attention. Groups of young people aged 10 to 12 were asked to follow a mathematical trail around the football grounds, taking in areas like the Directors Box, players baths and trophy rooms that they would not normally be able to access.

Pupils were also enthralled at 'Murderous Maths' an event held in Leyland where host and author of the Murderous Maths books, Kjartan Poskitt presented an enchanting and fascinating look at how numbers can be magical.

One of the highlights of the week was the final of the Lancashire Mathematics Challenge where nine winning teams from District finals held earlier in the year competed. After a hard fought contest the four pupils from Clitheroe Royal Grammar came out on top – Lancashire's Mathematics Challenge Champions for 2006.

Lancashire County Developments Ltd.

Lancashire
County Council

NEWS IN
BRIEFPublic plea
for safety

ROADS, pavements and crossings will have to be made safer if walking and cycling is to increase in Preston, a survey has revealed.

The questionnaires were sent to homes in the vicinity of the university as part of a drive to ask people what they would want to encourage them to walk or cycle around town.

Preston and South Ribble are part of the Europe-wide CIVITAS project which aims to make towns healthier places by finding convenient alternatives to the car.

The area between the university and the train station has been identified as one area which would be particularly suitable for alternatives to the car – so the questionnaire asked people what they wanted.

County council officers are still analysing replies which have included calls for reduced traffic, safer crossings and better landscaping. The replies will result in proposals which will be made public in September.

People were encouraged to respond by being entered into a draw for £50 of shopping vouchers. The winner was Adam Radford of Ribble Halls of Residence.

Pupils park
and stride

THE Warton community is working together to support two local schools as they take part in an innovative "park and stride" scheme.

Pupils from Brynning with Warton St Paul's CE Primary School and Holy Family RC Primary School, Warton, have teamed up to take part in the "Walk on Wednesday" (WoW) scheme, which encourages pupils and parents to walk to school.

The Pickwick Tavern and Cartmill's Engineering have offered space for parents to park their cars and walk the remaining journey to the school gates.

The schools have each written school travel plans to address road safety with help and support from Lancashire County Council's School Travel Plan Advisers.

Our winners

WINNERS of Vision's DalesRail competition, each winning a family pass, are: S Beeby, Bickerstaffe; A Moore, St Annes; P Armer, Chorley; J Blow, Halsall; H Worswick, Penwortham. Tickets will be posted to winners.

Tram special

A TRANSPORT festival, commonly known as Tram Sunday, is to be held in Fleetwood on 17 July. Tel. 01253 873336 or 01253 770103 for details.

Watchdogs bare their teeth

'Backbenchers' vow to keep decision makers on their toes



DECISIONS made by the county council affect all areas of life in Lancashire, from putting buses on the roads to encouraging jobs and investment and planning what to do with household waste.

But who makes sure that councillors and council officers act in the best interests of council tax payers?

TOP decision-makers are to be watched like hawks after the council streamlined its efforts to ensure decisions reflect public demand.

Overview and Scrutiny (O & S) committees, which act as the council's watchdog, have been revamped to make it clearer who they hold to account.

There are five O & S committees made up of backbench county councillors and district councillors from all political parties with each committee responsible for running the rule over a different area of the council's work.

Before they were reorganised in May, the committees had a wide-ranging remit based on broad policy areas.

But to establish clearer lines of responsibility each has now been assigned to review decisions made by the cabinet member for a particular policy area.

County Councillor Matthew Tomlinson, chairman of the O & S Management Committee, said: "Overview and scrutiny is a vital part of the democratic process – committees have the power to challenge decisions and investigate issues no matter how controversial or politically sensitive."

"Committee members can bring a fresh perspective and highlight concerns on behalf of the public which may otherwise not have been considered."

"O & S will now be more effective than ever as organising the committees along the same lines as the cabinet will make it clearer which decisions are being scrutinised and who is accountable for making them."

"Each member of the cabinet will have a team of councillors looking over their shoulder to ensure they are working in the best interests of the people of Lancashire."

Overview and Scrutiny meetings are open to the public. Agendas and minutes are published online at <http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/council/meetings/committees/overview/index.asp>.

O & S committees have a free reign to review policies and investigate issues that affect the council's work or Lancashire residents. If you would like to suggest a topic, please contact Overview and Scrutiny on (01772) 533377 or email scrutiny@css.lancsc.gov.uk.

Overview and Scrutiny Committees have the power to examine all areas of the county's work.

Some of the issues they have looked at recently include:

- Energy efficiency within the council
- Effectiveness of the adoption service
- School attendance
- Sprinkler systems in schools
- Reducing domestic violence
- Young people misusing drugs or alcohol
- Availability of free pet care
- Library provision

Task group okays new-look care provision

A NEW world of freedom has opened up for people with learning disabilities, O & S members have learned.

The O and S councillors established a task group to investigate the modern approach to supporting

people in the community.

Task group members spoke to families, carers and people with learning disabilities – and concluded that new policies were a winner.

The new approach involves individually tailored packages of support, so that people can do what

they want to do – rather than simply being provided with officially approved activities as in the past.

Extra help – such as support staff time – now allows people to plan their own futures and to enjoy activities such as working, studying, shopping, cooking and using

public transport.

They are now supported by facilities in purpose-built centres.

Task group members concluded that people have taken enthusiastically to the new approach. Their report can be seen at: www.lancashire.gov.uk



●RSPCA visit: from left, animal care assistant Nick MacMillan with Pippa the dog, County Councillor Wendy Dwyer, RSPCA branch manager Ken Harrison and County Councillor Mike Calvert.

RSPCA advice on pet care

"DON'T let your pet suffer because you're worried about vet's bills."

That's the message from Lancashire County Council's External Overview and Scrutiny Committee which is ensuring the council does more to help people with pets.

Animal welfare agencies say suffering could be reduced if more information about free and subsidised veterinary help was available to the people who need it most.

Now the county's Welfare Rights officers will carry leaflets and information to promote the services.

County Councillor Wendy Dwyer, chairman of the committee, said: "Animal welfare agencies such as the RSPCA and PDSA work tirelessly to rescue and care for neglected and unwanted pets."

"Some people fail to look after pets properly because they can't afford to take them pet to the vet."

"People involved in this work feel those who are really in need of the services don't know they exist and this leads to pets being neglected or abandoned."

The External committee reviews and makes recommendations on services or activities which are carried out by external organisations

The committee will continue to monitor the take-up of promotional materials and ensure that Welfare Rights offices have posters on display.

For further information on services for pets or details of your Welfare Rights office, please call (01772) 533504.

Councillors visited the RSPCA facility at Huncoat, near Accrington, to investigate the facilities available for providing subsidised pet care.

Opening time for happy homes



●HELLO mum: County Councillor Jimmy Eaton greets his mum, Agnes, at the official opening of Olive House. He is watched by County Councillors Hazel Harding and Sean Serridge.

RESIDENTS raised a glass to celebrate the official opening of Olive House Care Home in Bacup.

Council leader Hazel Harding cut the ribbon and declared the building open following a £1.6m makeover as part of the county's multi-million pound care homes improvement project.

Refurbished homes, part of a county council drive to improve care standards, are opening almost every month. Last month saw a new start for Woodlands care home in Clayton-le-Moors.

Olive House has been completely refurbished and contains 44 beds.

Resident Thelma Taylor said: "It's nice and comfortable. The rooms are like little houses with our own baths and everything we need."

Olive House has a rehabilitation unit as well as accommodation for older people who are physically frail or suffer from dementia. A secure garden area with decking has been created.

Local power shared

THE agendas have been packed for recent meetings of the pioneering Lancashire Locals.

Councillors from county and district councils have been meeting across the county for the "power sharing" scheme that aims to shape Lancashire County Council services at grassroots level.

Agendas for recent meetings have included reports on bus services, highways maintenance, various environmental issues, local road safety schemes and ways to engage local young people with Lancashire Local.

County Councillor Hazel Harding, Leader of Lancashire County Council, said: "This is real power we are sharing as the Lancashire Local members will be taking real decisions within overall budget levels set by the county council."



Work starts on schools' renewal

WORK has begun on the next part of Burnley's multi-million pound education overhaul.

Five demountable classroom buildings have been installed and kitted out for the newly formed Shuttleworth College at the former Habergham Sixth Form site on Kiddrow Lane.

Pupils will move there in September as construction on the new Shuttleworth College begins on Gawthorpe High's current site. The demountable units will supple-

ment the existing Kiddrow Lane buildings. Nearby, Habergham High School and Ivy Bank Business and Enterprise College buildings will be used by pupils of the new Hameldon Community College.

Building Schools for the Future spokesman John Ferris said: "The work at Kiddrow Lane is the first step to provide accommodation for the new schools from September 2006 until the schools are built."

Over the summer work will be undertaken at 11 sites to meet the accommodation needs of the new schools.