



Class act

'Camp school' is greater fun than ever before

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WIN A FOOD HAMPER

Lancashire's food producers have teamed up to send Vision readers to foodie heaven

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COUNTY PROBES BOOZE BARONS

A PROBE is to be launched into alcohol and its effect on Lancashire's young people.

Councillors, concerned about how drink may be seeping into the culture of the young, are to turn their attention to those in power – the brewers, shops, advertisers and the law enforcers.

County Councillor Susan Shorrock, who will lead the the county council's Overview and Scrutiny task group, said: "This is a big issue for many people but it is not young people who will be called to account – we will be looking at those who produce and sell the stuff."

"Alcohol is almost everywhere. There are adverts for it in magazines, football teams carry the brands on their shirts and special offers leap out at you from shop windows on the high street."

"It is all too easy to demonise young people who drink, but you need to look at the big picture."

"We will be finding out more about social attitudes, the services available to those with problems and how the laws are enforced."

"Having a drink is large part of

popular culture and it perfectly acceptable most of the time. But the county council has a duty to ensure people feel safe and can lead healthy lives and we need to look at any problems there may be."

"This is about taking responsibility for making Lancashire a better place, it's not about blame."

The main aims of the investigation will be to look at the influences on young people's use of alcohol, look at how misuse can be tackled and, most importantly, to seek the views of young people.

Councillor Shorrock explained: "Too many times young people are told what they should be doing, but we want to work with them."

Amongst those to be interviewed by the task group will be the Youth and Community services, Trading Standards, the police, young people and schools.

We want to know

Do you have views on young people and alcohol? Contact the overview and scrutiny team at scrutiny@css.lancsc.gov.uk or write to Vision, Corporate Communications, County Hall, Preston PR1 8XJ.

Investigation will look at drink and young people

●SUSAN Shorrock: we need to look at the law - and the help available for the victims of drinking.



Success for 19 out of 20 parents in choice of school

MORE than nine out of 10 Lancashire parents are now getting their children into their first-choice school, latest statistics show.

A high degree of flexibility and a wide range of good schools means that 95 per cent of children were offered a place in their first-choice primary school in September.

A further 2 per cent received an offer for one of their preferred schools.

At secondary level in September, 93 per cent of all offers were for first-preference schools and 98 per cent received an offer for one of their preferred schools.

Admission to schools is frequently a thorny issue nationwide. Lancashire's figures suggest that working closely with schools and parents can work.

Paul Bainbridge, Lancashire County Council admissions policy officer, said: "We try to respond to local need and give parents what they want."

"We are flexible in meeting people's preferences."

The county council co-ordinates primary and secondary school admissions – a total of 11,737 applications for primary school places and 13,152 for secondary school places.

Questionnaires have been sent to families which were not offered a place at their preferred school. Comments received will be used to further improve services.

DON'T FORGET

MUMS and dads have until 24 November to register their primary school preferences online. The easy-to-use system is open to all at www.lancashire.gov.uk/e-admissions

Families join united nations

A MULTI-NATIONAL task force is being established at Morecambe to get babies on the right track.

The town library's Baby Bounce and Rhyme group has many Polish as well as English mums and babies.

And with staff member Lucy Belanger being French, sessions combine rhymes in English, chatter in Polish and singalongs in French.

Libraries across Lancashire are involved in similar Baby Bounce and Rhyme sessions to encourage children to sing nursery rhymes and play instruments.

Most learning takes place on mum's knee while mum gets the chance to meet friends.

Some sessions are held in the nearby Arndale Centre.



●ALL together: Natalie Jones and Ollie (8 months).



Ask Shirley

Don't know who to contact when you need help? Are you baffled by a long list of names? Ring Shirley on 0845 0530000 or email Shirley on enquiries@css.lancscc.gov.uk

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.

As cold as ice

Mr F from Hesketh Bank writes:
Now that the icy weather is almost upon us I would like to request a salt box to be put on my road. How do I go about this?

Most sites meeting the criteria have already been identified and bins been provided. Therefore in general, it is not expected that bins will be provided at new sites.

For more information please contact the Lancashire County Council's highways department on 0845 053 0011.

Alternatively you can email them at highways@lancashire.gov.uk

Road to hell

Mrs L from Thornton Cleveleys:
I am really annoyed as I have had a parking ticket slapped on my windscreen. I admit it was my own fault for being parked on double yellow lines but I was only gone for half an hour.

Is this not just a money-making exercise for the council?

What will happen if I refuse to pay it?

All revenue from penalty charge notices is used to pay for the provision of the parking enforcement service and will ensure improved road safety, improved traffic flow and will improve the environment.

If you pay within 14 days the fine will be reduced by half from £60 to £30.

If you refuse to pay the charge after 28 days you will be served with a Notice to Owner (NtO).

If after 28 days of issue of the NtO the fine remains unpaid the original £60 fine will increase by 50 per cent to £90.

People can appeal if they think the ticket has been wrongly issued - and many succeed! Details are on the back of the ticket.



● COUNTRYSIDE volunteers are always needed to help on a variety of satisfying projects.

Hole in my pocket

Mrs P from Lytham writes:
My daughter is 16 and in her first year of college. She is always complaining that she doesn't have any cash to spend. My husband and I don't earn enough to keep giving her pocket money and are also finding her bus fares, lunches and equipment quite expensive.

We both work full-time, so would we be wasting our time by applying for Educational Maintenance Allowance?

The Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) is a weekly payment of up to £30, paid directly to eligible students aged 16 to 19 staying on at school or college.

The current household income threshold is £30,810 per year before tax.

EMA is not administered by Lancashire County Council. To get an application form, or for further information phone the free DfES helpline on 080 810 16 219.

Fight for the right

Mr S from Preston writes:

The other day I was travelling home on the bus and there were passengers who were fighting, swearing and throwing things. I couldn't wait to get off! It must have been very distracting for the driver. How do I report this?

The Lancashire County Council's Safer Travel Unit is committed to monitoring and trying to prevent this type of behaviour on buses.

To report an incident such as the one you have mentioned please contact the Anti-Social Behaviour on Buses (ASBOB) Customer Service Helpline on 0845 053 0040.

Keep on walking

Mr T from Eccleston writes:

My wife and I enjoy going for walks around the Lancashire countryside most weekends. I have been told that there is a team of volunteer rangers in Lancashire and I would be very interested to find out some more about this.

Volunteer rangers form an integral part of the Lancashire Countryside Service. As a volunteer ranger you will receive basic training, although this is not as comprehensive as a full-time ranger, you would have to attend and pass a basic training course.

You are not paid but there are fixed allowances for expenses.

For more information, contact Rosemary Bullivant on 01772 533919 or an application form can be found online on the Countryside Service page of the Lancashire County Council website: www.lancashire.gov.uk

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

Pressure turned on for extra roads cash

COUNCILLORS lobbied the government for more cash to maintain Lancashire's roads at a forum held recently at County Hall.

The Making Roads Work conference gave highways experts across the North West the chance to put their case for increased funding to fix cracked and potholed roads and pavements.

Figures revealed by Graham Harding, Executive Director of Environment for Lancashire County Council, showed that government funding for roads has fallen dramatically over the past 30 years.

From 1974-1994 the county council spent the equivalent of £54m in today's money on road maintenance each year.

Reductions in government subsidies mean that, from 1995-2006, this figure had fallen to £35m and this year around £31.5m will be spent on the roads.

County Councillor Tony Martin, Cabinet member for Sustainable Development, said: "The government recognises that we need far more money than we are currently getting to maintain and improve the roads."

"Funding has been cut in recent years while rising oil prices mean it is getting more and more expensive to do the work."

"The Making Roads Work conference was attended by Edward Bunting, a senior policy adviser for the Department for Transport, so it was a real opportunity for us to bring the decision-makers to Lancashire and make our case."

He added that councils across the country may soon be adding to pressure upon Whitehall.



● TONY Martin: more needed for roads.

City bus service now in orbit

THE new £2m Preston Orbit bus route has started its "rounds".

The service has been created to serve various areas of the city while reducing the need for passengers to travel into the city centre.

Improved journey times, less congestion and more direct routes are among the benefits of the new service. Improvements have also been made at bus stops and junctions.

Preston Orbit operates in a clockwise (service 88C) and anticlockwise (service 88A) direction around the city.

Monday to Saturday daytime services will run every 15 minutes with evening services every 30 minutes. On Sundays and Bank Holidays buses will run every 20 minutes during the day and every 30 minutes in the evening.

There is no-through service between Cottam and Royal Preston Hospital on a Sunday.

For route and timetable information visit: www.prestonbus.co.uk/home.htm



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

www.lancashire.gov.uk/vacancies

Lancashire
County Council

NEWS IN
BRIEFIndustry's
fishy
story

A PROJECT to conserve and digitise important aspects of Fleetwood's maritime history is now nearing completion and its new website will be launched this month.

The FLOAT (Fleetwood Online Archive of Trawlers) Project has been a joint venture between Fleetwood Museum, Fleetwood Library and the Lancashire Record Office and has been supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Over the last eight months, members of staff have been working with local volunteers to digitise two large collections of 8,000 trawler images for inclusion in the online database.

The aim is that each image is accompanied by detailed technical information, crew lists, personal accounts and interesting stories from the men who sailed on the vessels.

Further details on the project from Fleetwood Library on 01253 775803 or by emailing joanne.taylor@mus.lancashire.gov.uk

Pupils quiz
teachers

PUPILS are having a real say in one Lancashire school – they are involved in appointing teachers.

Youngsters at Alder Grange Community and Technology School in Rawtenstall get the chance to ask questions to job applicants in an exercise believed to be beneficial all round.

Staff at the school, which recently won Ofsted praise for teaching citizenship, say pupil involvement increases rapport between pupils and the person appointed to the job. Citizenship co-ordinator Suhed Ali said: "It gives pupils a sense of ownership of the appointment process."



●DOREEN Pollitt: jobs hope.

New hope for 'adrenaline' jobs boost

WATERSKIING, mountain-biking and climbing could still spearhead economic revival for East Lancashire – despite a £45m lottery setback.

The aim is to use "adrenaline sports" to rebrand East Lancashire as a vibrant, go-

ahead area in place of its current image of decline. The area could then be promoted as Pennine Lancashire to outside investors.

A multi-million pound lottery bid to build an "adrenaline gateway" centre failed earlier this year, but bid backers say plans to promote extreme

sports in the area will still go ahead.

Together with East Lancashire's Elevate housing programme it is hoped that private and public investment will regenerate the area economically and socially.

County Councillor Doreen Pollitt, Lancashire County

Council deputy leader, said: "It isn't just about housing and it isn't just about sports."

"Regeneration is also about things such as the economy, health, education and transport."

It is hoped that backers will launch a nationwide mountain-biking contest in the area.

Join the Direct Pay
trail with our DVD

A BUSY new life has opened up to teenager Simon Wolstenholme – thanks to Lancashire County Council's flexible way of providing help.

The old way saw people like Simon (16) – born with Down's Syndrome – receiving packages of help that officials said were suitable.

But now Simon and his mum, Carole, get the money themselves through Direct Payments – so they can employ exactly the people they want to give them the freedom they want.

And that means Simon can go bowling, to the park and on days out, while Carole gets some time to relax on her own.

Carole, from Burnley, said: "Social services told me all about Direct Payments, which are very simple."

"The payments allow Simon to get out more and mix with his own age group and they give me the chance to go out shopping."

"It balances out nicely as I know Simon has had a good time and been in good hands."

"It is refreshing to us both."

Many carers neglect their own needs while looking after others.

Direct payments are aimed at disabled people, at older people and at their families. Because the help comes in the form of money, families can decide themselves how to split the care it buys – so no-one need lose out.

Carole added: "Direct Payments have changed our lives for the better."



●(Above)ROUTE to freedom: social services' Steve Gross and County Councillor Chris Cheetham launch the new DVD.



●DIRECT Payments have meant freedom for Carole and Simon.

Direct Payments – want to know more?

THE payments are explained in a new DVD produced by Lancashire County Council.

It is fully interactive and contains case studies of people already receiving them.

County Councillor Chris Cheetham,

Cabinet member for Adult and Community Services, said: "This DVD will help people towards the Direct Payments that people need to gain some independence in their lives."

"This DVD will help people decide whether

Direct Payments are something that will benefit them."

Leaflets and copies of the DVD are available in local social services offices. Further details at:

www.lancashire.gov.uk

ParkWise: county council
lays it on the line

THE sometimes controversial ParkWise service has come under the microscope.

Councillors on the Sustainable Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee have pored over the accounts and practices of Lancashire's "parking enforcers" and have asked tough questions.

One of the main concerns was that the scheme, administered by district councils, has a poor image with many people believing the ParkWise service is a money-making exercise. The aim of the service

has actually been to improve road safety, reduce congestion and reduce travel times.

The committee were shown that to deliver these aims takes considerable resources, and that the service was not a money-making exercise.

Councillors also found that a great deal of work had to be done on updating paperwork relating to yellow lines.

And, disturbingly, some parking attendants have suffered physical and verbal attacks while doing their job.

Vali Birang, head of traffic and

safety, said: "The scheme has been in operation for two years and the first full year's financial figures are available."

"It has therefore been the right time to undertake a review of the scheme."

"The review has highlighted the need for improving the scheme in some key areas in particular in relation to communication and publicity."

The committee will receive a further report in three months. The task group's findings are available at www.lancashire.gov.uk

Online
library
'a hit'

LANCASHIRE'S Online Reference Library is going from strength to strength and was recently featured on television.

Encyclopaedias, dictionaries, census records and a host of other material is available at the click of a mouse.

Much is freely available to library members 24 hours a day from their own home or local library.

Individual subscriptions to such premium information would normally cost about £1,000 – but Lancashire Library members can use the service for free by visiting www.lancashire.gov.uk/onrl

Family historians, for example, will save weeks of time as census records and records of births, deaths and marriages are central in pursuing their interest.

To become a library member simply take proof and identity containing a signature to your local library.

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

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

A free place consists of a maximum of five sessions per week and no more than seventy sessions for the Autumn 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.



WIN

Six hampers of tasty Lancashire food to be won

SOME of Lancashire's classiest food suppliers are teaming up with Lancashire County Council to offer Vision readers the chance to win six food hampers.

A number of the county's food producers and suppliers have won the attention of nationally known chefs such as Rick Stein, Tom Bridge and Simon Rimmer.

And all locals know you can't beat creamy cheese – made from milk from Lancashire's lush pastures – you can't beat pasture-fed Bowland beef and you can't beat black puddings from the home of black puddings.

Each hamper will contain:

From Bowland Forest Foods, a north Lancashire farmers' co-operative, specialising in beef, lamb and pork, a **family-sized joint of topside beef**.

From pasture to plate, the Abbeystead-based company helps the environment by reducing "food miles" and promises quality with its Lancashire Pride brand of beef. Members supply minced

beef to 500 Lancashire schools. Contact 01524 793558 or visit www.bowlandforest.co.uk

Bowland's farmers also offer heather-fed lamb – a product of the wild and unspoiled uplands of Fair Snape, Bleasdale, Birkett and Marshaw. It is how lamb should taste. For details visit www.heatherrearedlamb.co.uk

From Chilli Lime Deli, of Fleming Square, Blackburn, bottles of **Lancashire Sauce** and **Hot Apple Chilli Jelly**.

Featured on television's Grub's Up, owner John Caffrey stocks a variety of traditional Lancashire produce – and tasty treats from Italy, Greece, Mexico and the Orient. His locally made cheeses and pies are worth travelling for.

From the Real Lancashire Black Pudding Company in Haslingden ... **Bury-style black puddings**, **vegetarian puddings** and **poloni-style white puddings**.

Andrew Holt's company is classed as one of Rick Stein's Food Heroes. With little wonder – Andrew has won scores of awards in Britain and beyond, including the Belgian Grande Prix d'Excellence.

From Exchange Coffee Company in Clitheroe and Blackburn ... packs of freshly roasted and **ground coffee** and packs of the best **tea**.

Owner Richard Isherwood makes a real spectacle from the coffee he imports as raw beans – he roasts it on the premises while the public watches. You can drink onsite – or buy and take home 80 varieties of tea and 50 types of coffee.

From Country Catering on School Lane, Pilling ... **home-made pies** in a variety of flavours.

Owner Shirley Roberts supplies farmers' markets county-wide and everything is home-made. Her suppliers are local farms, eggs are supplied locally, all pastry is handrolled. Everything is freshly produced.

The best sugar confectioners in the county have assisted with recipes and development at The Fudge Factory which is helping fill the hampers with **boxes of fudge**.

Founded more than 10 years ago, its wide range of fudges, truffles, toffees and chocolates have proved so popular that the company has had to expand



●TREAT your tastebuds: John Caffrey of Chilli Lime Deli.



●HAND-CRAFTED: coach parties regularly visit the theatre at the Fudge Factory.



●LANCASHIRE'S lush pastures: farmer Jim Curwen in beautiful Bowland.

ENTRY FORM

Q: Name Rick Stein's Lancashire Food Hero

A:

Name

Address

.....

Postcode Tel

.....

Return by 20 November to: Hamper competition, Vision, County Hall, Preston PR1 8XJ.

Costs down, service up

A HUGE drive to cut costs and boost reliability has paid off for the skilled engineers of Lancashire County Engineering Services (LCES).

They won the nationwide Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE) award for their maintenance of county council vehicles.

LCES staff beat more than 200 other organisations nationwide to win Best Service Team of the Year in the Transport and Fleet Service section in the annual awards.

Staff from LCES, the county council's engineering division, also

landed runner-up spot in the Public Partnership section of the awards for their maintenance of fire service vehicles.

More than 60 tradesmen and apprentices keep the wheels turning safely on more than 2,000 vehicles ranging from home-help transport, gritting wagons and road-maintenance vans and lorries to fire engines.

Facilities include two main workshops and four satellite workshops, open from 8am to 9pm and some weekends.

Specialist skills include bodyshop and paintshop repairs, auto-electrical testing and repair,

graphics and signs and in-house fabrication.

APSE judges heard of the huge culture change initiated by LCES in recent years – involving, among other things, reducing staff numbers and demarcation so the company could keep costs down and quality up.

The major changes have involved putting the customer first and improved cost control.

Under-secretary of state Angela Smith said: "Public services aim to improve the lives of our citizens – and innovations such as these are an example of what can be achieved."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Worker booster

LANCASHIRE County Developments Ltd may have exactly the break needed for people who want to gain work experience while working with rural businesses.

The scheme is open to undergraduates from Lancashire, or students who are studying at Lancashire universities reading tourism, marketing/public relations, business studies or event management on a sandwich course.

The one-year placement will focus on helping small rural tourism businesses with marketing.

For more information, contact Louise Kite at Lancashire County Developments Ltd on 01772 551888 or email Louise at lkite@lcdl.co.uk

The project receives funding support from the Lancashire Rural Tourism Initiative, funded through the Lancashire Rural Recovery Action Plan supported by the North West Regional Development Agency and Lancashire and Blackpool Tourist

Take a trip

BOWLAND landscapes are the destination for walkers on a five-hour trip from Beacon Fell Country Park.

They will walk over open moor on Sunday 12 November, taking in panoramic views of the Forest of Bowland.

Booking is essential. Telephone 01995 640557 for details.

Try your hand

PEOPLE will have the chance to try sculpture inspired by museum exhibits from 12.30pm to 3.30pm on Saturday 25 November.

When Saturday Comes: Arts and Crafts, is a series of craft activities at the Museum of Lancashire in Preston in which members of the public can take part.

Telephone the museum on 01772 534075.

Expedition

TEN South Ribble youngsters have trekked in the Lake District as part of a Youth and Community Service "expedition".

NEWS IN
BRIEFWriter
on county
visit

●WELCOME: Terry Burns, county council chairman, greets Geraldine.

LANCASHIRE book-lovers enjoyed a nationwide first when a famous author visited the county.

Peter Pan in Scarlet is Geraldine McCaughrean's official sequel to the original book – and she chose Lancashire Library and Information Service's Preston HQ for its North West launch.

Set in the 1930s, the book promises high adventure, dramatic tension and all the derring-do that readers can handle.

Kremlin
beware

TRADING standards officers are warning consumers about potentially dangerous bottles of vodka that could be on sale in Lancashire.

Consumers are advised to contact Lancashire County Council Trading Standards if they are offered bottles of "Kremlin" vodka, which has been found to contain illegally high levels of methanol.

On the spot

LEADING county councillors will be answering questions from members of the public in Accrington's Globe Centre at 7.15pm on Thursday 23 November.

The question time-style evenings are held regularly around Lancashire to give members of the public the chance to put senior decision-makers on the spot. The Globe Centre meeting will be held in the Saturn Suite.

Meet your ancestors - online

SCORES of volunteers are taking part in a huge project to computerise Lancashire's births, marriages and deaths dating back to 1837.

Literally millions of files are being transferred from dusty archives to computer database in an exercise that will make it simpler and speedier for people to trace their family trees.

Not many people realise it but Lancashire County Council is legally responsible for storing "BMD" records and its huge archives are now an Aladdin's Cave for family historians.

"It will take our volunteers many, many years to computerise the lot", said Christine Broughton, deputy superintendent registrar.

"Family history is one of the biggest hobbies in Britain today and our volunteers are mainly members of family history societies.

"Their work means that people can track down records of marriages, births and deaths at the click of a button, saving months of their time.

"People should beware, however – such records can uncover any number of skeletons in the cupboard!

"They can discover murder, disappearances and illegitimacy. People lived their lives in the past pretty much the same as some people do

today!

"Historians have to be ready for anything."

An earlier Lancashire County Council exercise in preserving old wills lasted decades.

Historians from across the county are only four years into the present exercise.

"There is so much work to do with these files", said Christine. "The volunteers are making things much easier for us. We could never do it without their help.

"History comes alive when you see the records. Just one page of Preston's 181 records, for example, shows the deaths of three children and one adult – a shocking inversion of the pattern you would expect these days.

"You can see the spread of illness and prosperity by the number of entries in each year.

"In the years before the NHS you could see the spread of fatal diseases on a street-by-street basis. You can also see baby bulges' just by looking at the number of files and the space they take up on the shelves and, latterly, on a computer disc.

"You also see the deaths caused by the 1918 flu outbreak – it is a fascinating picture for us all.

"All human life really is here and



●VOLUNTEERS are spending hundreds of thousands of hours putting family records on computer. Family historians will be the main beneficiaries.

putting them on computer will benefit the generations to come."

No one really knows how long the project will take. The best guess is that it may last another 10 years.

Anyone wishing to volunteer should

contact Tony Foster at Ga.foster@btopenworld.com

Anyone can see the files entered so far onto the computer database by visiting: www.lancashirebmd.org.uk

More cash on disabled
accessLancashire Locals
are working for you

THE budget for providing easier access to the pavements has been doubled in the Fylde following a meeting between county and district councillors.

Members of Lancashire Local – Fylde heard from a local councillor who wanted more dropped kerbs to help people with mobility difficulties get around easily. Councillor Fabian Wilson highlighted the fact that people using wheelchairs and mobility scooters often struggled when it came to getting onto the pavement.

County Councillor Bernard Whittle, chairman of Lancashire Local – Fylde, said: "We have £0,000 to spend each year on highway services and, after hearing from Councillor Wilson, we decided to put £,000 forward to improve matters.

"It is clear to me that the Lancashire Local project is a very effective way to address local matters.

"In just one meeting we have been able to take action and double the amount of money spent on dropped kerbs in the area."

The remaining £,000 of the devolved highways budget will be spent on upgrading backstreet lighting.

Lancashire Local brings together



●LOCAL action: Councillors Bernard Whittle and Fabian Wilson at one of the kerbs.

Lancashire county councillors and district councillors to influence and make decisions on local county council services.

Regular meetings are held at various locations around the Fylde area and members of the public are given the opportunity to speak on issues on the agenda at the start of each

of the meetings.

Lancashire Local committees are now established across the county to ensure that county council services – adding up to 10 per cent of all local government services in Lancashire – are suited to local need.

Paving in
Pendle

DISABLED people in Pendle are to gain in the same way as those in Fylde

after Lancashire Local members agreed to spend £9,700 on dropped kerbs.

Members of Lancashire County Council and Pendle Council are committed to working together to improve life in the borough – and also plan to explore propos-

als such as wheelchair walks and better transport links.

Pendle Council's own money for sett-paving and verge-hardening will also be delegated to Lancashire Local.

LANCS
LOCAL
ROUND-UP

SOUTH RIBBLE – Issues around the A59/Penwortham bypass will be addressed when Lancashire Local South Ribble members meet this month. Members will also consider grant applications.

PRESTON – More than 50 illegal mini-moto bikes have been withdrawn from sale in a new crackdown uniting trading standards officers and police.

RIBBLE VALLEY – about 70 residents attended the 4 October meeting to hear proposals for a residents parking scheme and also for an update on Moor Lane.

PENDLE – Lancashire Local in Pendle will bring together Pendle Council and Lancashire County Council to maximise the benefits from an injection of highways improvements cash.

LANCASTER – Members of Lancashire Local - Lancaster District approved a proposal for a Traffic Regulation Order in Galgate. This would prohibit traffic traveling along Chapel Lane, Galgate, between Tanhouse and Chapel Street except in a south-westerly direction and permit cyclists to travel in both directions.

A request from Eilel Parish Council was also approved – the environment director examine the feasibility of the area surrounding Chapel Lane/Chapel Street being designated as a 20mph zone.

Quiz sheets probe arts blackspots

A **GROF** of young people from Lancashire have been on a quest to find what's out there in the arts world.

Members of Lancashire Youth Council's White Paper Arts have been developing a questionnaire and going out to meet other young people to find out what they are interested in and to see where there are gaps in provision

"The arts" is traditionally seen as the kind of thing you would find in a gallery, but the audit will take in everything from Dñh, dance, drama, video, web design to song writing and poetry.

Young people will also be asking theatres, galleries, arts organisations and local authority arts offi-

cers in Lancashire what arts activities and events they provide for young people and how young people influence and shape the provision.

Celine Wyatt, arts development officer for Lancashire County Council, said: "The work that these young people are doing now will shape the future of youth arts development in Lancashire."

Young people will design and write their recommendations for the audit report which will be used by the Lancashire Arts Development Service to inform future developments.

Young people all over Lancashire are invited to fill in the questionnaire. We want your views.

The questionnaire will be available online from November at www.lancsys.org



Lancashire County Council

Summary Statement of Accounts 2005/06

This is a summary of the full statement of accounts. It gives a brief overview of the council's financial position at 31 March 2006.

Financial review

The county council's budget for 2005/06 was £1,136 million. We actually spent £1,133 million, which was slightly less than the budget.

One of the main reasons for this underspend (or 'surplus') was savings on interest charges, mainly due to favourable interest rates and lower levels of borrowing than expected.

The underspend of £3 million has been added to the County Fund. This is money we keep in reserve to meet future spending pressures and unexpected demands.

The revenue account

The revenue account shows how much we spent on services during the year and where the money came from to finance these services.

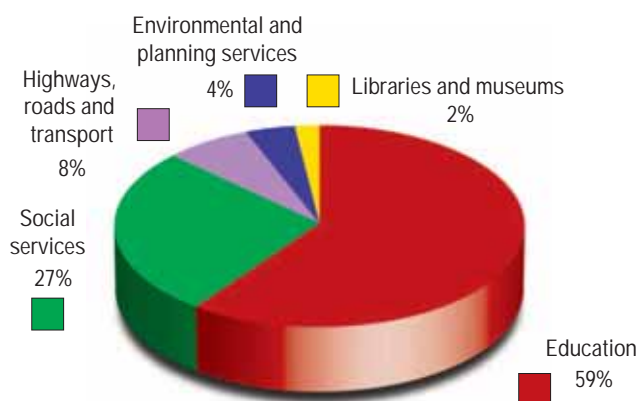
	2005/06 £ million	2004/05 £ million
Spending on services		
Education	676	650
Social services	310	282
Highways, roads and transport	86	80
Environmental and planning services	47	43
Libraries and museums	26	25
Other services	-4	24
Net cost of services	1,141	1,104
Other costs and income	-8	-25
Total cost to be funded	1,133	1,079
Funding		
Revenue Support Grant	430	446
Business rates	348	287
Council Tax income	358	347
Total funding	1,136	1,080
Net surplus	3	1

Cash flow summary

This summarises the totals of cash into and out of our accounts during the year. It includes both capital and revenue transactions.

	2005/06 £ million	2004/05 £ million
Cash in the bank at 1 April	9	1
Cash in	1,773	1,753
Cash out	-1,776	-1,745
Cash in the bank at 31 March	6	9
Increase/(decrease) in cash in year	-3	8

Split of spending between services

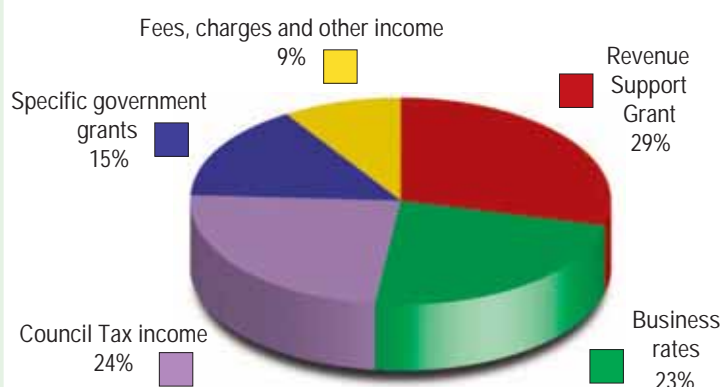


Income

In 2005/06 our service income was £352 million. This is made up of fees, charges and specific government grants (a specific grant must be spent on a particular service). In the revenue account this has been deducted from the cost of services.

We also received money from the government in the form of a general Revenue Support Grant and business rates. We raised the rest of our income from Council Tax.

Sources of income



The balance sheet

The balance sheet shows our financial position at the end of the year. It shows:

- the value of land, buildings and other assets we own;
- the value of our debts; and
- how these are funded.

Fixed assets are items that we own and will benefit from over several years – for example, land, buildings and vehicles.

Capital reserves are amounts set aside to fund and revalue fixed assets.

The **pension liability** and **pension reserve** show the difference between the amount invested in the pension fund and the amount it is estimated we will have to pay out in future years. This shortfall will be made good by increasing contributions (payments) to the pension fund in future years.

Earmarked reserves are funds set aside for specific purposes in the future. They include unspent school balances of £51 million (controlled by individual schools, rather than the council).

The **County Fund** is money set aside to cover unexpected future demands or spending pressures. This helps us to make sure we are always in a secure financial position.

	2005/06 £ million	2004/05 £ million
Assets and borrowings		
Fixed assets	1,262	1,196
Stock	3	3
Cash and investments	155	114
Debtors (money owed to the council)	149	167
Creditors (money owed by the council)	-209	-198
Borrowing	-468	-414
Pension liability	-572	-590
Total assets and borrowings	320	278
Financed by		
Capital reserves	788	751
Pension reserve	-572	-590
Earmarked reserves	87	103
County Fund	17	14
Total financed	320	278

Capital spending

In 2005/06 we invested £123 million in assets such as buildings, roads and other items that will have a long-term benefit for the residents of Lancashire. This is 16% more than we spent in 2004/05. Projects this year included:

- continued upgrading of school buildings;
- new childcare centres;
- road and bridge maintenance;
- a new waste management and recycling site; and
- upgrading residential homes for older people.

The money for this spending comes from several sources, including government grants, borrowing, income from selling other assets, and contributions from the revenue account.

Capital spending in 2005/06 £ million

Children and young people

Building work on pre-school facilities	4
Building work on primary schools	19
Building work on secondary schools	26
Furniture and computer equipment for schools	2
Work on other buildings	4
Total for children and young people	55

Environment

Highway work and maintenance	15
Maintaining bridges	7
Public transport schemes	10
Waste recycling schemes	8
Planning and land reclamation	3
Total for environment	43

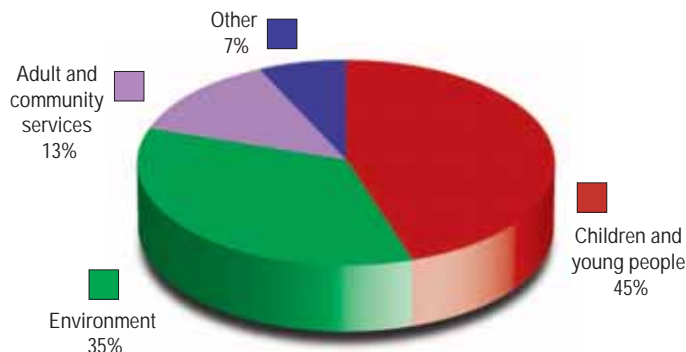
Adult and community services

Refurbishing care homes	12
Libraries and museums	2
Information technology	1
Other	1
Total for adult and community services	16

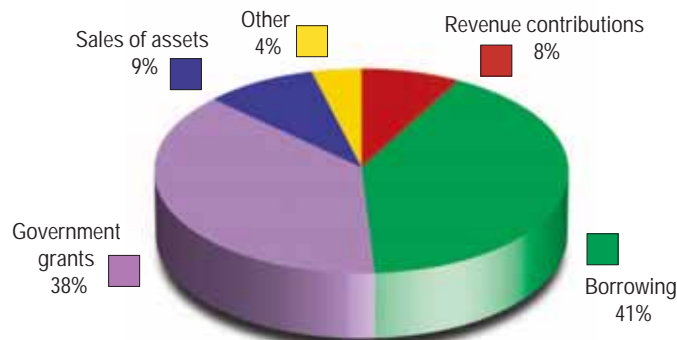
Other	9
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Total spending for the year	123
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Capital spending by Directorate



Sources of funding for capital spending



For further information

A complete Statement of Accounts 2005/06 is available on our website at www.lancashire.gov.uk/budget/publications/index.asp or at your local library.

If you have any questions, or suggestions on how we could improve this summary, please contact Phil Maynard at:

PO Box 100, County Hall, Preston PR1 0LD
Phone: 0845 053 0000
Email: phil.maynard@fin.lancscc.gov.uk

LCDL update

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



Be-D-Stressed

BEAUTY is more than skin deep for young people in Skelmersdale.

They are boosting their life chances by learning beauty therapy and hairdressing skills – thanks to a company that received cash from Lancashire County Developments Ltd (LCDL).

Grants for Growth were the key to expansion for Be-D-Stressed, a beauty and holistic therapy company that started life in 2005.

Directors Sharon Williams and Toni Rowlands started training "disengaged" young people aged 14 to 16 – and have now expanded to include hairdressing skills for young people.

Based in Gladden House, Skelmersdale, the duo have developed professional training facilities, such as beauty therapy and hairdressing salons. Clients can choose to have their service provided by a trainee or a qualified beauty therapist.

County Councillor Niki Penney, LCDL chairman, said: "The Grants for Growth scheme helps those who need it most."

"Be-D-Stressed is a glowing example of this. They have shown what can be achieved by teaching young people skills that will set them up for life."

Lancashire's Grants for Growth is a partnership scheme between Lancashire County Council, LCDL and the European Union.

The funding comes from the European Social Fund (ESF) with LCDL providing match funding to create a real opportunity to help people gain skills, qualifications and employment right across the county.

Backed by LCDL, Lancashire County Council and the European Union, Grants for Growth funding has the potential to inject over £1m into Lancashire's economy.

Grants, from £1,000 to £6,000, are aimed at groups, such as local charities, voluntary organisations, not-for-profit organisations and social enterprise groups.

The grants are for people living in Lancashire who are not in paid work, including ethnic minorities and people:

- out of work for a long time
- with physical disabilities, learning difficulties or mental health issues
- aged over 50 years who are looking to return to paid work
- with caring responsibilities
- who are either young parents or lone parents
- who have difficulties with reading, writing or maths
- with English as a second language
- aged 14-16 years and either excluded or at risk of exclusion
- who are homeless, rough sleepers, or ex-offenders.

Application forms for grants are available by downloading a copy from grantsforgrowth@cdl.co.uk and returning to:

Grants for Growth, LCDL, Robert House, Starkie Street, Preston, PR1 3LU.

Packs can also be requested on 01772 551888 or grantsforgrowth@cdl.co.uk. Forms are also available in other languages. Contact Colette Taylor for more details.

Lancashire Rural – action recovery plan

RURAL areas are helping themselves thanks to help from friends at Lancashire County Developments Ltd (LCDL).

The company works in partnership with the Lancashire Rural Recovery Action Plan, supported by the North West Regional Development Agency, in a scheme aimed at creating jobs through new builds or refurbishment.

One successful project has been run by Quermore's AE Huddleston Limited.

Lancashire County Councillor Susie Charles and County Councillor Niki Penney, LCDL chairman, visited boss John Huddleston to see the transformation their Rural Small Buildings Grant has made to one of the buildings.

John added a workshop next to his existing precision engineering premises to create a further 120sqm of floor space. The premises are now home to three thriving companies. Eight jobs have been created.

Councillor Penney has also visited another project near Oswaldtwistle – the development of Countrywide and Global Ltd's new mail order distribution centre

The company has developed the centre, along with associated storage and offices, by converting a redundant dairy building at Magnoll's Farm. The centre covers 1,200 sqm and will provide employment for 10 people within the next three years. The development was helped by a £52,500 grant.

Other completed projects include Waterslack Farm in Silverdale, a converted 16th century farmhouse that entrepreneur Stephen Sowery has transformed from a former garden centre into something completely different – stunning garden features and plants to an animal corner and a first class licensed restaurant.

The Rural Small Buildings Grant enabled him to create a purpose-built farm shop packed with local produce, organic specialities, regional delicacies and patisserie kitchen.

Other projects have included:

- Six new jobs at Hire Heat Installations in Garstang.
- Victoria House in Clitheroe where Kevin Crook has converted a former public house into eight retail/office units.
- Farraday's in Clitheroe which involved conversion of a former Royal Mail sorting office into a wine bar and café.
- Middlestead Barn, Downham – conversion of a disused barn into work space for a new crafts business thanks to a £2,900 grant. Bespoke furniture maker Paul Case is now creating designer pieces at Middlestead which featured in the TV series *Born and Bred* as 'Jean's Yard'.
- Fairfield Farm – Philip and Louise Edge used a £55,500 grant to convert buildings near Clayton-le-Dale to provide a series of small lets for light industrial use. The buildings enhance the Edge's diversification into farm shop and café on the site.

The Rural Small Buildings' Scheme received £250,000 of funding from the Lancashire Rural Recovery Action Plan supported by the North West Regional Development Agency.

The success of the Rural Small Buildings Scheme has paved the way for a new, larger scheme supporting rural regeneration, the Rural Lancashire Development Grant. This new grant makes over £1m of grant available to develop the rural economy. Contact LCDL on 01772 551888 for further details.



Economic regeneration projects

LCDL is currently engaged in a wide variety of economic regeneration projects across Preston City working with both the public, private and voluntary/community/faith sectors. A good example of multi-partnership working being the St. Augustine's New Avenham Centre, a multi-purpose sports facility, family learning, education, and enterprise centre with 'women's only' section gym to cater specifically for minority ethnic women's groups.

LCDL is also currently an active partner within the broader regeneration of Preston through its representation on the City Vision Board and through its strong partnership working with Preston City Council on specific projects that aim to investigate opportunities to engage with the private sector. Any resultant projects will have an underlying aim to target hard to reach groups, assist in reducing unemployment and increase opportunities for employment and business growth in line with the Lancashire Local Area Agreement. In short, more opportunities for local people to benefit from Preston's success.



Lancashire County Developments Ltd.

Features

Library honour for rebel friend of Gandhi



●MICHAEL Davitt's legacy is now remembered in Haslingden library. From left, Kathleen Lindsay, Michelle Smith (granddaughter of artist Michael Laffy), County Councillor Bob Wilkinson, Dr John Dunleavy and Bobby Higson (great-great grandson).

YESTERYEAR'S many struggles for dignity are being remembered in a Lancashire library with a collection of works by a rebel and reformer.

Haslingden's Michael Davitt left Ireland for England as a child and lost an arm in an industrial accident while still a child.

His agitations on behalf of the Irish – and also on behalf of English working people – led him to jail and later to election as an MP. He was a friend to both Lenin and Gandhi.

A collection of eight books, entitled *The Collected Writings of Michael*

Davitt, has been perpetually loaned to Haslingden Library by members of Lancashire's Irish community.

The library's collection of Davitt memorabilia, bought with help from the Heritage Lottery Fund, also features a linocut picture of Davitt studying at Haslingden Library and also pictures by Haslingden artist Michael Laffy, also of Irish descent and a contemporary of Davitt – and, intriguingly, a student at Munich Art College at the same time as Adolf Hitler.

The collection was handed over at a ceremony attended by civic dignitaries and descendants of Davitt and Laffy.

TAKE CARE WITH CASH-BACK OFFERS ON MOBILE PHONES THIS CHRISTMAS

A COMMON and recurring complaint to Trading Standards involves cash-back schemes on mobile phones and the difficulties that face consumers in obtaining the promised money.

A number of complaints have been received in which the consumer has clearly been misled but is faced with a difficult situation as the company which made the cash-back offer has gone out of business.

The following ought to be considered before you sign up for any offer:

■When you purchase a mobile you normally enter into two agreements: one for the purchase of a phone and a second for an airtime agreement.

■You need to know who is going to pay the cash-back.

■Airtime companies like Orange, O2, Vodafone, T-Mobile, etc often provide subsidies to independent retailers selling phones, in order to generate future airtime business.

■This subsidy invariably results in a discount on the price you have to pay for the phone or in some cases allows the retailer to provide a cash-back offer.

If the cash-back has to be claimed it is almost certain that it is being paid by the retailer rather than the airtime company.

Cash-backs will always require you to claim within a strict time period AND abide by all conditions.

With the proviso that it is essential you strictly comply with the conditions, cash-backs can work very successfully and some, especially with the larger well-established companies without difficulty.

Airtime companies are, or should be, aware of the offers being made to induce customers to sign up to their airtime agreements.

It is reasonable to accept the companies' lack of liability if the agreement is clearly transparent and is

understood by the mobile phone user.

However, if there is confusion and a lack of clarity, then the fact that the retailer has acted as agent in getting the customer to enter the airtime agreement could give some justification to making a claim against them directly.

Each case will depend on its facts and mobile phone users should be aware that the airtime companies normally deny any liability.

However, in view of the problems that have, and will continue to be, experienced with smaller retailers or where companies have gone out of business, Trading Standards would strongly advise the following:

■Ensure you understand, and can comply with, the conditions to make a claim.

■Check carefully who is going to pay the cash-back. What happens if the seller goes out of business?

■Remember, if the cash back is clearly coming from the retailer, and not the airtime company, you would continue to have liability to pay if the retailer went out of business.

■Remember, it is the high monthly tariff airtime agreements that generate the biggest cash-back offers. If you do not receive the cash-back will you be able to pay?

If you have been misled or confused as to the agreement you have entered into make a complaint to the companies involved.

If the complaint is not resolved register your complaint with Trading Standards via Consumer Direct on 08454 04 05 06 and consider contacting the industry regulators CISAS or OTELO.

Julian Edwards

Senior fair trading officer,
Lancashire County Council



'Camp school' makes a splash

One of Lancashire's four outdoor education centres now has a lake to add to climbing, mountain biking and hiking - so happy memories are guaranteed

A NEW lake is making a splash at one of Lancashire's four outdoor education centres.

In addition to climbing, survival skills, shelter-building, mountain biking, orienteering and walking, canoeing, kayaking and raft-building are now part of the on-site activities at Hothersall Lodge, near Ribchester.

Although the centre is set in beautiful countryside it has a serious educational ethos and although the courses are great fun it's no holiday camp. Since 1967 tens of thousands of children and adults have visited the centre to gain experience and skills that have enriched their lives for good.

The new 2,400 square-metre lake has been built with a combination of money from Lancashire County Council and the National Lottery.

Its borehole-fed water is so pure that experts have pronounced it "top quality".

"Hothersall visitors wishing to canoe or kayak used to have to go to the river at Garstang or even to a canal", said centre manager Dave Richardson. "It meant travelling miles in wet clothes - and doubts about water quality meant we could never encourage anyone to fall in!"

"The water here is crystal clear and you can see the bottom even at the deep end. The lake is also near to the showers and changing rooms and is a great addition to the centre."

Hothersall Lodge has traditionally concen-

trated on activities such as field studies and environmental education.

These continue, but with the addition of many more activities. Even survival skills are now taught at the centre.

Adults also enjoy team-building and problem-solving activities as part of the centre's training and development courses. Conference facilities are also available.

Dave, who is also a qualified geography teacher, said: "Children and adults alike are more likely to learn by actually doing something, rather than just being told about it."

"For example, a river study can be done from a textbook - or it can be done by taking children to the river and measuring its depth.

"You can then measure its speed and calculate the volume of water, and even the weight of the water, flowing past each second.

"It really teaches people how to think and that is something that will last a lifetime.

"We know that this approach works educationally. Teachers from visiting schools frequently remark on positive changes in

their pupils.

"As well as being challenging and healthy moorland walks are also very educational. For example we can measure the changes in wind speed and temperature at different altitudes - and then consider the scientific principles involved.

"I sometimes get stopped in the street by people who attended the centre years ago and they all say how much they enjoyed their stay here."

Courses typically last between three and seven days and accommodation is available for up to 60 people.

In addition to the wonderful new activity lake the centre also has climbing and abseil facilities, a mountain bike trail, a floodlit games court and a pond-dipping area. Hothersall really is a wonderful facility and if you live in Preston it's on your doorstep!

The county council's other "camp schools" - as generations of people recall them - are at Tower Wood on Windermere, Whitehough, near Nelson, and Borwick Hall, near Carnforth.



●LAND ahoy: staff, children and civic dignitaries at the official opening of Hothersall Lodge's new lake.



●(Right) TENS of thousands of Lancashire children have enjoyed stays at outdoor education centres. Lauren Moss (10), from Clitheroe, gets to grips with abseiling.

Work, a new experience

John Fisher tried the political life for two weeks



●LEYLAND Truck visit: from left, John sees the production line with County Councillor Vali Patel, County Councillor Hazel Harding and managing director Stuart Hays.

Some lucky souls find there is more to work than just a pay-packet.

For John, a Lancashire 16-year-old on work experience, excitement is a key part.

John couldn't decide which long-term ambition appealed most when he did work experience over the summer - working in

WORK experience is a relatively new concept.

In Lancashire, it is organised by the Lancashire Education Business Partnership, supported by the county council, and is now compulsory for all pupils in year 10 or 11.

The aim of work experience is not, as many think, to help choose a career, but instead is to give students an invaluable view of the world of work: good and bad.

I attend Lancaster Royal

Grammar School where, unlike most other schools, work-experience placements last for a fortnight rather than the standard week.

I chose to split the fortnight, spending the first week at the Lancaster and Wyre Conservative Association, and the second shadowing Hazel Harding, the leader of Lancashire County Council, and working in the Labour Group office in County Hall.

My week in the Conservative

the civil service, being an MP or being a councillor.

He spent his two weeks covering his options by spending one week at County Hall with Labour leader Hazel Harding and another week in the office of Conservative MP Ben Wallace...

Office was thoroughly enjoyable.

I was fortunate enough to meet the local MP, Ben Wallace, and was involved in a number of tasks including answering constituents' phone calls and extracting data from survey results.

As well as the party political contrast, my week at County Hall enabled me to see the difference between local and national politics.

In shadowing Hazel Harding

I enjoyed a highly interesting visit to Leyland Trucks and attended a meeting of the full county council.

Overall, I really enjoyed my two weeks of work experience.

I found that I now not only understand more about politics, but also a lot more about work itself.

I am still not sure what I want to do - but I do know that I find public service interesting.

However, I did find that work is not as glamorous as some people think - much of it is interesting but there are also a lot of dull bits.

Despite the nerves that many feel beforehand, work experience is very beneficial: if you put the effort in, you will find it very rewarding.

LOOK LIVELY



SOCIAL workers are often misunderstood and unfairly portrayed in TV soaps. But their job is about finding ways to help people live a better quality of life.

Here Norma Ward gives an insight into her career from nurse to qualified social worker and team manager supporting older people across Fylde and Wyre.

Part of Norma's busy week involves mentoring social work university students. As a qualified practice teacher Norma gives advice to those who may be considering a career in social work.

Why did you become a social worker?

When I left school I immediately went into nursing. I had always wanted to work in a caring profession that supported people.

I pursued a career in social work when my personal circumstances changed. I qualified as a social worker after almost 20 years as a nurse. Social work was a natural progression from nursing.

What does your job involve?

As a team manager I supervise and support a mix of qualified social workers and review officers who support older people who need social care support.

Social workers manage their own case loads, but I'm responsible for monitoring decisions about funding and the type of care packages that can be put in place. This can involve supporting people at home and those who leave hospital.

What is the appeal of your job?

I enjoy meeting people and listening to their life stories. Above all I enjoy giving older people some independence and helping them find ways to maintain or improve their quality of life.

What qualities and strengths do you need to be a social worker?

Anyone in social care must have a keen interest in people with good communication skills.

You need a lot of patience and be committed to ensuring people's needs are properly met. Good time management and organisational skills are essential.

What motivates you?

I find satisfaction in coming to work knowing that my work and the work of my team can make a difference.

Often I meet with many older people who ask me, "You're not going to put me in a care home, are you?"

I like finding alternative ways of support that meet their needs and help them remain independent.

What is the worst part of your job?

I find sitting in front of a computer quite frustrating.

But, like any profession that involves working with vulnerable people, paperwork is vital.

What advice would you give new social workers?

Remember that clients are somebody's mother or father.

You need a sense of empathy and understanding of a person's or family's situation.

We work with a variety of people so a non-judgemental and non-discriminatory attitude is essential. Finally - enjoy making a difference. It's a fantastic job.

Lancashire County Council has a recruitment hotline for social workers on 01772 534406.

Details are also available at:

www.lancashire.gov.uk/socialcarejobs

Further information can also be seen at:
www.socialworkandcare.co.uk

Take a break and make it 'special'

THERE is more than one way to teach the young - and special schools must try harder than most. Headteacher Joe Prendergast finds pupils at his school, for those with emotional and behavioural difficulties, to be real livewires...



Joe Prendergast, head, Wennington Hall Special School, Lancaster

AS the new academic year gets into full swing and all the old pressures return to staff and children alike, I found it quite refreshing to focus on some of the positive changes that have taken place over the years.

Some time back, breaks in the school day were quite boring events, unless there was a football - or even better, a fight - in the playground. Choice was limited.

When I became headteacher, one of the first areas of focus was break times. I wanted to introduce choice and lots of fun. Children and staff need positive break-time opportunities.

Today, I went for a stroll around the campus to observe pupils and staff. As I

entered the assembly hall, I found pupils laughing and joking with a member of staff. They were smokers who had decided to quit.

I then entered the corridor where two prefects were running the drinks machine. "What! No coke?", I said. They laughed, and reminded me that we were a healthy school, and they only sold drinks that were good.

I then moved into the library and found pupils playing a card game, some reading the daily paper, and - to my surprise - three pupils working on their literary skills on the computer. Interestingly, the member of staff was winning the card game. Hmm!

Then, I headed out to the main yard. BMXs and go-karts were flying around. Pupils were using the skate park. The sounds were great - lots of laughter.

As I moved perilously across the yard, two quads appeared. The smiles spoke a

thousand words. Pupils were helping each other kit up for the activity. "Here, let me help you". I looked over to the field and saw a huge kite which was being flown by a junior and senior pupil. Instruction at the top end!

I was exhausted at this stage. A member of staff shot past in a pedal kart. I noted that they used to sit down every break in the past.

Risking life and limb, I walked across the yard to the sensory room. An oasis of calm at last! There were six pupils in the room. One pupil was having a head massage, another relaxing in the ball pool. "Have a go, Sir!"

The music was relaxing - sounds of the sea. I was tempted, but decided I should return to the dreaded office and attack a mountain of paperwork with a refreshed head.

I felt proud that pupils and staff would also be returning to lessons positively refreshed.



●NEW centre: Dorothy with Scarlett Kenney (3) at last month's opening

DOROTHY'S PRIDE

HONOURING one of their backers was child's play when Lancashire's newest children's centre opened last month.

Haslingden Community Link's numerous activities have been backed by Dorothy Mitchell MBE for many years.

Dorothy, known as the Rossendale rotweiler for her campaigning and fund-raising, backs the idea of uniting family support in children's centres - and found the new building was dedicated to her last month.

The centre has an enormous range of activities on offer, including full daycare, breakfast club, child-minder group, computer sessions, jobs advice and a Help for Health group.

Lancashire will soon have a total of 61 children's centres.

Bus enthusiast's Lancashire trail

BUS stations may be a little boring to most of us - but they're great places to visit for pensioner Peter Kershaw.

Britain's best bus passenger is trying to visit every bus station in Britain and has visited every one in Lancashire.

Lancashire-born Peter, who now lives in Birmingham, said: "Earby, Colne, Rawtenstall, Burnley... I've visited them all."

"Preston is one of the best places to be a bus passenger as there are many routes and the fares are reasonable."

"Lancashire fares overall are not bad, but I wish there was such a thing as a pass that could be used everywhere - even across county borders as in Scotland."

Peter keeps an eye open for new stations, especially bus/rail interchanges. One planned development he wants to see is the interchange that is planned for Accrington.

Peter, a former factory guard, added: "I take my holidays on the bus."

"I get up in the early hours to catch the first bus of the day, take in some distant stations and then get home late at night."

Council website now easier and simpler

OVER the last few months we have been asking the citizens of Lancashire for their opinions on the county council's website - www.lancashire.gov.uk

Our users told us how they felt about the website now and how they think it can be improved.

As a result we are making some changes and we'd like to tell you about it...

Our citizens wanted us to update the homepage and make it more visually appealing,

so we're launching a new homepage in November.

The survey also told us that people wanted to find information more easily; so a Google search engine has been installed and we're checking the site for out-of-date pages and broken links.

New software will help us identify and fix broken links quickly.

We have also been working hard to put more entries into our A to Z list so that people can reach the pages they want quickly.

In order to do more transactions online we're making

more online forms available.

This was a common request from our customers.

From our website, you can now apply for children's primary and secondary school places and soon you'll also be able to order and pay for copies of birth, marriage and death certificates.

All of these systems use our new forms system that allows customers to save and print half-completed submissions.

In future we want to increase the number of things you can do online, so if you have any ideas then please get in touch.

From Pendle to Preston, open spaces are looking better

Parks gain new designer look

PROFESSIONAL help is available for community groups that have great ideas for projects – but lack the cash to put them into action.

About 50 small-scale projects have received professional design help from Lancashire County Council over the last two years and more are in the pipeline for 2006, ranging from community buildings and gardens, to play areas and disused graveyards.

The county council's Community Design scheme helps groups to design environmental improvement projects, recognising that a good plan goes a long way to ultimately raising financial support.

Tim Blythe, Lancashire County Council's environmental projects team leader, said: "A good set of concept plans and detailed drawings are invaluable for presenting ideas to grant-funders such as the National Lottery.

"That is where we come in. Grant

giving bodies get a lot of sketchy applications, which have little credibility.

"A professionally produced plan, with detailed drawings and realistic costings goes a long way to convincing grant funders to support projects, we want as much money to come to Lancashire as possible and to support as many local projects as possible.

"This scheme provides a kick-start for groups that have great ideas but little or no experience in seeking grant aid."

The fifty successful bids, backed by Community Design so far, have attracted £1m of investment into the county.

Help is available to groups wanting to improve their environment if their idea or project:

- is within Lancashire;
- has potential sources of funding in mind;
- comes from an identifiable community group;
- would realistically be assisted in gaining funding by help from Community Design.

The scheme was initially supported by Barclays and the North West Development Agency, but it has been so successful that the Environment Directorate is now making Community Design part of its mainstream activity.

Telephone **01772 534186** for details.

Outlook sunny for Japanese garden

You can seek design help on **01772 534186**

PENDLE



●NEW look: environment chief Clive Grunshaw, left, hands the plans to Friends of Walverden Park Martin Hodgson and Alan Whittaker.

A NELSON park will soon be spick and span – thanks to Lancashire County Council, volunteers and Pendle Council. The Friends of Walverden Park group was formed to spruce up the Pendle Council-owned park.

Design and planning needs money

and skill – and Lancashire County Council's Community Design team designed elements of the park for free. The plans, handed to the Friends recently by County Councillor Clive Grunshaw, include extra planting, new seating areas and a new park trail.

PRESTON



●ORIENTAL look for Japanese garden: from left, park campaigners Father Timothy Lipscomb, Diane Kirkpatrick, Helen Lord, Audrey Wilson, Harvey Thorpe, K Horsley, Alan Wood.

A JAPANESE garden is to be restored to its 1930s splendour in a joint project between volunteers, Lancashire County Council's Community Design Team and Preston City Council.

Changes in the Avenham Park, Preston, garden will include new planting of bam-

boo and Japanese maple, restoration of the waterfalls, new fencing and a new viewing platform.

Avenham Park and neighbouring Miller Park are included in an £8m improvement project – part-funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund – so restoration of the

Japanese garden is part of a wider project.

The project involves volunteers from the Friends of Avenham and Miller Parks. Lancashire County Council's Community Design Team arranged and funded design work.

Take a 'Strider' to school safety

CHILDREN are safer than ever at a school which adopted a School Travel Plan to tackle congestion at the school gates.

About nine in 10 children now walk to and from Aughton Town Green Primary School after the travel plan looked at ways to make the daily journey safer.

Not only are pupils fitter and happier, they are more alert in class – and that turns learning into a piece of cake.

Schools across Lancashire can adopt School Travel Plans which involve county council staff, teachers, pupils and parents looking at – and seeking to remove – things that deter walking to school.

School governor Christine Donnelly said: "Traffic used to be really bad near the school. Reducing that is better all round.

"Children are now chatting and laughing with friends and parents when they arrive at school."

Other steps either have included, or may yet include, earlier cycle proficiency tests, possible traffic-calming near the school, a shared school bus, a wider pavement and flashing speed signs.

About 180 Lancashire schools



●SCHOOL Travel Plan's Strider symbol with, from left, Cain Williams (6), Amelia Shaw (10), Robert McGowan (10) and Daniel Holmes-Moody (7).

now have travel plans.

Adviser Rob Hancock said: "Congestion at the school gates is a problem nationwide because parents fear their children won't be safe walking to school.

"Ironically their action makes the roads less safe and it becomes a vicious circle.

"Travel plans involve looking

closely at people's routes to school – and often we find we can tackle whatever it is that stops pupils walking or cycling.

"It may be a narrow pavement, it may be an unsafe junction, it could be a poorly situated bus stop – problems like that can usually be tackled fairly easily and that gets people out of their cars."

More details from School Travel Plan team on **01772 532212**.

Win a camera on youth site

YOUNGSTERS now have plenty to do, thanks to Lancashire Youth and Community Service's website.

From applying for a grant to voluntary work, from education to involvement with Lancashire's groundbreaking youth council, there is something for almost everyone.

In addition, the site – **www.lancsyces.org** – can also be viewed over mobile telephones.

The site contains details of dozens of things to do and opportu-

nities to become involved in the community.

Current opportunities include:

- The Youth Capital Fund and the Youth Opportunities Fund. More than £1m per year is available in Lancashire for young people to spend on things to do in their neighbourhood. The big difference is ... it is young people who decide where the money should go!

- The chance to win a camera in a photography contest. Quality photographs are always needed for Youth and Community Service

publications – so we are offering a camera to encourage entries.

- This year's Youth Work Week on the theme of mental health and emotional well-being.

- A chance for young people to help the police's Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre. The centre needs volunteers aged 11 to 16 to help with vital safety-first messages.

An information and advice service and freephone telephone helpline is also available on **0800 511111**.

Help when you need it most

Infirmary is what people dread - but at least their material interests are now protected

A NEW team of financial "guardians" is working in Lancashire to safeguard the interests of people who can no longer handle their money affairs.

Lancashire County Council's receivership team steps in to help people who are unable, either mentally or physically, to manage their money.

Team members are obliged in law to look after the vulnerable person's best interests in cases that will range from maximising benefits to handling complex property and equity empires.

Receivership officer Janice Magee said: "These people are very vulnerable. Most people who are unwell will have friends or family who will work

in their best interests.

"Some people, however, have no one willing or able to help – and that is where we come in."

The process usually starts when a social worker becomes concerned about the welfare of their client and their plight is then explained to the receivership team.

The new service has helped more than 70 people and families since this spring. Work on each case is governed by new mental health legislation.

Janice added: "It is a new service designed to put the interests of the client first.

"Some are unable to handle their affairs and some have even been financially mistreated by family and so-called friends."

Charity begins at home

A FORMER home for elderly people is to be offered to a charity for the homeless.

County councillors agreed to sell the former Birches home in Preston to the Emmaus charity which is expected to convert it to a residential home.

It was initially decided to reduce the number of homes for the elderly in 2002, with some remaining open for highly dependent people while other people would be supported in their own homes.

Apply for cash help

YOUNG people in Lancashire have real power to develop new services and fund activities after taking charge of a budget worth millions.

They are being asked for ideas that will benefit young people in their neighbourhood – the money could be spent on anything from record decks or recreational visits to bigger projects like skate parks or refurbishing youth centres.

Lancashire County Council's Youth Opportunity Fund and Youth Capital Fund aim to make sure there are places to go and things to do for young people in every area of the county.

A training workshop was held recently to begin setting up youth-led committees in each district called "youth banks" which will decide how to spend the government allocation, totalling £2.4m over the next two years.

Members of Lancashire's youth councils and youth service volunteers attended the Lancaster event to find out how to administer the grants and establish criteria for deciding how the fund will be used.

County Councillor Marcus Johnstone, Cabinet member for Children and Young People, said: "This fund is an exciting initiative to give Lancashire's young people choice and influence over

services in their neighbourhood.

"How the budget is spent will be decided democratically by youth representatives in each district and any young person can apply for funding or to join the decision-making committee.

"The criteria setting out how the money can be spent are very broad. All ideas are welcome – grants could be made for anything from equipping sports clubs to creating new facilities such as youth shelters and skate-parks or even helping individuals to fulfil their interests."

Anyone aged 13 – 19 can apply. The age range goes up to 21 for people with learning disabilities or those who have

recently left local authority care.

The Youth Opportunities Fund can be used to fund short-term activities such as trips, activities and decoration of youth centres while the Youth Capital Fund can finance permanent facilities such as BMX ramps, youth shelters or computers.

Further information and application forms are available from District Youth and Community Offices, Lancashire County Council's After Care Service or by calling John Clark on **01772 532785**. Information will also be available soon on the Lancashire Youth and Community Service website **www.lancsys.org**

Write to us

PRESSURE on space means that readers' letters for You're Telling Us are being held over for next month.

Letters to Vision are welcome on any subject and may be edited.

Letters should be sent to: The editor, Vision, Corporate Communications, County Hall, Preston PR1 8XJ.

Winner

WINNER of last month's Virgin Trains/Milton Keynes competition was K Jordan, of Owen Street, Accrington.

A total of 836 people entered. Details will be posted to the winner.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES DEMONSTRATE SUCCESS

An independent evaluation of Lancashire Children's Fund (LCF) services is providing a useful tool for LCF, its partners, and project workers. The Evaluation sets out the characteristics that are likely to contribute to successful projects, and specifically highlights key areas of achievement.



LCF currently supports 74 schools and community based projects across Lancashire, and the Evaluation highlights positive results, particularly in improving children's attendance at school and issues with behaviour. It is evident that parenting and family interventions can be successful in improving children's behaviour and school attendance, all of which are key elements for a child to succeed in life and help to prevent more severe problems later in life such as truancy, poor academic achievement and anti-social and criminal behaviour.

There is also clear evidence that LCF funded community and school based interventions are successful in helping children with disabilities and children from ethnic minority communities to overcome disadvantages and barriers to social inclusion.

The report specifically highlights key areas of success and details projects which demonstrated evidence of good practice as shown in the following extracts from the report.

Cllr Veronica Afrin
Chair of Lancashire Children's Fund

REDUCING CRIME

Youth Works Pendle provides social-group support for young people who are involved in crime or anti-social behaviour. GRIP provides one-to-one support across Lancashire for young people who have received a reprimand but have not reached the Final Warning stage. Both projects demonstrated evidence of reduced levels of offending and reduced risks of offending for most children.

"Groundwork should be encouraged to establish similar projects in other parts of the county."

Youth Works Pendle : Groundwork East Lancashire
Maggie Hulston : 01282 430433 : maggie.hulston@groundwork.org.uk

GRIP (Group Intervention Panel) : Lancashire Youth Offending Team
Judith Gluyas : 01772 531477 : judith.gluyas@grip.lancscc.gov.uk

Green text indicates extracts from the independent Evaluation Report

Further information on the Evaluation Report and Lancashire Children's Fund is available from Programme Manager, Jo Humphries on 01772 662260 : email lcf@nch.org.uk. The full Evaluation Report and Summary Document can be viewed and downloaded from the Children's Fund website

www.lancashirechildrensfund.org.uk

NCH the children's charity is the lead agency and accountable body for the Lancashire Children's Fund Partnership

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

A cassette version of Vision is now available for visually impaired people from Galloway's Society for the Blind by calling 01772 744148

Produced by Corporate Communications Group, Lancashire County Council (tel 01772 531095/535336). Printed by Morton's Print Ltd.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Learning and Home School Mentors provide support to families to get children to attend school and to help and encourage educational attainment. The projects use direct interventions with children with behavioural issues, problems of social interaction, truancy and aggression, and children and families benefit from breakfast clubs, classroom support and sports & recreational activities.

"Clear improvements have been achieved in children's school attendance and punctuality."

Moorside Community Primary School, Skelmersdale
Karen Kyriacou : 01695 722931
headteacher@moorside23.lancsngfl.ac.uk

Holland Moor Primary School, Skelmersdale
Mike Beale : 01695 725062 : head@holland.lancsngfl.ac.uk

PARENTING

Preston Parenting is a community based project that takes a holistic approach to family problems, and early interventions are followed up with a range of support in partnership with social services, schools and health groups. PPP is also particularly successful in recruiting volunteers.

"Preston Parenting Project has proved very successful and the case for mainstreaming and replicating the project in other parts of the county is strong."

Preston Parenting Project
NCH, the Children's Charity
Debbie Charlesworth : 01772 701100
debbie.charlesworth@nch.org.uk



the children's charity

EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

The project is mainly supporting secondary school age children and aims to improve children's emotional health. It provides substantial levels of intervention through one-to-one support, group work and family counselling.

"The project has been able to demonstrate improvements in behaviour for a large majority of children and young people, particularly for those with the highest level of problems."

Coastal Child and Adolescent Therapeutic Service, Fleetwood.
Stephen Booth : 01253 875735 : ccats@btconnect.com

HEALTHY EATING

The project is run by sessional staff and involves a four-week programme for groups of primary school children in Years 4, 5 & 6.

"The project has provided clear evidence about improvements in children's diet. A major benefit has been sharing food cultures between mainly white and mainly Pakistani heritage communities."

The Good Food Project
Community Food Workers as Peer Educators :
Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale PCT
Jenny Slaughter : 01282 657395:
jenny.slaughter@bprpct.nhs.uk

