

Taking part
couldn't be
easier

[www.lancashire.gov.uk/
corporate/vision/](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/corporate/vision/)

Vision

2004-2005
Transforming the School Workforce
2006-2007
Positive Youth Engagement
(in the community and
Democratic Process)
2007-2008
Healthy Schools



Lancashire
County Council

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

June 2007

Providing • education • highways • trading standards • social services

ELEVATE

Boost your
backyard

Page 3

HAPPY FAMILIES

Parents like
what they see

Page 5

STARS OF FREEDOM

£25m pounds to tackle
crime and nuisance

See page 3

HELP

I need somebody

- ☒ Job clubs – already SUPPORTED
- ☒ Training for the young – already SUPPORTED
- ☒ Disabled people back to work – already SUPPORTED

THE world of work can be exciting – one group of cheerleaders, backed by LCDL's Grants for Growth, is to appear on Simon Cowell's new talent show. Shell's Belle's won a place at the London finals after auditioning for the show in Manchester. The road to possible stardom is exciting – but the Burnley group's day-to-day activities actually involve preparing young people for life.

Full story p5

**Got a good idea – GET SUPPORTED at 01772 551888
or www.lancashire.gov.uk/grants_for_growth/**

HUNDREDS of thousands of pounds are available to help people help others.

That's the opportunity being made available by a Grants for Growth series of events which aim to create a network of helpers across the county.

Grants for Growth, jointly funded by Lancashire County Council and the European Social Fund, involves cash support to help people get back to work. A travelling roadshow over the summer could be your chance to contribute.

The Lancashire County Developments Ltd (LCDL) scheme already helps more than 300 projects – and thousands of individuals – overcome the setbacks in life that prevent people from living a full life.

Grants of up to £6,000 are awarded to groups or individuals for projects that either create employment or move people in to employment through training or volunteering.

County Councillor Niki Penney, LCDL chair, said: "I urge anyone who wants to help others to come along to these events to see how Lancashire Grants for Growth funding can help them."

"Already over 300 such schemes are in

place thanks to our funding. That has helped young people to learn building skills that have turned a derelict garage into a youth centre and it has helped job clubs to give advice and support to people looking to return to work.

"These events will help establish a network of existing Grants for Growth recipients to form, so that they can learn and help each other in the future and, at the same time, tell others how they can benefit from Grants for Growth."

The summer roadshows will be held across Lancashire where those who have received a grant can tell those who want a grant how it can help them help others.

The events will be held in easily accessible venues. It is hoped to distribute the entire fund to hundreds of new projects helping people back into work.

The events will be heavily publicised in the local media and will be held in West Lancashire, East Lancashire, Morecambe and Preston. So if you are a voluntary, community or faith sector organisation or an individual passionate about your community and would like to attend please phone the Grants for Growth team on 01772 551888 for more information.

VENUES

July 9 – 10:30-2:30
St Augustin's Centre,
St Austin's Place, Preston

July 27 – 10:30-2:30
The Globe, St James Square,
Accrington

August 6 – 10:30-2:30
West Lancashire Investment
Centre, Maple View, White
Moss Business Park,
Skelmersdale

September 19 – 10:30-2:30
The Platform, Central
Promenade, Morecambe

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

The presence of promotional leaflets delivered inside Vision does not imply Lancashire County Council endorsement.

YOUR LANCASHIRE: A PLACE WHERE EVERYONE MATTERS



Ask Shirley

Don't know who to contact when you need help? Are you baffled by bureaucracy? 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 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.

Transport help

Mrs S from Cliviger writes: I am a 78 year-old widow who can no longer drive and am finding it hard to keep appointments.

I have tried to persevere with taxis but haven't found them very reliable. I also find that they drive very fast and on occasions this has made me too sick to be treated by the dentist.

Are there any volunteer drivers in my area.

Communicars operate within your area and are supported by Lancashire County Council and Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale Council for Voluntary Service.

Your local co-ordinator can be contacted 10am-3pm Monday to Friday on **01282 412096**.

More information including how to become a volunteer driver and also contact telephone numbers for many other areas in Lancashire can be found at the community transport website: **www.lancashire-communitytransport.co.uk**

Springclean help

Mrs G from Grimsargh writes: I have some general household waste that needs to be taken to a tip.

Where is my nearest site and will I need a permit?

Your nearest Household Waste Recycling Centre is based in Longridge.

The centre is best accessed from the mini roundabout on the B6243/B6244 Preston Road by turning into Chapel Hill where the site is located on the left.

For information or to apply for a permit visit: **www.lancashire.gov.uk/environment/waste** or call the waste helpline on **0845 0500 957**.

Healthy trips

Mr F from Kirkham writes: Now that summer is here I want to make the most of the long, sunny days and keep fit at the same time so I

am planning on getting myself a secondhand bicycle. Is there anywhere that I can find out about cycle routes in Lancashire?

What an excellent idea. Whether you are looking for cycle routes linking attractive villages on quiet lanes, cycle paths on disused railway lines or rugged off-road tracks across remote moorland, Lancashire has lots to offer you.

Leaflets and lists of some of the main cycle routes in Lancashire can be found at **www.lancashire.gov.uk/environment/cycling/countryside**

There are also many handy leaflets to download such as, "Choosing the Right Bike" and "Cycle Maintenance".

If you don't have access to the internet, publications and more information may be obtained from county information centres.

On the buses

Miss L from Lancaster writes:

I am on benefits and my daughter is due to start high school in September. Will she qualify for a free bus pass to get her to and from school? If so, how do I apply and when?

Eligibility for free school travel is not income-based.

As a general guide the child must live in Lancashire, be travelling two miles or more if aged under 8, three miles or more if aged over 8 and attending the nearest suitable school.

The child's age, religion and the availability of places is taken into consideration.

Application forms are sent out at the end of April to children due to start primary or secondary school if they may be eligible. If you have not received a form by the end of May, you should ring the School Transport Helpline on **01772 534588**.

Be my baby

Mrs D from Poulton writes: I recently gave birth and was wondering how long I have to register my baby



● FRIENDLY people are on hand at household waste recycling centres (see "Springclean help").

and how do I make an appointment to register?

It is a legal requirement to register your baby within 42 days from the date of birth.

To make an appointment to register your baby please ring Lancashire County Council's Customer Service Centre on **0845 053 0021**.

Career step

Mr F from Skelmersdale:

I am 18 and am interested in doing a course at college. I am unable to receive any funding from my Local Education Authority. Can you suggest anything?

Yes. Career Development Loans are available to students aged 18 or over and help to fund up to two years vocational education, plus up to

a further 12 months if the course includes some practical work experience.

You would not have to make any repayments during the period of learning covered by the loan. The Department for Education and Skills pays interest on the loan during the period of learning and up to one month afterwards.

The loan is then repaid to the bank over an agreed period at a fixed rate of interest.

If you require further details you can contact Lancashire Student Services on **01772 530430**.

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**.

300 Visions of success for blind readers



● UPON request: Galloways' volunteers record 300 copies of Vision each month. Linda Wright is pictured demonstrating some of the items available in Galloways' sight advice centre.

MORE and more blind people are being helped by Lancashire County Council services with tapes, Braille - and a variety of "talking" devices.

More than 300 people each month now ask for a tape-recorded copy of Vision, up from 12 three years ago, 106 two years ago and 196 this time last year.

The audio version of Vision is only one of a number of services for blind people that Lancashire County Council produces with help from the volunteers at Galloway's Society for the Blind.

The charity's 220 helpers also provide leaflets on things such as bus travel - and record 3,500 tapes per week of newspapers and community and church newsletters.

The Penwortham-based volunteers also provide items such as talking microwaves, talking clocks, large-buttoned phones, watches that can be read by touch - even talking weighing scales.

The charity receives no help from the taxman, so volunteers must work at full stretch to help Galloway's 6,500 "customers".

Cassette versions of Vision are available by ringing **01772 744148**.

ONE of the charity's main fundraisers is the annual guided walk across Morecambe Bay. The eight-mile sponsored walk - on both 23 and 24 June - will be led by Cedric Robinson MBE, the Queen's Appointed Guide. Further details: **01772 744148**, visit **www.galloways.org.uk/main/pages/gtnews.html** or email **kevin.loneran@galloways.org.uk**

Fun day party for child centre birthday

BIRDS of prey, fruit kebabs, marquees and sunflower-planting were among the attractions when a children's centre held a fun day.

It is just over a year since Park Children's Centre in Skelmersdale opened its doors to provide a brighter future for families in the area.

Attractions last month included displays and talks by firefighters, local historians and by a number of craft experts.

Centre facilities include a nursery, a mums' and tots' group, a baby-massage group, a baby clinic and visits by dieticians and physiotherapists. Contact **01695 554535** for more details.

Don't forget - your county councillor can help. Contact details are available on **0845 0530000** or at: **www.lancashire.gov.uk**
You can also try your area's County Information Centre where staff are trained to help the public



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

www.lancashire.gov.uk/vacancies

Lancashire County Council

NEWS IN
BRIEFLibrary
nostalgia

● **MILITARY memories:** Stanley Dickinson at Chorley library.

MEMORIES of air-raid shelters and songs and films from the dark days of World War Two were the subject at a "nostalgia day" at Chorley library.

Librarians organised the day of reminiscences for people connected mainly with the old Chorley Grammar School, but also for all Chorley people.

Librarian Linda Langford said: "We held a similar event last year. It was so popular that many people asked us to organise it again."

"The school used to have an air-raid shelter on what is now the car park. Many people had memories of it as well as happy memories of songs and films of the era."

Sign up
to help

VOLUNTEERS of all ages are needed to provide community support for people with physical and learning disabilities, and socially isolated adults in their communities.

The county council's volunteer service, as part of this year's Volunteer Week, wants to recruit more people willing to spend a couple of hours a week to befriend and help vulnerable people.

Training and education opportunities are available for volunteers. Telephone 01257 248118 or visit www.opening-doors.lancashire.gov.uk for details.

Held to
account

SENIOR decision-makers will be open to question in Preston and Burnley in June.

Lancashire County Council's Cabinet Question Time will visit the Harris conference centre on Garstang Road, **Fulwood** at 7.15pm on Tuesday 19 June. County councillors on the panel will include leader Hazel Harding, finance chief Anne Brown, planning and partnerships boss Jean Battle, and Vali Patel.

It will move to Burnley Youth Theatre on Queen's Park Road, **Burnley**, at 7.15pm on Wednesday 27 June.

County councillors will include Hazel Harding, Matthew Tomlinson, Anne Brown, adult and community services lead member Chris Cheetham and environment chief Tony Martin.

Audit praise for four-star council

INDEPENDENT local government watchdogs have concluded that Lancashire County Council is improving services and delivering "good value for money".

The Audit Commission's annual inspection letter says that the county's only four-star authority is performing "consistently well" and that Lancashire Local committees in each part of the county are showing signs of success in increasing local involvement.

The auditors report that nearly eight out of 10 local indicators – a measure of service performance – are improving, that recycling rates are high, that the council exceeds targets for reuse of neglected land and that community development is being strengthened through libraries and schools.

Highlights include:

- Strong outcomes for children and young people. Provision for looked-after children is improving and above those of similar councils; educational attainment is high and still improving.

- Services for vulnerable adults are good and improving. The report notes speedy provision

£25m stars of freedom

EXTRA freedom to address crime, anti-social behaviour and health and wellbeing is being granted to Lancashire County Council as a reward for good performance.

The council's four-star status – four stars is the maximum the independent Audit Commission can award – means more flexibility in spending a £25m Whitehall grant.

The flexibility means an end to "ringfencing" and "clawbacks" in Local Area Agreement (LAA)

sion of care packages; support for independence; delayed hospital discharges – bed-blocking – remains one of the lowest

The council performs well . . . good value for money is achieved in services

projects – giving managers more chance to plan for the long term.

Gill Kilpatrick, county council deputy finance chief, said: "There used to be a number of limitations in how we could spend money."

"These new freedoms mean we and our LAA partners can spend the money the way we think will best suit local conditions."

"We would not have this extra flexibility without having our four stars."

Projects affected include those on providing a cleaner and safer environment, encouraging recycling, supporting under-performing schools, reducing disturbance caused by quarrying and improving neighbourhood management.

money. Efficiency savings totalled £19.5m in the last financial year – the same or improved service levels at a lower cost.

- auditor

Targets, however, could be used more effectively to further improve value for money.

The Audit Commission report stated: "The council continues to perform consistently well across all five 'use of resources' themes with strong financial management, a sound system of internal control and good value

for money being achieved from the provision of its services."

"The council continues to achieve a four-star rating and its direction of travel is improving well."

County Councillor Hazel Harding, county council leader, said: "Value for money is paramount for Lancashire people and it will always be paramount for Lancashire County Council."

"Efficient services are one thing; responsiveness to what people actually want is another. We exceeded our £15m annual efficiency target by £4.5m, while strengthening Lancashire Locals to actually direct money to where it is needed."

Town's success boosts trading battle

LANCASHIRE'S bid for official Fair Trade status has received a double shot in the arm from the NHS and from the people of Burscough.

First, the Fair Trade Foundation awarded Fair Trade status to Burscough after retailers and the town's council signed up to Fair Trade principles and to selling Fair Trade goods.

Then one of the county's NHS hospital trusts – a major employer – said it planned to apply for Fair Trade status.

County Councillor Tim Ormrod said: "This is another step on the path towards gaining Fair Trade status for Lancashire as a whole."

"Fair Trade involves treating Third World suppliers fairly and buying their goods at a fair price."

The Co-operative College has also produced a fair Trade information pack for Lancashire schools.

Householders' pride in backyard beauty



● **TEAMS** are ready to tackle backyard blight in areas such as Accrington, above.

A **NEW** project has been launched to help transform one of Lancashire's most underused resources – the backyard!

There are approximately 160,000 terraced houses with backyards in Lancashire – a massively underused space with great potential for environmental regeneration in urban areas.

The county council's Environmental Projects Team is working with Myerscough College and Elevate East Lancashire to spruce up backyards.

K Horsley, environmental projects officer, explained: "The traditional Lancashire terraced home has been overlooked for so long – but the Backyard Project aims to change that."

"We want to help to raise awareness

of the opportunities within Lancashire's urban environment to enhance biodiversity, establish wildlife corridors and develop sustainability and recycling."

A pilot design – the result of a competition – is being built in the backyard of the India Street Neighbourhood management office in Accrington.

Students from Myerscough College will be constructing the garden, while the permaculture project at Offshoots, Burnley will be growing the plants that will turn the backyard into a green oasis.

The construction of the garden will be finished by the beginning of July 2007 and is being funded with contributions from Elevate East Lancashire and Lancashire County Council.

People can see the garden for themselves, or just find out more, by ringing **01772 530650** or email: projectsteam@env.lancscc.gov.uk

Taking part couldn't be easier

We have put **Vision** online to save you time (not to mention money!)

- Enter readers competitions online – no need for stamps or envelopes
- Let Shirley solve your council problems online
- You tell us! Readers letter goes live
- See our picture galleries and download for free.

<http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/corporate/vision/>

All at the click of a button



Working in Lancashire

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

LCDL RELOCATION

LCDL will be relocating back to County Hall on Friday, 1st June. This move back to the central hub is to reinforce LCDL as the economic development directorate of the County Council and to further develop links with other directorates. This will strengthen delivery of projects and programmes for example, Lancashire Local Area Agreements and the LCDL Skills and Inclusion agenda.

This move is also part of the LCC review of property as part of the Lancashire Efficiency Initiative.

Lancashire County Developments Limited
County Hall, PO Box 78, Preston, PR1 8XJ

Telephone 01772 536600 Fax 01772 536601 www.lcdl.co.uk

Managed workspace available to help Lancashire business grow

LCDL's portfolio of properties provide flexible accommodation for new and small businesses illustrating the commitment of the county council's economic development department to new jobs and a prosperous Lancashire. The tenants at all of these locations will be able to access the support of LCDL.

Lancashire Business Park, Leyland is one of the North West's premier business locations. Opportunities are generally available to meet the needs of companies requiring industrial / distribution facilities or office premises.



White Cross



Lancashire Digital Technology Centre



St. Augustine's New Avenham Centre



The Innovation Centre

Lancashire Business Park

To take your place in this growing success story contact the centre on 01772 622108 or email lbp@lcdl.co.uk.

St. Augustine's New Avenham Centre, Preston has incubator office space available and offers a fully secured site with parking and flexible short term leases amongst other benefits.

If you are interested in finding out more about the centre telephone 01772 521001 or email enquiries@avenhamcentre.co.uk.

White Cross, Lancaster lies at the heart of the city centre and boasts over 400,000 square feet of high quality accommodation. This site is close to the motorway network and offers easy access to the West Coast Main Line.

To be part of this thriving community contact the estate office on 01524 585360 or email njnelson@lcdl.co.uk.

You can also gain further information about all the above by taking a look at the LCDL website - www.lcdl.co.uk.

LCDL - a combination of offering workspace, providing business finance and directly supporting businesses to start and to grow. Contact us to find out if we can help you.

LCDL can also help to source high-quality business premises for companies. For further information call LCDL on 01772 551888 before June 1st or using the new contact details after this date.

There is currently an opportunity to rent a unique high quality workshop/development unit and offices totalling 10,866 square feet. Also, every Friday throughout June free tea and coffee will be provided with every meeting room hired so make your booking quick!

For further information or to make a booking, please contact the centre on 01282 872500 or email ldtc@lcdl.co.uk.

The Innovation Centre, Nelson is a two-storey building located near to the town centre and has excellent transport links. Currently there are three units available of approximately 450 square feet each and the centre has recently undergone extensive refurbishment.

For further information, please contact the centre on 01282 872500 or email cbaxter@lcdl.co.uk.

Lancashire County Developments Ltd.



Another chance to WIN recycled garden furniture with Vision

OOPS! We forgot to include the question for last month's competition. So here's another chance to win this fantastic prize.

You could be the owner of a £295 picnic table or a bird table - made from recycled "waste".

Prosperity Recycling and Lancashire County Council have teamed up to reduce Landfill Tax by using domestic plastic waste to make garden furniture.

The company also produces garden seats, play-ground equipment, benches, planters and raised flower beds all made from recycled plastic.



All of it is rot-free, maintenance-free, vandal resistant and features an attractive wood effect.

Available in black and brown, the furniture is as good as wood - only it will last almost for ever.

To win, all you need to do is

answer this simple question:

Recycled garden furniture can be bought in black and ... which other colour?

The first correct entry to be drawn will win the picnic table, while the second will win the bird table. Delivery to your home is free.

Send your entries to: Picnic Competition, Vision, Corporate Communications, County Hall, Preston, PR1 8XJ.

Don't forget - you can also enter Vision competitions online by visiting our website at: www.lancashire.gov.uk/corporate/vision

Employees of Lancashire County Council are not allowed to enter.



You're telling us!

Send your letters to:

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

A hard day's grind

I HAVE many memories of textiles (Vision, May), having worked at age 16 in J & JH Entwistle's Clifton Mill, Church.

I used to sit on a piking stand, piking bobbins for the mule spinners. I had to put a stick in the back of each carding engine and sometimes it would hit a revolving drum, thus requiring the helpful services of Alan, our stripper and grinder.

I recall David Ralph and another man called David who put a frog in my coat pocket. That made me jump!

I didn't go often into the weaving shed - it was very noisy.

Mill work was more money than shop work. I got more than £6 in the mill, compared with £3 or £4 I would have got in a shop.

The job was alright but dusty and I used to fear it would damage my lungs. I didn't actually stay there long enough to suffer.

My memories of Clifton Mill are all nice. I still have the glowing reference I was given when I left.

ADRIAN V GRADY
Accrington

Being Frank

VISION asked for recollections of the cotton industry and I have a 101-year-old friend called Frank Trudgill.

Frank was born in Nelson and started work at Fletcher's Mill, Nelson, as a 12-year-old. He looked after three-four looms and was paid a weekly 30 shillings.

He rose at 5.30am,



● REEL stories: Vision readers have been fondly looking back on their time in the mills.

started work at 6am and worked 56 hours per week.

He had one week's holiday per year.

He had four brothers and one sister.

All his brothers served in France in the 1914-18 war and all returned, one with a military medal.

He is a self-proclaimed communist - and bitter about his experiences in the mill.

He is admired by many and enjoys pretty good health.

H D TALBOT
Arnsdale

Generation dedication

FOR 32 years, apart from war service with the Royal Navy, I worked from being a weaver to eventually being works manager in the textile industry.

More than anything else, my enduring memory is of the dedicated workforce, male and female, which endured without complaint for generation after generation.

May their efforts never be forgotten.

DOUG BULL
Waterfoot

Root Pain

REFER to the article in May's edition of Vision regarding the availability of NHS dentists in Lancashire.

I am aged 63 and my wife is aged 61. We have been on the Lancashire NHS dental waiting list for over 12 months since our dentist ceased to treat NHS patients.

In that time we have had to pay for private treatment, which we can ill afford, but have no alternative.

I have contacted a number of dentists in the area, all with negative results.

One dentist told me that they also are only going to treat private patients in future.

It appears, as you said in your article, that the NHS told the committee that almost all the dentists would be signing up to the new contract, the ones that have not and will not sign all practice in the Chorley area.

I personally suspect, as a retired police officer, that we are being conned and that this a nationwide problem.

PAINED
Chorley

■ Thank you to everyone who has responded on this issue. Our Adult Social Care and Health

Committee will be considering all your views in September, so there's still time to let us know your views - editor.

Canal Can't

LIVE in Burnley. Last week I decided to walk along the canal to Blackburn.

Once I got past Rose Grove, the path was dreadful. Worst of all was the amount of litter in and around the canal. There are some great views across the valley, but the amount of litter between Rose Grove and Rishton in particular, made me ashamed to say I'm a lassie from Accrington.

There wasn't one seat where I could eat my lunch without being surrounded by beer cans and worse. We live in a beautiful part of the country, why is it being turned into a tip?

Come on Accrington, tidy it up and make us proud.

ANNE CHATBURN
Burnley

Letters containing a name and address will be given priority in publication. Letters may be edited.

Dance group's Simon Cowell trial

CHEERLEADERS funded by Grants for Growth will have national exposure when they appear on Simon Cowell's new talent show.

Shell's Belles won a place at the London finals after auditions in Manchester. The Burnley group has gone from strength to strength after receiving the county council grant.

The group, run by Michelle Williamson (38) from Burnley, teaches cheerleading dance moves and applied for the grant to enable young people from the area to take dance qualifications.

One example of the good work Shell's Belles has achieved is Devon Burnell (16), who was getting into trouble until joining the group.

Devon now has confidence to pursue A-levels and won a commendation from Lancashire's High Sheriff after chasing and catching a mugger.

Fitness trainer Michelle says cheerleading gives children a chance to learn new skills while improving their confidence. Receiving the grant she says has made a huge difference.

She said: "The courses will help hundreds of children. They are now being rewarded for all their work."

The group has just performed its first show.

Appearing on Simon Cowell's "Britain's Got Talent" involved meeting Ant and Dec, Piers Morgan and Amanda Holden.

Councillor Sean Serridge, Lancashire County Council's Champion for Young People, said: "It is this kind of project that Grants for Growth can help."

"I urge any groups or individuals who believe funding will help their project to get in touch."

Grants for Growth is European Social Fund money matched by and made available through Lancashire County Developments Ltd (LCDL).

Grants of up to £6,000 are available to groups or individuals for projects that either create employment or move people nearer to employment through training or volunteering. Anyone wishing to know more can contact LCDL on 01772 551888.

HAPPY FAMILIES

Research shows Lancashire has what parents want for their child's future



● MUM Lorna Hamer, daughter Emily and grandmother Ingrid love trips to the park and swimming pool.

THE low cost of living, low unemployment, good schools, beautiful countryside and relatively cheap houses are making Lancashire into one of the top places in Britain to bring up a family.

Readers' Digest pollsters asked parents what they wanted from an area – and then found that each of Lancashire's 12 districts were above the national average.

Unsurprisingly, Lancashire's "top" district is Ribblesdale – ranked nine out of 408 council areas nationwide.

Second in Lancashire, Hyndburn was 18th out of 408. Indeed, 10 out of 12 parts of the county were in the top half of the table while seven Lancashire districts were in the nation's top 100.

County Councillor Hazel Harding,

county council leader, said: "Members of the public said they wanted good state schools, affordable family housing, good local hospitals and plenty of other families nearby."

"The areas looked at included large towns, small towns and rural areas. Obviously, none were without problems altogether – but they did show that Lancashire was among the best loved in the country."

One thread appeared to unite all the top-performing areas – the thread of "community".

Councillor Harding added: "We know from our own research that there is a great sense of belonging to the county of Lancashire."

"Improving life in Lancashire needs that sort of commitment from Lancastrians – a commitment that will include individuals, community groups and councils."

More views

Mum Lynette Edwards, Rishton (pictured with husband Carl and daughter Shelby, 8) said: Rishton is a lovely village where everyone knows everyone else. There is good community spirit and it is good for bringing up young children.

The cost of living is not bad here – but there is not enough for teenagers to do and they make trouble.



Marie Morris, Preston (pictured left): I've lived in Preston all my life and I wouldn't want to live anywhere else. People are very friendly and everybody seems to know everybody else.

People talk to each other. I like to visit Lytham and Blackpool for walks along the coast. I use public transport which is very good and generous – it doesn't cost a lot.

Mother, Burnley: Schools and nursery schools are good in the area. There is a lot for families to do, like

going to Towneley Park and hall. Not all parks are as good though.

The cost of living is good for families in Lancashire.

The programme to build and merge schools in the area is catching people's attention. We will have to wait and see – I went to Ivy Bank High School and pupils there never got on with Habergham pupils. Long term, mergers may end that rivalry but only time will tell.

Beverley Cartwright, Rishton: This is a good place to bring up children – I have three grown-up children. It's very quiet which is good.

Houses around here are very good value, although they are more expensive than they used to be.

Countryside locally is very nice and easy to get to.



Joan Hargreaves, Rishton: My two nearly grown-up children have been brought up in Rishton and they have turned out well.

The town now has better facilities than it used to have and so it is better for families. My children used to go bowling, swimming, to football and to cricket and now the golf club is very good for the young.

The countryside round here is also very nice.

TOP OF THE POPS

PARENTS were asked which characteristics were desirable to bring up a family. Each of the nation's 408 local authority areas were then ranked. Lancashire's 12 districts are listed below:

- 9. Ribblesdale ■ 18. Hyndburn
- 23. Chorley ■ 65. Rossendale
- 74. West Lancashire
- 90. Pendle ■ 99. South Ribble
- 141. Burnley ■ 170. Preston
- 200. Lancaster ■ 208. Fylde
- 229. Wyre

Your views

Parent Martin Jones, Burnley: There is plenty for people to do in this area – and plenty of schools. They are going to be building more schools.

We are getting more people coming into the area so we need more schools. People wonder about the location of these new schools but, overall, it is a good thing.

Alex Deegan, from Skelmersdale,

said: I like the open spaces. I've got grandchildren and I enjoy taking them for a walk to the pond to feed the ducks.

I'm from Liverpool originally but I wouldn't want to go back because it's so much more built up.

There needs to be more amenities for young people though.



Ann Malia, from Ormskirk, said: I live opposite a farmer's field and I've lived there 20-odd years – I like it and have no intention of moving.

I work at Ormskirk hospital and live in walking distance so it's right on the doorstep. The schools are good. My daughter and I like to take my granddaughter to the park in Ormskirk or out to Southport.

Lorna Hamer (main picture with young daughter Emily and mother Ingrid), **Skelmersdale:** I lived in Ormskirk for 16 years but live in Skelmersdale at the moment.

Ormskirk is a comfortable size and you generally bump into someone you know.

There's the park and duck pond and the swimming pool. I've brought Emily out for a walk. It's nice and clean and you can actually walk to places without having to cross busy roads.



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Gail.bonney2@mus.lancscc.gov.uk



SAVE YOUR STAMPS

Vision competitions and letters are online at: www.lancashire.gov.uk/corporate/vision

LOOK LIVELY



LOCAL government is about more than talking heads, agendas and endless meetings. It is actually about people and the services they need.

Education, roads, sports centres, housing – all is done at local government level and, as a democracy, everyone has their say.

For Josie Farrington – now Baroness Farrington – it was a concern for housing conditions that propelled her to seek election as a councillor, then as a county councillor and then as an MP.

She believes passionately that everyone should get more involved in public affairs ...

What first made you seek election?

I got involved with housing charity Shelter and came to realise that housing policy change needed local government action. I was elected to Preston Council from 1973 to 1976.

I became a county councillor in 1977 because of my interest in education and served until 1997.

Representing people is very important and usually enjoyable. Most people who become councillors want to make life better for people – I believe that is true for candidates of all parties.

Are elections enjoyable?

Yes. They are always hard work although nerve-wracking for candidates. You have to genuinely enjoy meeting people and be prepared to speak up for them.

I have been in the Lords since 1994, but still miss local government.

What do you feel you have achieved?

Some things I have been involved in have really changed people's lives for the better. Most have been highly localised but still very important.

One was getting young children full-time places in reception classes. That was the basis of the recent expansion of nursery places – a really important issue for families.

The second thing we achieved in Lancashire was producing a policy for education in a multi-cultural community. It was something that won support from all the parties and from all religious groups.

What motivates a councillor?

A desire to see something change for the better. Small things matter a lot at a neighbourhood level.

I want to see people of all sections of society take up their place as elected representatives – men and women, working and non-working and people of all cultural backgrounds.

Being a councillor is very time consuming, but it is fundamentally important that the needs of all sections of the community are represented.

We need more women in local government.

I remember when the leaders of the three main parties on Lancashire County Council were all women and there was a particularly long and arduous budget meeting. I heard two councillors lamenting the fact that a deal could not be struck in the breaktime in the men's toilets!

What didn't you enjoy?

Being unable to solve problems faced by constituents.

There is also the occasional unreasonable voter. I was once telephoned just before midnight on Boxing Day by a man reporting a broken streetlight!

Help when school tragedy strikes



Lesley Carr

Senior educational psychologist

FOR some years now I have been co-ordinating the Critical Incident Support Team (CIST). This is a team of educational psychologists (and one special educational needs officer) who train and work together to support schools that have to deal with tragic incidents.

Schools sometimes have to cope with very sad events such as the sudden death of a pupil or of a member of staff.

Sadly, for example, children are sometimes injured or killed in road traffic accidents or house fires; sometimes a parent, pupil or teacher commits suicide and at such times grieving

schools often turn to CIST for advice and support.

We get about 30 calls a year and we aim to visit the school really quickly when that is needed.

We always rely on schools contacting us to arrange support, as we know from the research in this area and from our own experience that if schools actively want the team's involvement, it is likely to be more effective.

We try to keep schools well informed and up to date in terms of what CIST can offer and how we can be contacted if we are needed.

When we go into schools we give advice and assistance which helps the school community develop their own response to their bereavement. We support

staff in a way that will help them support the children.

We believe that staff in schools are best placed to help grieving children and colleagues because they are known to them and they are accessible on a daily basis.

We make follow-up visits and give contact numbers for ongoing support in every case.

We sometimes offer targeted support to individuals or groups and this is always done with informed parental consent if pupils are involved.

It is sometimes very sad work, but we know it is highly valued and the team derives a high level of satisfaction from the contact with school staff, children and families.



Canal project gets adults On The Move

A GROUP of dedicated green-fingered volunteers have worked tirelessly to transform a dumping ground into a beauty spot in Burnley.

The "On the Move" group from Lancashire County Council's Meadow Bank centre for adults with learning disabilities has worked as volunteers on a canal side garden project at Lower Bank in Burnley for two years.

The project has involved turning a waste land area into a community playground, barbeque area and sensory garden with disabled access.

Colin Howarth, the project manager who also works on a voluntary basis, said: "When we started the place was full of trees, weeds and

loads of rubbish. It was basically a dumping ground.

"We, as individuals and as a group, have overcome all kinds of obstacles over the last two years", says Colin.

Group members successfully convinced neighbours not to throw their rubbish into the area.

Colin as overcome bigger personal obstacles with his health after suffering a heart attack which has left him semi-blind and other conditions to his health. But now Colin is involved with On The Moveand, in his own words, "lives for every Wednesday" and has made many friends.

"To see it now compared to what it was like two years ago is unbelievable. The group can really be proud of what has been achieved," says Colin.

Safety system to boost services

WHITWORTH Town Council has teamed up with Lancashire County Council to install Amberwatch emergency alert systems on to lampposts.

The camera-based system, useful for transmitting messages to the community via LED panels, will also record vehicle movements in

and out of town – a database that will only be used by police in the aftermath of a serious incident. It will not record the speed of cars.

The camera system cost £17,000, funded jointly by the county council and by Whitworth Town Council. The system also features adverts that raise revenue for Whitworth Town Council services.

THE 500-acre Yorkshire Sculpture Park is the subject of a talk organised by Lancaster's Storey Gallery.

Members of the public are invited to Peter Murray's talk at 7.30pm on Tuesday 5 June at The Dukes, Moor Lane, Lancaster.

The park was founded in 1977 in an 18th century parkland - with pleasure gardens. Peter's talk will explore how the park has gradually opened up to the public.

Summer listings



Wednesday 6 June
10am-4pm. Map and compass event. All-day workshop on navigation basics. Bowland Visitor Centre, Beacon Fell Country Park. Booking essential 01995 640557.

Saturday 9 June
10.30am-3.30pm. Want to gain experience of the work of a countryside ranger? Meet the Conservation Crew. Age 14 to 18. Bring suitable clothing and packed dinner and join in. Beacon Fell Country Park visitor centre. Tel 01995 640557.

Sunday 10 June
Noon-1.30pm. 1.30pm-2.30pm or 3pm-4pm. The terrific and terrible lives of the Tudors. Sessions ends with actual musket firing. Suitable for all family. Turton Tower 01204 852203.

1.30-4.30pm. World of Wool – sheep shearing, spinning demonstrations and other crafts associated with sheep. Aisled barn, Wycoller, near Colne.

Wednesday 13 June
7-9pm. Relaxing stroll along the River Ribble, looking at flowers and searching for wildlife. Marles Wood, Dinkley.

Saturday 16 June
10am-3pm. 20-mile cycle ride, Cliviger Loop. Bridleway ride, suitable mountain bikes. Meet Clowbridge car park. Booking essential 01995 640557.

Sunday 17 June
1pm-4pm. National Badger Day. Bring your dad or granddad as it is also Father's Day. Make a badger-inspired gift. Turton Tower 01204 852203.

Wednesday 20 June
10am-2pm. Trumper trek through Witton Country Park, Blackburn. Meet at visitor centre car park. Booking essential 01254 55423.

Thursday 21 June
8am-6pm. Mary Towneley Loop in a day. 50-mile cycle trip for serious mountain bikers. Depart Clowbridge car park. Booking essential 01995 640557.

Sunday 24 June
10.30am-4.30pm. Limestone Hushings. Historical and archaeological guided walk. Meet Pepper Hill Barn, Wycoller. Booking essential 01995 640557.

1-3pm. Flower Power. See Scorton's meadows at their best and learn about their wild flowers. Meet at Scorton picnic site.

Monday 25 June
Get Knotted – learn how to tie knots. Drop-in activity for all ages. Lancaster Maritime Museum 01524 382264.

You can find lots of information about events on: www.lancsmuseums.gov.uk and at www.lancashire.gov.uk/environment/countryside

Useful phone numbers

Bowland Visitor Centre, Beacon Fell Country Park 01995 640557
Wycoller Country Park 01282 870253
Spring Wood Picnic Site 01254 825187
Lancashire Countryside Service main office 01772 534709
Museums' main office 01772 534061

Life in Lancashire

Golden Jason's sports launch

A MAJOR new sports facility is bringing opportunities for fitness and fun to school children and local people in the Lune Valley.

Thanks to a grant of nearly £710,000 from the Big Lottery Fund, Lancashire County Council has built a brand-new sports hall at Caton Community Primary School, officially opened by former pupil and Olympic cycling gold medallist Jason Queally MBE.

The major award means that determined fundraisers at the school have seen their vision for a much-needed sports venue turn into reality, for both the school and the surrounding area.

Mrs Donna Sully, headteacher at Caton Community Primary School, said: "The school and local community are absolutely delighted with our new sports hall.

"We are now able to offer wider opportunities for gymnastics and dance in particular, together with a wet-weather option for games lessons and extra-curricular activities.

"We have already hosted events for schools in the Lune Valley, such as a multi-skills festival and gymnastics training. In addition, the sports hall has also enabled us to establish a Breakfast Club on site, offering regular childcare for a number of our families."

The sports hall has been completed to a very high standard, with markings for badminton, netball and football, a fitted kitchen, changing rooms, facilities for disabled people, an office and storage space for equipment.

Funding for the new facility comes from the Big Lottery Fund's £750 million New Opportunities for PE and Sport Programme, which aims to create new and improved PE and sports facilities for communities across England.

Richard Gaskell, school governor and chairman of the Sports Hall Management Committee, added: "The addition of this sports hall means that Caton Community



PUPILS, Jason (back row, left), staff and building firm representatives at the school.

Primary School will play a more central role in providing access to PE and sport for this thriving community."

Big Lottery Fund Head of North West Region Helen Bullough outlined the benefits the funding will bring: "This sports hall will be a vital resource for the school and community. Caton Community Primary School is leading the way in this area – providing access to high quality sports facilities to thousands of users and developing a new role as a local hub for PE and sport."

Wendy is chairman of the house



COUNTY Councillor Wendy Dwyer has been named as the new chairman of Lancashire County Council.

Wendy, who represents Accrington South, will hold this important civic position for a year.

The post of chairman is similar to that of a mayor, raising the profile of Lancashire at a regional, national and international level.

During her year in office, the chairman will attend a range of events and functions, in addition to many other formal duties. Wendy is the 41st chairman of the county council and takes up the historic role which dates back to 1889.

Wendy takes over from County Councillor Terry Burns, who represents Burnley North East.

During the past twelve months Wendy worked closely with Terry in her role as deputy chairman.

A new deputy chairman will be appointed shortly to assist the chairman with her year in office.

Cash help with your Council Tax bill

By Jim Dickson, head of the county council's Welfare Rights Service



IF YOU are paying the Council Tax for your home you may be interested to know how you could reduce your bill.

Council Tax Benefit is a means-tested benefit that could help pay some or all of your bill. Whether or not you qualify will depend on your income and your savings.

You cannot claim if you have more than £16,000 in savings unless you get the Guarantee Credit of Pension Credit, in which case all your savings are ignored.

If you can't get Council Tax Benefit you might qualify for a second adult rebate if someone else who lives with you is on a low income.

There are also discounts which do not depend on your income or savings. For example if someone in your household has a "severe mental impairment" this could reduce your bill.

You could also get a reduction if you have had to adapt a room or have a second bathroom or kitchen fitted because someone in your household is disabled.

There are other ways to cut your Council Tax bill which we don't have space to go into here. Your local council will have information about the full range of rebates and discounts or you can get our factsheet, "Money off your Council Tax," by writing to Lancashire Welfare Rights Service, FREEPOST, Preston PR1 8BR.

New Era for gran

GRANDPARENTS are being helped to overcome family problems by the extra support provided by a county council-backed social enterprise.

Drugs, prison, mental breakdown, divorce, family rows ... all can lead to grandparents losing touch with their grandchildren.

"That can be incredibly painful," said Fiona Duncan, of Burnley's New Era Enterprises.

"Some mums and dads use grandchildren as a weapon. Often there are problems in their own lives that they can no longer face – and the grandparent ends up picking up the pieces by looking after the children.

"Either way, it can leave the grandparents needing support in a number of ways. There is evidence that they struggle with the physical

and financial aspects of parenting at a later age."

Such carers fall into two main categories:

- Those who provide support for parents during holidays and while parents are at work.

- Those who act in a loco parentis situation – their grandchildren often live with them by way of a court order.

New Era's Grandparent Carer Network, a county council-funded group of professionals, provides support and friendship for grandparents.

Project worker Fiona said: "Grandparents have told us of their physical health concerns, their worries over their grandchildren's behavioural issues, financial worries and their feelings of isolation.

"They lack knowledge of the support available to them within the community and that is where the

Grandparent Carer Network comes in.

"At the very least we are a meeting place for grandparents and give them the chance to share their experiences and the lessons they have learned.

"Guest speakers also come to meetings to help grandparents cope while fun days give everyone the opportunity to make new friends.

"Grandparents are in a vitally important position as, in the absence of parents, a child invariably needs loving grandparents."

Network members meet on the last Wednesday of each month, except in school holidays. Formal training is also available as well as informal support.

Outreach home visits are also provided and the project provides crèche facilities for children while grandparents attend meetings.

Contact 01282
450536 or
www.newera.coop
for more details

Cabinet change as new members join

THE new civic year will see a new look for Lancashire County Council's cabinet.

As with 10 Downing Street, the county council's cabinet makes major decisions on policy and overall direction of services in the area.

The total number of cabinet members remains unchanged at 10. Two new members are to join the cabi-

net to replace two departing members.

They are Leyland Central member Matthew Tomlinson, who takes over the planning and environment portfolio from Clive Grunshaw. County Councillor Grunshaw is to gain responsibilities with the Police Authority as a nomination from Lancashire County Council.

The second new member is Preston North West member

Tom Burns, who takes over responsibility for organisational development from Vali Patel. County Councillor Patel takes over responsibility for schools from Alan Whittaker who, in turn, moves sideways to become the council's deputy chairman.

The full list of responsibilities is as follows:

Hazel Harding, leader; **Doreen Pollitt**, deputy

leader; **Chris Cheetham**, Adult and Community Services; **Jean Battle**, Community Planning and Partnerships; **Tony Martin**, Sustainable Development; **Matthew Tomlinson**, Planning and Environment; **Marcus Johnstone**, Children and Young People; **Vali Patel**, Schools; **Anne Brown**, Resources and Performance; **Tom Burns**, Organisational Development.



Free disc to help pals of L-drivers

EXPERT help is at hand for those planning to help friends learn to drive.

Lancashire County Council's Road Safety Group has launched an interactive CD-ROM to assist "accompanying drivers" and their learners.

And the good news is that the package is available for free.

The Perfect Partner resource is the first of its kind in the UK and is designed to raise accompanying drivers' awareness of the vulnerability of new drivers.

Neil Cunliffe, Road Safety Group manager said: "This is not an alternative to getting professional lessons.

"Studies have shown that gaining more supervised on-road experience at the 'learner stage' can significantly reduce new drivers' crash risk in the first two years after passing the driving test."

The CD-ROM supports professional tuition through practice sessions at home, as well as tips on both the theory and practical tests and current legislation.

It will also help accompanying drivers to practise the skills already taught by their professional instructor and driving attitudes of learner drivers.

The innovative resource is available to the public and is available direct from the Road Safety Group and elsewhere throughout Lancashire.

For more information visit lancashire.gov.uk/road-safety call 0800 328 1365 or e-mail road-safety@env.lanc-ccc.gov.uk

TV's Trevor goes on the buses

THE county's pioneering Safer Travel Unit (STU) was the centre of national media attention recently when Trevor McDonald sent his cameras to Lancashire.

Council officers teamed up with police officers to give the TV crew an inside view of the work done to make public transport safer for all.

STU manager Rick Wilson explained: "The producers approached us some time ago as they had heard that Lancashire had a particularly innovative approach to tackling anti-social behaviour."

"For a few years now we have been developing a new way of making public transport a better way to travel."

"This includes running our own lessons in schools, providing bus companies with training DVDs and carrying out on-the-spot checks of buses."

St Christopher's CE High School, Accrington, where the idea of "bus prefects" was trialled some years ago, received a visit from the ITV producers.

The year 11 pupils act as the "eyes and ears" on buses, dealing with minor incidents and reporting major ones.

There are now 620 travel prefects at schools county-wide with more coming on-board each year.

Viewers also saw officers board buses to check for anti-social behaviour.

Rick said: "The way we work to make public transport safer for everyone means that we are in the spotlight quite often - but it doesn't mean that there is a bigger problem in the county."

"In fact, the work we are doing is inspiring similar projects in other parts of the country."

Schools spearhead £250m jobs boost

CONTRACTS worth nearly £10m have already been placed with Lancashire firms as work begins on the Building Schools for the Future programme in Burnley and Pendle.

Nearly £6m of business has been won by firms in east Lancashire.

The contracts include work on things like fixtures and fittings, steel frames, and earthworks.

The Building Schools for the Future programme will involve £250m pounds of development on nine sites in Burnley and Pendle.

Work has started on three sites where students are due to start using the facilities in September 2008.

The Shuttleworth College site on Burnley Road, Padiham, will house a 1,050-place school for pupils aged 11 to 16 and a learning support centre.

Orders placed so far for the site are worth £2.5m pounds to Lancashire businesses:

● Keith Walton Brickworth Ltd, of Nelson, has a contract to provide bat roosts.

● James Killelea Ltd, of Rossendale, has a contract to provide steel work.

● H. Breakell, of Blackburn, has a contract to provide lifts.

● Vari-tech, of Blackburn, has a contract to provide fixtures, fittings and equipment.



● THE Building Schools for the Future development at Shuttleworth College in Padiham was featured on the BBC's North West Tonight programme. Students Charlotte Seddon and Michael Nuttall, both aged 13, are pictured talking to TV reporter Dave Guest.

The Burnley Campus, on Barden Lane, will house a 600-pupil sixth form, a primary school, a primary special school, a

worth £5.9m pounds to Lancashire businesses.

The Building Schools for the Future programme is being spear-

This makes a real statement about confidence in the area
- business leader

children's centre, a faith centre and a public library.

The Pendle Vale College and Pendle Community High School site, on Oxford Road in Nelson, will house a 1,050-place school for pupils aged 11 to 16, a special school for pupils aged 11 to 19, and a learning support centre.

Orders placed so far for Pendle Vale are

headed by Lancashire County Council in partnership with developers Catalyst Lend Lease and builders Bovis Lend Lease.

Michael Damms, the chief executive of East Lancashire Chamber of Commerce, said: "The Building Schools for the Future programme is a great boost to the economy of east Lancashire and makes a real state-

Building work: full steam ahead

WORK is continuing on the first phase of the 250 million pounds Building Schools for the Future programme in Burnley and Pendle.

At the Shuttleworth College site on Burnley Road, Padiham, thousands of cubic tons of concrete have been poured into the foundations.

At the Pendle Vale College and Pendle Community High School site on Oxford Road, Nelson, the

foundations have been completed and structural steelwork has begun.

At Burnley Campus, on Barden Lane, the steel structure of the buildings is starting to emerge.

The BSF scheme will bring state-of-the-art schools and economic regeneration to east Lancashire.

Students and teachers will move into the first three sites in September 2008.



The Platform, MORECAMBE
Saturday 23rd June 2007 7.30pm

St Wilfrid's Church, RIBCHESTER
Ribchester Festival
Sunday 24th June 2007 7.00pm

MORECAMBE BOOKINGS Tickets: £8.50 (£5 conc.) **TEL: 01524 582803**

RIBCHESTER BOOKINGS Tickets: Nave: £26 and £23
Side Aisles £21 and £19. Restricted view £10 **TEL: 01524 878881**

Lancashire Sinfonietta

Lancashire County Council